



Health and Disability Services  
Complaints Office

# Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017

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## Message from the Director



The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent statutory authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health or disability services provided in the State of Western Australia.

HaDSCO is committed to promote leadership in the delivery of health and disability services via effective communication and supports improvement through complaint resolution.

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan has been produced in recognition that people with disabilities, their families and carers, have the same rights to access HaDSCO's services as any other member of the community. I have a great pleasure in endorsing the HaDSCO Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Anne Donaldson  
Director  
Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

## Table of contents

Role of the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO)	1
Background	1
Disability defined	2
Overview of disability in Western Australia	2
Access and inclusion policy statement	3
Development of the HaDSCO DAIP	4
HaDSCO strategies to improve access and inclusion	7
Appendix A – Consultation process	15

## **Role of Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO)**

The Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO) is an independent statutory authority providing an impartial resolution service for complaints relating to health or disability services provided in the State of Western Australia. This service is free and available to all users and providers of health or disability services.

Acting impartially and in confidence, HaDSCO reviews and reports on the causes of complaints, undertakes investigations, suggests service improvements and advises service providers about effectively resolving complaints.

HaDSCO promotes leadership in the delivery of health and disability services via effective communication and supports improvement through complaint resolution.

## **Background**

The *Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)* requires all State and Local Government authorities to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people in the community to access services, facilities and information. A DAIP can assist public authorities to identify access and inclusion issues that preclude people with disabilities from participating in the community, and enable public authorities to identify methods to make its information, services and facilities more accessible.

HaDSCO has developed a DAIP in recognition that as members of the community, people with disabilities, their families and carers have the right to access all information, services and facilities provided by HaDSCO. The HaDSCO DAIP identifies means to improve accessibility of both service delivery and employment opportunities.

## Disability defined

A disability is defined as:

*Any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities<sup>1</sup>.*

The term disability may refer to any intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory and/or physical impairment that is, or is likely to be, permanent<sup>2</sup>. A disability will cause a person to have a reduced capacity to communicate, interact socially, learn and/or move about<sup>2</sup>.

The main areas where barriers are experienced by people living with a disability include<sup>3</sup>:

- Social inclusion and community participation;
- Disability services;
- Rights, justice and legislation;
- Income support and the cost of disability; and
- Employment

Access and inclusion barriers are not exclusive to people with disabilities, and can be attributed to factors such as speaking English as a second language; living in rural or remote areas; low literacy levels and discrimination in relation to age, gender, race and culture. HaDSCO has developed a DAIP that promotes a range of proactive initiatives to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately.

## Overview of disability in Western Australia

Approximately 17 per cent of people living in Western Australia in 2009 reported having a disability<sup>4</sup>. This is slightly lower than the national rate of 18.5 per cent<sup>4</sup>. The majority of people living with disabilities in Western Australia experience physically disabling conditions, such as back problems and arthritis, as opposed to mental and behavioural disorders<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Disability Service Commission 2008, *What is a disability?*. Available from: <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/aboutdisability/disabilitydefined.html>

<sup>2</sup> *Disability Services Act 1993*. Available from: [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol\\_act/dsa1993213/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/dsa1993213/)

<sup>3</sup> National People With Disabilities and Carer Council, *National disability strategy consultation report*. Available from: [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/community\\_consult/Documents/NDS\\_report.pdf](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/community_consult/Documents/NDS_report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011, *4446.0 – Disability, Australia, 2009*. Available from: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4446.0main+features42009>

In 2009, 59 per cent of people living with disabilities in Australia required assistance with activities such as health care (26.9 per cent), property maintenance (29.8 per cent), and mobility (22.8 per cent)<sup>4</sup>. However, only 37.6 per cent of people with a disability can access services that fully meet their need for assistance<sup>4</sup>.

Rate of disability typically increases with age<sup>5</sup>: this indicates that as Australia's population ages, the proportion of people living with a disability is likely to increase.

## Access and inclusion policy statement

HaDSCO affirms its strong support and acceptance of staff, clients and contractors with disabilities, their families and carers, and commits to meet their needs by providing equal opportunity, accessible information, and appropriate services and facilities.

HaDSCO is committed to the six outcomes of the DAIP as prescribed by the Disability Services Commission:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and events organised by, HaDSCO
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and facilities at HaDSCO
3. People with disabilities receive information from HaDSCO in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it
4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from HaDSCO staff as other people in the community
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to HaDSCO.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by HaDSCO

In addition, HaDSCO has added another outcome:

7. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to seek employment, professional development and work experience at HaDSCO.

All provisions of this plan apply equally to HaDSCO employees, agents, stakeholders, clients and contractors.

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<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011, *4430.0 – Disability, Aging and carers Australia: Summary of findings, 2009*. Available from:  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4446.0main+features42009>

## Development of the HaDSCO DAIP

### Research and consultation

An internal Reference Group was established to oversee and contribute to the development of the HaDSCO DAIP (see Appendix A – Consultation process).

The issues and strategies that are included were developed following extensive research regarding contemporary trends and best practice initiatives that promote access and inclusion for people living with a disability.

Following review of the Plan by the internal Reference Group, external stakeholders (including health and disability service providers and consumers) were invited to comment on the Plan. Feedback was sought from stakeholders about the HaDSCO DAIP through:

- the HaDSCO website
- Health Happenings (the Department of Health WA e-newsletter)
- e-newsletter sent to the HaDSCO Connect and HaDSCO Disability Service contact list
- submitting information about the feedback opportunity to relevant, external newsletter publications

It is estimated that HaDSCO invited over 400 individuals who work in an area related to health, disability or mental health to provide feedback by promoting the DAIP through these mediums. External stakeholders who provided feedback and contributed to the development of the HaDSCO DAIP are listed in Appendix A – Consultation process.

### Implementation, review and reporting

This edition of the HaDSCO DAIP will be implemented from 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2017. The DAIP applies to all services, policies, commodities, events and programs developed or hosted by HaDSCO and will be made available to people with a disability, their families and carers, and other members of the community through the HaDSCO website. HaDSCO will take all practicable measures to ensure that the Plan is implemented by its employees, and relevant agents and contractors.

The HaDSCO DAIP will be reviewed, monitored and evaluated in accordance with the *Disability Services Act 1993* (WA). HaDSCO will:

- Review the DAIP at least every five years, or earlier as required
- Advertise the intention to review the plan and invite stakeholders (including the public) to participate in the review process
- Lodge amended plans with the Disability Services Commission
- Ensure the HaDSCO DAIP is available and accessible to people with disabilities and the public



- Report annually to the Disability Services Commission about progress towards:
  - achieving the desired outcomes, as specified in Schedule 3 of the Disability Services Regulations 2004<sup>6</sup>
  - communicating DAIP strategies to staff, agents and contractors.
- Report progress towards implementation of the DAIP in the HaDSCO Annual Report.

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<sup>6</sup> *Disability Services Regulations 2004*. Available from:  
[http://corrigan.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol\\_reg/dsr2004322/](http://corrigan.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_reg/dsr2004322/)



## HaDSCO strategies to improve access and inclusion

**Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, HADSCO.**

	<b>Implementation strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.1	The objectives of the DAIP are reflected in the HaDSCO Strategic Plan 2012-2015.	2012	Director
1.2	HaDSCO staff are informed about the DAIP and the practical implications of the policy.	2012 – 2017	Manager Corporate Services and Manager Complaints Operations
1.3	HaDSCO's policies, procedures and communications include references to people with disabilities, where appropriate.	2012 – 2017	Manager Complaint Operations, Manager Corporate Services and Communication Officer
1.4	All publications, events, and programs developed or hosted by HaDSCO are accessible for people with disability and their carer.	2012 – 2017	Communication Officer and Administrative Coordinator
1.5	The HaDSCO DAIP is promoted to stakeholders and published on the HaDSCO web site.	2012 – 2017	Communication Officer



**Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access HaDSCO's buildings and facilities.**

	<b>Implementation strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
2.1	Ensure that HaDSCO offices are located in a building and location that is accessible for people with disabilities.	2012 – 2017	Manager Corporate Services
2.2	Review occupational health and safety policies and procedures to ensure they meet the needs of people with disabilities, as required.	2013 – 2017	Manager Corporate Services
2.3	Provide a disability-friendly workspace and accommodate adjustments required by staff with disabilities, as appropriate.	2012 – 2017	Director and Manager Corporate Services



**Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from HaDSCO in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.**

	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
3.1	Consumers are informed that HaDSCO resources are available in alternative formats on request.	2012 – 2017	Team Leader Complaints Management and Communication Officer
3.2	HaDSCO staff are informed about the alternative formats that they can use to provide information to complainants.	2012 – 2017	Team Leader Complaints Management and Communication Officer
3.3	Review the HaDSCO website and publication materials to ensure the format and language used is accessible for people with disabilities.	2012 – 2017	Communication Officer
3.4	HaDSCO publications and education materials are prepared in accordance with the HaDSCO Communication Style Guide and accessibility best practice guidelines where applicable	2012 – 2017	Communication Officer



**Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from HaDSCO staff as other people receive from HaDSCO staff.**

	<b>Implementation strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
4.1	Ensure staff are aware of where the HaDSCO DAIP is saved so they can readily access the resource.	2012	Manager Complaints Operations and Manager Corporate Services
4.2	Conduct research about how to manage difficult complaints (includes complaints involving people with disabilities).	2013	Manager Complaints Operations and Research and Policy Officer
4.3	Educate people (staff, consumers and/or service providers) about how to adapt the complaints process to make it responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.	2016	Manager Complaints Operations and Communication Officer
4.4	Maintain and strengthen partnerships with the disability services sector to ensure that service providers and consumers are aware of the services that HaDSCO can offer.	2012 – 2017	Director, Manager Complaint Operations and Communication Officer



## Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to HaDSCO.

	<b>Implementation strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
5.1	Proactively seek feedback on the quality and accessibility of HaDSCO's services.	2012 – 2017	Manager Complaint Operations and Research and Policy Officer
5.2	Proactively seek feedback on the quality and accessibility of HaDSCO's communication materials and amend as appropriate	2012 – 2017	Communication Officer
5.3	Continue providing consumers with the opportunity to make complaints, and access information about HaDSCO's services, in a variety of formats.	2012 – 2017	Director, Manager Complaint Operations and Communication Officer
5.4	Continue to produce resources in plain English formats	2012 – 2017	Communication Officer
5.5	Amend services based on feedback received, as appropriate.	2013	Director, Manager Complaint Operations
5.6	Utilise template letters that are developed in line with accessibility best practice guidelines	2012 – 2017	Manager Complaint Operations



**Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people and are encouraged to participate in public consultation by HaDSCO.**

	<b>Implementation strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
6.1	Provide all stakeholders with opportunities to participate in consultation processes in online, written and verbal formats.	2012 – 2017	Director, Manager Complaint Operations, Manager Corporate Services, Research and Policy Officer and Communication Officer
6.2	Ensure that venues where public consultations are held are physically accessible for people with disabilities.	2012 – 2017	Director, Manager Complaint Operations, Communication Officer and Administrative Coordinator



**Outcome 7: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to seek employment, professional development and work experience placements at HaDSCO.**

	<b>Implementation strategy</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
7.1	Continue to promote that HaDSCO encourages people with disabilities to apply for all advertised positions within the agency.	2012 – 2017	Manager Corporate Services
7.2	Continue to accommodate, where possible, the needs of people with disabilities in the HaDSCO work environment.	2012 – 2017	Director, Manager Corporate Services

## Appendix A – Consultation process

Internal Reference Group members:

- Director
- Manager Corporate Services
- Manager Complaints Operations
- Research and Policy Officer
- Communication Officer.

External stakeholders that responded to requests for feedback about the HaDSCO DAIP:

- Acting Senior Development Officer, Workforce, Department of Health
- Support Services Officer, Corporate Services, Department of Health
- Research and Policy Officer, Identity WA
- Client Liaison Officer, Silver Chain
- Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Equal Opportunity Commission, Government of Western Australia