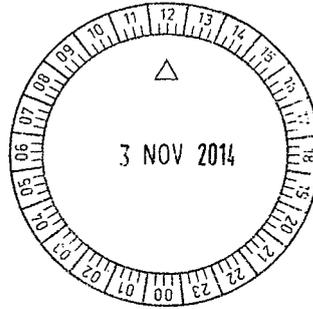




Government of Western Australia
Disability Services Commission



Our ref : 68000448v1
Enquiries: Dr Ron Chalmers
Telephone:

Ms Margaret Liveris
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Environment
And Public Affairs
Parliament House
Perth WA 6000

Dear Ms Liveris,

Thank you for your letter of 20 October providing a copy of the transcript of evidence I gave to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs on 15 October.

With the exception of one typographic error, referring to a Disability Services Commission group home as "Hanson" rather than "Nanson" (page 10), I confirm the transcript as accurate.

I note the highlighted section of the transcript identifying requests made for supplementary information by the Committee and am pleased to provide labelled materials requested here (Attachment 1, Attachment 2).

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ron Chalmers
Director General
Disability Services Commission

30 October 2014

Att:

Attachment 1:

Parties Consulted Prior to Announcement of Transition Project

- National Disability Services (NDS) WA
- People With Disability (PWD) WA
- WA Individualised Services
- Developmental Disability WA
- Disability Sector Organisations (through NDS WA State Committee and CEO Roundtable)
- Community & Public Sector Union / Civil Service Association of WA
- United Voice

Parties Consulted Post-Announcement to Ensure Transparency and Suitability of Processes

- Residents in Commission services / Families or Guardians of residents in Commission Services
 - Dedicated contact points identified for immediate response (via direct correspondence with all families of residents) for any person wishing to raise issues
 - Information Sessions held at various locations throughout Perth allowing for a 1:1 conversation on issues of interest / concern
 - Meetings held with families / guardians both routinely at working level and with Director General and Minister for Disability Services upon request.
- Specifically established Independent Review Panel (Parents of people in Commission and Non-Commission accommodation, WA Individualised Services, PWD WA, Office of the Public Advocate, Independent Evaluator for Quality System, DSC Behaviour Support and Policy specialists)
- Disability Sector Peak and Advocacy Bodies (NDS WA, PWD WA, Personal Advocacy Services, Developmental Disability WA)
- Specifically contracted Independent Information Officer
- Disability Sector Organisations (service providers that expressed an interest in participating in the process)
- Disability Sector CEO Roundtable
- Community & Public Sector Union / Civil Service Association of WA
- United Voice

Attachment 2:

Examples of materials provided to families / guardians of residents

Transitioning management of accommodation services to non-government providers – Update for families, February 2014

The transition process to non-government service providers has begun for 47 people currently supported by the Commission's accommodation services. These individuals live in the Stirling, Armadale, Joondalup, Vincent and Bayswater local government areas.

Supported accommodation options for people with disability have changed a great deal in recent decades. We have moved from housing people with disabilities in large institutions, to hostel-style accommodation and more recently, in the 1980s, to community-based and group home models. Each of these steps has been a significant and often confronting transition at the time, but they have all been very positive changes. The transition process we are starting now seeks to continue this trend of giving individuals with a disability greater choice and control over how they live. Where people want to stay in their current group home arrangements, they absolutely can. But where people want to investigate what other options may be available, this process will let them look at their next steps as well.

The transition process

Through the transition process, people will make two key decisions:

- Do I want to stay in my current home with my current housemates, or do I want to investigate other options?
- Who do I want to provide my support services in the future?

These are significant decisions, and ones that have a big impact in anyone's life. The Disability Services Commission (the Commission) has established a Transition Team to spend time with individuals and their families, or other important people in their lives, to work through their questions, concerns and ideas about the transition process. The Transition Team members, Sue Cannell, Neil Paynter and Luke Doyle, are all people with a strong, enduring connection with the disability sector and have the knowledge and experience to be able to have real conversations about this issue. When it is time for an individual's planning for transition to begin, the transition team will make contact and arrange to meet. For the first transition group, this occurred in January. For the second transition group, this will happen in late March.



Sue Cannell



Neil Paynter



Luke Doyle

We recognise the transition process will take time. These are important decisions, and shouldn't be rushed. When the transition team first makes contact, they will seek to meet and talk about how the process will work and things you may wish to consider. The Transition Team will seek to meet with you again, later, once you feel you have had the opportunity to consider the options available. There is no timeline on which you need to make a decision – it will take different lengths of time for different people. Depending on whether a group home or a more individualised option is selected, the Transition Team can coordinate house meetings or opportunities to meet with different non-government service providers. They are there to support you through your decision making process, so please feel able to use their expertise in a way that works for you.

The Transition Team will also provide you with information about different organisations that provide accommodation support services. There are around 40 non-government organisations that are preferred service providers with the Commission for providing accommodation support services. These providers operate under the Commission's Quality Framework, meaning they have appropriately skilled and trained staff and comply with the Disability Service Standards. They are independently evaluated to ensure the services they deliver are up to the standard that the Commission expects. Any of the organisations available for you to choose from are monitored in this way.

Other Information Sources

In making significant decisions, it is important to be able to talk to a variety of people to feel confident about the choice you eventually make. Some other people that you may wish to contact are:

- **The Independent Information Officer, Kylie Davis**

Kylie is employed by Therapy Focus specifically to talk to people about this transition process, and she does not work for the government. Kylie can discuss different options you may wish to consider, and what things you may wish to find out before making a decision.

Phone: 9478 9500 Mobile: 0418 940 991 Email: kylie.davis@therapyfocus.org.au

- **Peak and Advocacy Organisations**

Many people would be familiar with WA's strong disability sector. A benefit of this sector is that it gives people many options if they want to talk to someone with really good understanding of the issues they're facing. Some organisations include: National Disability Services (NDS), WA Individualised Services (WAIS), Developmental Disability Council of WA (DDC), People With Disability WA (PwDWA) and CarersWA.

- **Non-Government Service Provider Organisations**

Before making any decision about who should provide your services into the future, we recommend that you talk to some potential organisations. You can also seek to meet or visit some of the people they currently support, to see if you think it's the right fit. Details for these organisations will be provided to you by the Transition Team.

We are aware that some information about this process circulating in the community, especially information from sources other than those listed above, may be misleading, incorrect or confusing – I encourage you to talk to your Local Area Manager to clarify any information that worries you.

Wendy Cox
Executive Director, Accommodation Services

Transitioning management of accommodation services to non-government providers

Update for families, June 2014

Transition planning to non-government service providers is underway for about 80 people currently supported by the Commission's accommodation services. These individuals live in the Stirling, Armadale, Joondalup, Vincent, Bayswater, Wanneroo, Bassendean, Canning and Rockingham local government areas.

The first group began transition planning in January 2014 while the second group started the planning process in March 2014. These individuals, families and other key decision makers are engaging well in the planning process and are at various stages of deciding their preferred non-government provider. Some individuals and families have already confirmed their preferred provider, while others are still in the process of making that decision and are meeting with a number of providers and viewing their existing accommodation services.

This means that the planning process is taking longer than initially anticipated. The Commission recognises this process will take as long as it needs to take, and people will only be transitioned when there is a sustainable plan in place for their future care and support.

The transition team has a finite capacity, and want to ensure they are able to direct enough time and support to each individual moving through the process. Based on these factors, the Commission will now commence planning with the third transition group at a time to be confirmed later this year. Future transition groups will also be contacted after the third transition group has commenced their transition planning.

Disability sector organisations exploring options

The Commission is staying in close contact with the disability sector organisations that expressed an interest in supporting people who will be transitioning to new service providers. They tell us that they are having very positive discussions with families and key decision makers about what their future supports may be.

Like the Commission, all the alternative service providers are strongly committed to setting up long-term, sustainable support arrangements. For some of the organisations, this includes staff and industrial relations planning as well as service planning. We recognise that some organisations are working through what the *Fair Work Act 2009* will mean for them, and are taking the time to do this to ensure their services to people with disability are sustainable.

Metropolitan information sessions

The first information session about this transition process was held in late April 2014 in Mandurah, with the second occurring in late May 2014 in Maylands. This enabled local families to meet one to one with a Commission representative, to ask questions they had about the transition process.

Further information sessions have been scheduled to occur over the next few months. One key part of the feedback we have received from people who have commenced their planning is that talking to the Transition Team is really useful. It allows people to ask questions specific to their situation and allows us to give people complete and accurate information about what the process is and how it will work, so we strongly encourage you to come along to one of the sessions if you have any questions. The table below shows the sessions scheduled for the Perth metropolitan area:

Date	Venue	Address	Times available
Thurs 24 July 2014	Redcliffe Community Centre	Cnr Morgan Road and Field Ave, Redcliffe	From 1:30pm
Wed 20 August 2014	Maddington Community Centre	19 Alcock St, Maddington	From 1:00pm
Tue 23 September 2014	The Boulevard Centre	99 The Boulevard, Floreat (below Cambridge Library)	From 1:30pm
Thurs 23 October 2014	The Hive: Cockburn Youth Centre	25 Wenworth Parade, Success	From 1:30pm

To RSVP, please phone Tess Foote on **6104 9589** or email Theresa.Foote@dsc.wa.gov.au

Tess will allocate up to an hour for you to meet one to one with a Commission representative. As there are limited spaces it is recommended you make contact early.

Regional information sessions

If you would like to discuss the transition process with a Commission representative but the above times are not workable for you, teleconferences can be organised at your local community resource centre or Local Area Coordinator's office. Please phone Tess Foote on **6104 9589** to arrange a time.

If you have any questions about this process, whether the information is from the Commission or other sources, I encourage you to keep in contact with your Local Area Manager and/or make use of the metropolitan information sessions to clarify any information.

Wendy Cox
Executive Director, Accommodation Services

Transitioning management of accommodation services to non-government providers

Update for families - July 2014

First group of people to transition

A group of people living in one of the Group 1 houses has recently chosen their preferred service provider, and their transition is underway. It has been a busy few months for this group, as in May after two years of planning the group moved to a new, purpose-built house. Everyone has been working together to make it their home, buying new furniture, designing gardens and adding other personal touches. Now, the group will be supported in that new home by a new service provider.

In January 2014, the four families of individuals who are living in this house received a letter indicating they were part of the first group to commence the transition process. They also received phone calls from the transition team leader and started focusing on their options relevant to the transition process.

From the start, the four individuals clearly stated they wanted to stay living together in their new home rather than pursuing other options. Once this decision was made, their families worked closely with the transition team to research various disability sector organisations and meet with the ones they were most interested in. After many meetings and discussions between the families and with the transition team leader, the families chose their preferred provider in June 2014.

Work has now started on the final transition aspects for this group. Since receiving signed consent forms from families, the transition team leader has been working with the service provider and sharing important information about each individual to make sure all the needs of people living in the house will be met. The organisation will also be meeting with the individuals and their families to make sure they fully understand each person's individual needs and wants.

Once this is completed, the Disability Services Commission and the service provider will finalise agreements outlining the individualised plan for each person's supports, and how much they will cost. These plans will only be finalised by the Disability Services Commission once the individuals and their families are happy with them. At this stage, the house and vehicle (or cashed-out value), will all be transferred to the new provider. Staff from the service provider will commence buddy shifts at the house to ensure a smooth transition for the people living there. A house-warming party will be held and current and new staff will be invited to celebrate the move to a new house and a new provider.

Independent Information Officer

The Independent Information Officer, based at Therapy Focus, was engaged in January 2014 for six months to provide impartial advice around the different types of accommodation support models offered in the disability sector. Uptake of the officer's services has been very limited, so the decision has been made to allow the contract to expire. As a result, the position **will cease at the end of July 2014**. The Commission is very happy to re-establish the role if there is an expressed need for it into the future.

Over the past six months the Independent Information Officer has undertaken extensive research and has developed a suite of information that describes the service model types available in Western Australia and factors to consider when choosing a service model to

best suit each person. This resource will be made available to families and key decision makers who will participate in the transition process.

Information sessions

Information sessions have been booked for Maddington, Floreat and Cockburn for August, September and October, respectively. If you live outside of the metropolitan area, a phone or video link-up can be coordinated to enable you to speak with a Commission representative at a time that is mutually convenient. For further details or to RSVP, please phone Tess Foote on **6104 9589** or email Theresa.Foote@dsc.wa.gov.au.

Which groups are part of the 60 per cent of houses to transition?

Many people have been asking: "How have houses in the Commission's accommodation services been prioritised to transition? Am I part of this 60 per cent?"

People have been prioritised for inclusion in transition groups one and two through the use of a set of guidelines. These guidelines were initially developed by the Disability Services Commission, but have been refined and agreed by an independent review panel. The panel included representatives from advocacy organisations, the Office of the Public Advocate and, importantly, parents of people with disability living in both Commission and non-government homes. The guidelines prioritise people who:

- have limited need for specialist support, other than physical health; AND
- whose individual support needs are complementary to the support needs of those they are residing with; AND
- require a service that can be fully met by non-government service providers; AND
- reside in a house that meets the needs of the people living there and/or another building option is in the process of being built or modified; OR
- when a person, their family, carer and/or guardian nominates for transition.

The houses that meet these guidelines, beyond those nominated in Transition Groups 1 to 3, have not yet been confirmed. When it is time to commence another Transition Group, the same guidelines will be used to identify the next group of people.

Family engagement and feedback

Feedback from phone calls, group and individual meetings and information sessions has driven the development of a toolkit to assist people through this transition process.

Examples of the resources developed for the toolkit include:

- a revised version of the service provider booklet, which includes a quick user guide,
- a list of questions people may wish to ask service providers,
- an information sheet explaining the handover between the Commission and the service provider, and how families are involved,
- a comparison table to track out of pocket expenses charged by the Commission and disability sector organisations, and
- a list of ongoing support and services provided by the Commission.

These resources are available at any time during the transition process. Thank you to the many families and stakeholders who have influenced the development of these resources following their discussions with a member of the transition team.

Keeping in contact

If you have any questions about this process I encourage you to keep in contact with your Local Area Manager, transition team member and/or attend one of the information sessions to clarify any queries.

The contact details for the Transition Team are:



Sue Cannell



Neil Paynter



Luke Doyle

Wendy Cox
Executive Director, Accommodation Services
Disability Services Commission

Transitioning management of accommodation services to non-government providers

Update for families – October 2014

A quick update

The first Commission house to undertake the transition process has now completed its transition to a non-government service provider. Individuals and their families from the Transition Group 1 house in Doubleview worked closely with the service provider and Disability Services Commission staff to facilitate a thorough transfer of information and knowledge in the weeks leading up to the handover. I would like to commend the partnership approach taken by all involved to ensure that the transition process was smooth and without issue. This provides for a good model for us to build on in coming months.

In addition, the families of people living at three other houses in Transition Group 1 have selected their preferred service provider. These houses are in Nollamara, Morley and Armadale. People in these houses, with their families and guardians, are developing individualised plans with the service provider, and the Commission and service provider are undertaking significant background work to prepare the houses for handover.

The family information sessions are almost at an end for 2014, with the last session to be held on 23 October in Cockburn. Feedback received from families who have attended so far has been overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of families saying they felt more informed and at ease with the process as a whole after speaking with someone closely involved in the project. Given this feedback, the Commission will schedule more sessions next year. Further details will be provided in the next update.

Transition Group 3, originally scheduled to commence in May 2014, was deferred to allow for extended time for families in the first two transition groups to explore their options and make their decisions. Now that Transition Groups 1 and 2 are well advanced in their planning, families and decision-makers from Group 3 will be contacted by the Transition Team this month to discuss commencing the planning process.

“How I want to live and be supported” – A new resource for families

The Independent Information Officer engaged through Therapy Focus from January through until July this year was specifically employed to be an impartial source of information for families who wanted to explore the different models of accommodation support available in the disability sector.

As part of the officer's work, a booklet was developed that provides a range of information about disability service models. It also contains real stories of people with disability who have found a model that works for them and details their personal journey. The booklet is titled “How I want to live and be supported” and is now available for families who are interested.

This resource is available for download soon on [the Accommodation services transition page on the Commission's website](#)

A word from Jon Peach



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Services Directorate. My arrival comes at a time of immense change in the disability sector.

I have only been with the Commission for a few short months, but I have already had the pleasure of visiting many of the houses where supports are provided by the Commission, meeting the individuals who live there and the staff that support them. Over the course of the next six to 12 months I look forward to having an opportunity to meet you, as the families and loved ones of the individuals we support.

It is of key importance to me that families have an open communication channel with my team both in general, and in particular, for transition related matters. For general enquiries I would urge you to continue to access the support of staff and managers for the respective houses. For transition related matters, as you will be aware, a dedicated transition team is in place and will do their utmost to work through and concerns you may have.

New Transition Team member and keeping in contact

Janet Wynne will join the team this month as a Transition Officer, and will begin working with families and key decision-makers in Transition Group 3. Janet brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge that has been gained throughout many years supporting people with disability and their families both within the Commission and the disability sector. More recently, Janet has worked in the Commission's Funding Directorate managing the contracts that Disability Sector Organisations work within.

If you have any questions about the transition project, please contact one of our Transition Team members. Please do note that some team members work part-time. You will find their days of work, along with contact details, enclosed.

Jon Peach
Executive Director, Services
Disability Services Commission

17 October 2014

Updated Information Sheet: The Transition Process

Since the release of our first information sheet to families, we have refined the way we will work with you to choose your housing arrangement and a new organisation to manage support services. This information updates and provides some extra detail on the transition process as outlined in Information Sheet 1. The steps discussed below are in the order you will probably undertake them.

Initial meeting

When a person is identified to 'start' the transition process, the Transition Team will make contact and seek to meet with you. At the initial meeting, Sue, Neil or Luke will discuss the transition process with the family, friend or guardian. This first individual meeting is just to talk about the range of options and providers available to you, answer your questions and discuss any concerns you may have. Sue, Neil or Luke will start discussion with you on whether your family member would like to continue living with the same people in the same house or explore a different option. You do not need to make any decision at this meeting.

At the initial meeting they will also ensure you have their contact details, so that you can phone or email them with any new concerns or questions that arise. They will also provide a booklet about the potential new service providers.

Selection of a preferred transition pathway

A few weeks after the meeting you will be contacted by Sue, Neil or Luke to see if you have decided on which transition pathway your person (son/daughter/sibling/friend) would prefer. If you are not yet ready to decide, that is fine. Significant decisions can take time. Your Transition Team member can, if you would like, spend more time with you to talk about the things you are considering.

If you choose for your person to stay with the same housemates and remain in the same house, a meeting will be organised for all family members, carers and/or guardians of the other people living in the same house as your person.

If you choose an individualised option pathway, the team will assist you to start the individual options exploration process.

Housemates choosing a non-government provider together, as a household

If members of a household decide they want to stay together, Sue, Neil or Luke will organise a group meeting of family members, carers and/or guardians of people living in the household to:

- discuss the providers you can choose from
- discuss how you will choose a provider
- discuss what questions to ask providers and how to determine what characteristics of a service provider are important to you
- start the process of shortlisting providers.

Once you, and other members of the house, have shortlisted provider/s Sue, Neil or Luke will arrange for you to meet the provider/s to ask them about the services they provide and to ask any other questions. After meeting the providers you will decide as a group which is your preferred provider.

The Commission will work with your chosen provider in relation to funding and contractual issues. Should the provider be unable to provide the services you require, a further meeting will be held with all families to discuss other options.

Transition planning as a group of housemates

A transition plan will be developed in consultation with you, the provider, and the Commission's accommodation service managers/staff. To ensure a comprehensive handover occurs the transition plan will include (but is not limited to):

- the daily routines, plans, activities and personal preferences of the housemates,
- transferring the lease,
- transferring the ownership of home contents (such as whitegoods, electronics and furniture),
- ensuring important information is passed on such as historical and medical information, banking details etc.,
- ensuring relevant institutions are informed of the change (ie banks, Centrelink etc.), and
- ensuring individuals' personal possessions and finances are accurately recorded at handover.

Choosing an individual option

If you choose an 'individualised' option, the Transition Team will introduce you to an Options Exploration Officer. The Options Exploration Officer will meet you to discuss how you can move forward with your planning, and your person's support needs and preferences. Options Exploration Officers specialise in working with people to develop their individual option and will be able to guide you through the process. They will also discuss interim support while a long term option is being developed, as long term individualised options usually take several months to finalise.

The Options Exploration Officer will assist you to choose your preferred provider/s and meet your preferred provider/s. You will then choose your new service provider. The Options Exploration Officer will develop a transition plan with you, the provider and the Commission's accommodation service managers/staff.

Transition to a new provider

The transition to a new provider will follow your transition plan and may include the new provider staff working alongside the Commission's accommodation staff for a period of time during the handover. Alternatively, nominated Commission staff may be involved in a review process and/or being available for the new staff member to contact for a period of time post the transition.

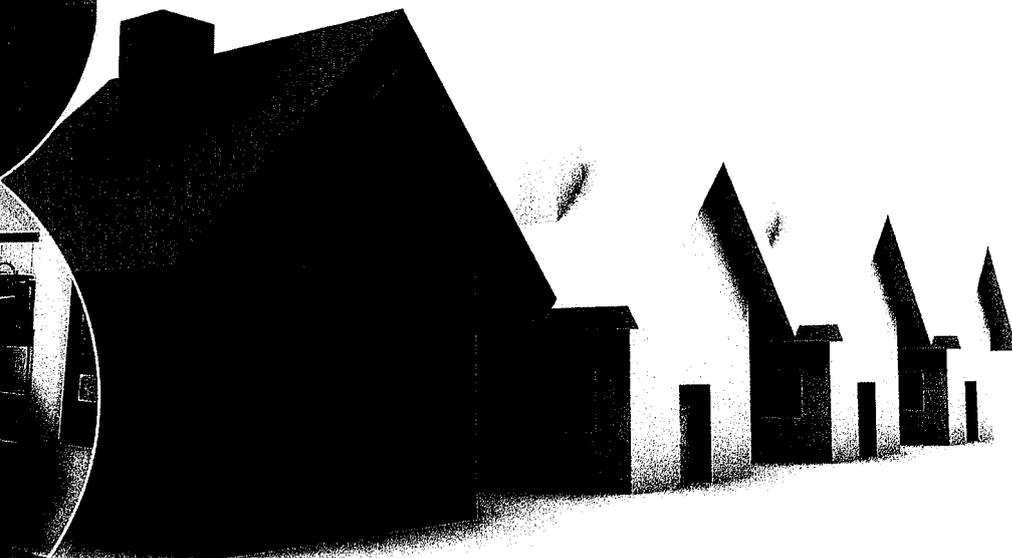
Ongoing Support

Once you have completed the transition process, the Commission will still be involved in the management of your service. The Commission manages its contracts with service providers, undertakes quality evaluations of their services, and has a Consumer Liaison Officer that you can contact if you become concerned about the services. These are ongoing Commission functions that you will always have access to.

Wendy Cox
Executive Director, Accommodation Services
Disability Services Commission

How I want to live and be supported

Information about a range of accommodation supports available
to people with disability support funding in Western Australia



July 2014