

Steps for developing a disability action plan

Introduction

This disability action plan (DAP) checklist and template can be used as a guide when developing a DAP for your organisation. Follow the checklist to gather information and formulate a plan of action. Then use this information to populate the template on pages 4-7 or use your own template. All Victorian public health services and hospitals must have a draft DAP in place by 30 June 2019.

1. Undertake background research

Inform yourself about what you need to develop a DAP for your organisation.

- Think about what your DAP will look like.
 - Consider your organisational strategy and priorities. How will this plan fit in with those? What other accessibility plans are you, or will you, be drafting? How do they all contribute to your organisational priorities?
 - Consider the type of facilities that will be covered under this DAP e.g.. rural hospital with multiple campuses, large metropolitan hospital, or a combination of different sized facilities. The number, size and type of facilities that your DAP will cover will dictate the level of complexity and detail your DAP will have.
 - Study a number of DAP examples to gather ideas on structure or content. **Appendix A** contains links to example DAP's or excerpts.
- Understand your obligations. Think about how these obligations apply to access at your service. Your legislative obligations fall under:
 - **Disability Act 2006.** Your obligations under this act relate to providing services which give people with a disability the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community. Those rights include:
 - respect for their human worth and dignity as individuals with control over their own lives
 - active participation in decisions that affect their lives, as well as information and support where necessary, to enable this to occur
 - information access and communication that is appropriate to their communication and cultural needs
 - services that support their quality of life.
 - **Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.** Your obligations under this legislation cover the provision of quality access for everyone with a focus on human rights. They require public authorities such as hospitals to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when developing policies, delivering services and making decisions.
 - **Disability Discrimination Act 1992.** Under this legislation, your obligations relate to providing people with a disability to open and

available access to areas of your facility that can be accessed by other members of the community. *‘They should expect to enter and make use of places used by the public if people without a disability can do so’* (Disability Discrimination Act 1992). The definition of ‘Area’ in this case also includes footpaths, walkways, entrances, facilities, and information. Barriers to access can be physical, attitudinal, and communicative. This legislation also covers equal access to employment, including the provision of reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with a disability can access employment opportunities at the same level as everyone else.

- Remember to also consider your obligations as they relate to funding agreements and the Statement of Priorities.
- Study available resources such as *aDAPting to Disability: A guide to disability action plans in Victoria*, produced by the Office for Disability.

2. Allocate responsibilities

The *aDAPting to disability guide* recommends that one representative is appointed from each business unit to drive the DAP activity in that unit. These representatives can then form a DAP action team or sub-committee and meet regularly to inform, as well as drive, the progress of the project. Appoint an executive sponsor to drive the project top down. This would usually be a director or manager who oversees service quality.

3. Consultation

Establish an external reference or advisory group through which to gain input. The group could be made up of people with a disability, families, carers, disability user group representatives and staff who advocate for people with a disability. Consult with other disability groups and advocacy organisations to seek specific feedback on any new policy or proposal.

4. Review current practices

Conduct a gap analysis to evaluate the accessibility measures you currently have in place and how they might align with your DAP.

- Questions to ask include:
 - What have we got in place that will assist us to achieve our vision?
 - What do we need to have in place that will assist us to achieve our aim?
- Evaluate services and facilities to ensure they are meeting the needs of people with a disability who are accessing your services. You may want to test your services with your consultative group.
- Review communication practices, not only how you communicate with people with a disability but also how your communications influence community perceptions of people with a disability.

- Assess employment practices:
 - Are you providing employment and recruitment support to increase the workforce participation of people with a disability?
 - What other support or education are you providing e.g. support services and disability awareness training to staff?

Evaluate the feedback you have received from the consultative process, the gap analysis and your organisational needs. What key areas stand out? For example, **holistic health care, physical access** and **workforce participation** for people with a disability are three areas that the VHA has identified as key. The feedback you have received may be different to this or you may have organisational priorities that you need to consider that influence this. The areas that are relevant for your organisation will become your priority areas of focus.

5. Draft the disability action plan

Draft the DAP using the DAP template on pages 4-7, or use your own template.

6. Evaluate, monitor and review

Take a continuous approach to evaluating the DAP. Some ways to do this include:

- Utilise formal and informal methods of feedback to measure the effectiveness of the DAP in reducing barriers for people with a disability.
- Survey health care users after implementing changes, to identify where change is having an impact.
- Include anecdotal and observational data supplied by staff and backed by your disability advisory group or disability organisations as part of your evaluations
- Report on progress with a regular DAP update to your executive and board.

7. Communication plan

Communicate the progress of the DAP to people working in your organisation and to your community by:

- providing updates and progress reports from your advisory group through communication channels such as newsletters and intranet
- ensuring each business unit receives a copy of the disability action plan
- noting achievements and progress in annual report
- including information about the DAP as part of staff induction.

DAP Template

1. Table of contents

Include a summary of the key areas within the document.

2. Executive summary

The Executive summary should provide a short and concise overview of the plan, how it relates to your organisation, key findings and a broad summary of actions. It should capture the reader's attention.

3. Introduction and summary of key legislative references

Provide context into the development or history of the DAP in your organisation and how it links with organisational strategy. You may like to focus on how it supports equal access to your services for people in your community and how it promotes inclusive service provision and employment.

- Is this the organisation's first DAP?
- What do you want it to achieve for your organisation?
- What are you changing in your organisation as part of the DAP implementation, and why?
- What are the benefits to your organisation and to the general community of implementing the DAP?

Provide a short summary of how you have gone about this i.e. consultation, gap analysis of activities and setting goals from consultation feedback. You may want to briefly outline the key areas of the legislation that support the development of your DAP and accessible health services. For example:

'This DAP supports the principles of the Disability Act 2006 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 in supporting access to health services and health services employment equally for people with a disability, as those without a disability.'

4. Vision statement

Develop a high-level impact statement of what access means for your organisation.

e.g. An inclusive, safe and accessible health service for everyone.

Reinforce your vision with a more detailed aim.

e.g. The aim of this disability action plan is to ensure that we provide an inclusive, safe and accessible health service and workplace for our community.

5. Objectives

Outline the key objectives that you hope to achieve with this plan. For example:

- Over the next four years we will reduce barriers for people with a disability to employment in the health services by x percent. This will be achieved through the provision of accessible application and employment conditions.
- Over the next four years, we will improve understanding of the needs of people with a disability using our health service. This will be achieved through staff training and public education initiatives.

6. Accessibility planning

If your health service has more than one type of accessibility plan, summarise these in a way that illustrates how they work together to achieve your strategic vision. A good way to do this is in a Venn diagram with your vision at the centre, and each of the accessibility plans as overlapping circles around this, or you can just summarise them all in a short paragraph or dot points.

7. Governance structure

Summarise your DAP project governance structure in a diagram or paragraph. This includes your project sponsor, steering group, project officers' sub-committee. Outline the roles each plays.

8. Set goals and actions

Map out your plan of action

1. Identify goals:
 - Create short, medium and long term goals
 - Make them specific, realistic, time-bound and measureable, ensure they are within budget
 - Group them according to organisational area of responsibility i.e. into departments, business units or work areas.
2. Determine actions:
 - Identify actions against strategy for each goal e.g.

Strategic priority:

Provide reliable, safe and person centred care

Goal:

All clients with complex access needs and their families/carers are supported to formally communicate specific health and support needs to clinical and service staff.

- Clearly specify who is responsible for the action being carried out.

3. Performance indicators

- Set performance indicators that are used to monitor DAP implementation, and test them regularly. Ensure they are:
 - well defined and quantifiable
 - communicated throughout your organisation and department
 - describe how the actions will be measured.

There are a number of ways of mapping out your goals and actions. The most straightforward is to create one table for each of the key areas that your health service identified when reviewing current practices i.e. one table for holistic care, one for physical access, and one for workforce participation. Again, these areas will depend on your organisational focus and findings. You may like to create detailed working tables that include goals, actions, timeframe, budget, performance measure (or indicator) and responsibilities. These can be working documents to guide your internal work. You may wish to create an abbreviated version for publication. This abbreviated version could outline goals, actions and performance indicators (or measures). Regardless of how tables are structured, each goal will most likely have more than one action and performance indicator (see Appendix B).

Acknowledgement

This template and checklist were compiled with reference to:

- Office of Disability, aDAPting to Disability: A guide to disability action plans in Victoria
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Act 2006
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.
- Austin Health, Disability action plan 2015-2020
- Bendigo Health, Bendigo Health Diversity Plan 2016-2019
- St Vincent's Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Disability Action Plan 2012-2017



Appendix A:

Disability action plan examples

Victorian Government DAP's

1. [Every Opportunity – Victorian economic participation plan for PWD 2018-2020.](#)
2. [State Disability Plan 2017-2020](#)

Health care DAP's

1. Eastern Health [Diversity & Inclusion Framework](#)

Appendix B: Example working table

Holistic care

Outcome: Quality care acknowledges and supports the individual care needs of people with a disability, including communication method, decision making capability, or allocated advocates.

Goal	Actions	Due Date	Budget	Performance measure	Responsibility
All clients with complex access needs and their families/carers can formally communicate specific health and support needs to clinical and service staff through a health record.	Staff, client and carers collaborate to create and utilise a record of health care needs, including advocacy responsibilities, communication or privacy needs on client's first contact with health service.	2020	Ongoing staff costs	Number of clients with complex access needs who have a health record which outlines care preferences, legal responsibilities, communication and other access needs.	Client intake & registration Nursing & medical staff Client, family and carers
	Development of a health care plan template to be used to inform care provision of complex clients	Aug 2019	\$5K	Number of health care plans which have been created, tested, reviewed and is now operational.	Client intake & registration Client, family & carers.
	Development of policy and procedures to guide the provision of health care plans for clients with complex needs.	July 2019	\$2K	Health record policy and procedures have been completed and communicated to relevant staff.	Client intake & registration

However, for publication, the table may look more like this:

Holistic care

Outcome: Quality care acknowledges and supports the individual care needs of people with a disability, including communication method, decision making capability, or allocated advocates.

Goal	Actions	Timeframe	Performance Indicators
All clients with complex access needs and their families/carers can formally communicate specific health and support needs to clinical and service staff through a health record.	Staff, client and carers collaborate to create and utilise a record of health care needs, including advocacy responsibilities, communication or privacy needs on client's first contact with health service.	Long term	Clients with complex access needs have a record which outlines care preferences, legal responsibilities, communication and other access needs.
	Development of a health care plan template to be used to inform care provision of complex clients	Medium term	Health care plan has been created, tested, reviewed and is now operational.
	Development of policy and procedures to guide the provision of health care plans for clients with complex needs.	Short term	Health record policy and procedures have been completed and communicated to relevant staff.



Future resources and support

The VHA will soon release more tools and resources to support members in developing their disability action plans. These tools and resources will be announced through the VHA bulletins, website, and other announcements.

About the VHA

The VHA supports the health sector by responding to system reform, shaping policy and advocating on key issues to strengthen the Victorian health system.

Further information

For further information, contact:

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