

Your Life Your Choice

Self-Directed Support Framework

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1. Introduction

The Queensland Government is committed to strengthening front-line disability services. Self-Directed Support is a key element of this commitment. This framework for Self-Directed Support will enable people with a disability, their families and support networks, service providers and the wider community to design, develop and grow their personalised model of Self-Directed Support in preparation for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

1.1. Definition

Self-Directed support is an approach which enables people with a disability and/or their family to have choice and control over their disability supports and services to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. By using funding and other resources to plan, purchase and select supports and services that suit individualised needs, people with a disability and/or their families become active participants in the design and delivery of their disability support.

1.2. Vision

The vision is to enable people with disabilities, their families and support networks to have more choice and control in relation to their disability services and consequently their lives.

1.3. Underlying principles of Self-Directed Support

Self-Directed Support adopts the following principles¹. People with disabilities:

- have the same human rights to be respected and treated with dignity as any other member of society
- have the right to individual autonomy, independence and the freedom to make their own choices about their lives
- cannot be discriminated against due to their ability, culture, age, gender or geography
- have the right to have valued roles in the community and be full, effective and active participants within their communities
- are accepted as part of human diversity and humanity
- have access to the same opportunities as other members of society
- have access to information in easily understood formats
- have the right to realise their individual, skills, capabilities and development within their lives.

1.4. Terminology

Person/people

The word “person” throughout this document will refer to an adult or child with a disability.

Family/families

The use of the word “family” throughout this document will refer to the family members, unpaid carers and informal networks of an adult or child with a disability.

¹ Adapted from the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Host provider

Host provider refers to a non government service provider that has been approved to deliver services under the Queensland *Disability Services Act 2006*. The provider is also endorsed by Disability and Community Care Services to support people with a disability and their family with their funding as a recognised Self-Directed Support service provider.

Disability services/disability supports

Disability services and support refer to funded supports that are specific to the nature and impact of the disability on the person. These may include:

- Aids and appliances
- Home and vehicle modifications
- Personal care
- Community access: support to participate and belong in the community
- Respite (in home, centre based, community settings, host family and recreational / holiday program)
- Additional cost of living associated with having a disability
- Specialist accommodation support encompassing support for people to carry out essential activities of daily living
- Domestic assistance
- Transport assistance
- Mobility and orientation training
- Supported employment services or transition to work programs that prepare people for paid and unpaid work
- Therapies such as occupational, speech and physiotherapy, counselling and specialist behaviour support for the person
- Local Area Coordination (case coordination and brokerage costs)
- Crisis and Emergency support
- Guide dogs and assistance dogs (including reasonable costs associated with assessment, training and veterinary costs)
- Whole of life personal planning.

2. Framework for Self-Directed Support

The following elements underpin the framework for Self-Directed Support in Queensland⁽²⁾:

1. Good Planning
2. Working together in co-creation and collaboration
3. Promoting personal choice and control
4. Supporting changes in capacity
5. Having flexibility
6. Being accountable
7. Encouraging peer support
8. Purchasing reasonable and necessary support
9. Supporting community connections
10. Ensuring safeguards

2.1. Good Planning

Good planning is a key aspect for a person and/or family to successfully self direct their support. Good planning, including succession planning with family and supporters, can happen in many ways, from conversations with others to formal processes with distinct goals. While planning in Self-Directed Support will look different for each person and/or family, the end product is an agreed document (between a person, their family and Host provider) that can be used to guide Self-Directed support.

Planning for Self-Directed support should be related to a person's disability needs, sustainable and focus on positive outcomes. Outcomes may include (but not limited to):

- Moving to or continuing in independent living
- Continuing to live in a family environment
- Helping to make the support provided by family and carers more sustainable
- Having better health and wellbeing
- Improving skills and capabilities
- Having more opportunities to connect and participate in the local community
- Participating in further learning and development opportunities
- Improving employment prospects

People and/or families are encouraged to do your own planning. If people don't feel they have the skill, experience or confidence to do planning themselves, they should connect with others to provide them with support. It is important that people and/or families are always in control of the planning and it is unique for their circumstances.

² Collation of information collected at the Queensland Self-Directed Support Co-Production Meetings

2.2. Working together

Engaging with others for informal support is something we all do. Co-creation and collaboration is about working together, acting jointly and cooperating with others to achieve positive outcomes for a person and/or family. Bringing together a range of different people with different views, skills and experiences helps build a richer vision and plan for what a good life for a person and/or family could look like.

People and/or families are encouraged to work in partnership with others, for both formal and informal supports (including experienced providers) to help shape the way supports and services are delivered to best meet their needs.

2.3. Promoting personal choice and control

The freedom to make decisions about supports and services that impact on our lives is a fundamental right that everyone should enjoy. The outcomes of personal decision, both good and bad, help us to grow as citizens. Being involved in decision making is a powerful thing as it can help create a picture what a good life should be. Through Self Directing Support, a person and/or family will have better choice of the types of supports they receive and greater control over who and how this support is provided.

People and/or families are encouraged to be as independent as possible and have as much choice and control over their disability supports as they are comfortable with. If a person and/or family need help with decision making, they can contact an experienced person or provider to assist with their decisions.

2.4. Supporting changes in capacity

Capacity is a word often associated with decision making. Capacity means that the person can understand the choices available to them, the consequences of these choices (for both themselves and others) and is able to communicate the decision to others. A key component of self direction is to recognise that a person and/or family enjoys the maximum possible participation in decisions about the important things in their lives. A person and/or family are the active participants in their supports.

It is also recognised that capacity can change over time. There is an presumption that if a person and/or family want to self direct their support, they can. Likewise, there is also an assumption that capacity and/or a willingness to self direct may vary over time depending on factors occurring in a persons life.

People and/or families are encouraged to consider what model of Self-Directed Support would best suit them. How much responsibility does the person and/or family want over their support? It is important that they have contingencies in place when planning their support.

2.5. Having flexibility

Flexibility is about having the ability to change or react with minimal time and effort. Self-Directed Support is about having the ability to change the way funds and resources are used to support the person and/or family in such a way that is timely, flexible and creative.

People and/or families are encouraged to think “out-side the box” when considering what their disability support should look like. Self-Directed Support is an opportunity for people and/or families to change the way they use their funded resources in a timely, flexible and creative way.

2.6. Being accountable

Entering into a Self-Directed Support arrangement involves responsibilities. Being accountable for autonomy and funding are part of these responsibilities. Self-Directed Support is about people and/or families taking responsibility for the decisions they make about the supports they require and the funding that comes with it. All decisions need to be attributed to their plan and agreed to by both the person and/or family and the Host Provider (or the department for YLYC direct payments). It is important that the funds are used to support the intended outcomes of the person’s plan and a process to review this if they are not. Everyone who engages in Self-Directed Support is required to, or be involved in:

- checking expenditure
- accounting for actual supports and services purchased
- providing an acquittal for actual service provision and expenditure

Ultimately, all funding provided under the *Disability Service Act 2006* can only be used on disability service.

People and/or families will be responsible for meeting their disability support needs within the available funding being Self-Directed. People and/or families will need to have a process in place for allocating, purchasing and reporting funds against their plan. With support from the right people, self direction is not difficult. It may appear overwhelming, but in reality, once the processes are in place, they are not onerous.

2.7. Encouraging peer support

The intent of peer support is to provide an opportunity for a person and/or family to connect and share information with others and build capacity of the person and/or family to self direct their support. Peer support is on a voluntary basis. People are often more comfortable with natural conversations that happen with others that are not formally recorded. They may feel more comfortable discussing issues faced and possible solutions with their friends and colleagues rather than their formal service networks. Peer support in Self-Directed Support should be solution focused, readily available and informal.

Does the person and/or family know anyone else who self directs their support? Think about the people you can talk to help you think “outside-the box” when planning, coordinating and purchasing your disability services.

2.8. Purchasing reasonable and necessary support

The Productivity Commissions report on Disability Care and Support looks at the concept of reasonable and necessary supports. Purchased supports and services through Self-Directed Support are in response to the best interest of the person with a disability. They should promote positive outcomes as outlined in the person’s plan and considered a proper use of public resources as funding is provided under the provisions of the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

Reasonable and necessary supports consider³:

- the benefit to the person
- the appropriateness of the supports
- the appropriateness of providers
- cost effectiveness.

Reasonable and necessary supports should **not** include:

- day-to-day living expenses
- supports or services that can be accessed through other schemes or programs
- items or activities that are illegal, or detrimental to health (cigarettes) or that place the person or others at risk of harm.

People and/or families will need to outline the rationale for purchases being reasonable and necessary disability support. All supports purchased should be directly related to the person's disability support needs. Good planning should clearly outline what the person and/or family are going to purchase and the reasoning behind it.

2.9. Supporting community connections

Belonging and participating in a community is being fully involved with others in the local area or community of choice. Each person and/or family has opportunities to meet others, to share common interests, to feel good about oneself and to feel part of a group. Community connections lead to community participation and the choice to be included and welcomed into community. Self-Directed Support should build on broader community supports and mainstream services.

People and/or families are encouraged to use self direction as an opportunity to further connect with their local community and lead an active life in the community of their choice.

2.10. Ensuring safeguards

Safeguarding is about reducing a person's vulnerabilities and providing good quality services that are free from risk and harm. A person and/or family should have natural supports and relationships, access to peers and information to make the best decisions about the quality and quantity of disability support they want.

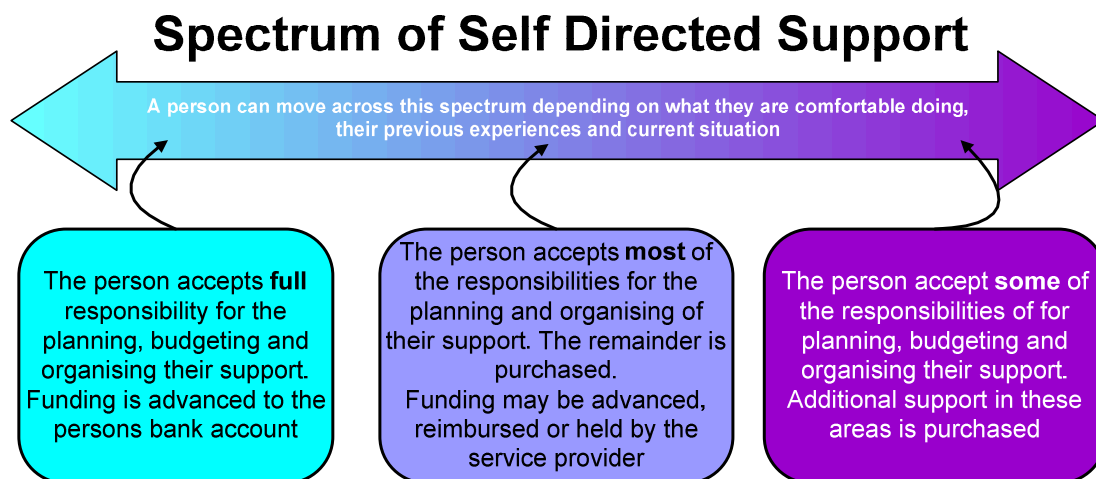
People and/or families are encouraged to use the support networks around them to ensure safeguards are in place to reduce potential vulnerabilities. Using good planning process, regular reviews and support from peers/others is recommended for ensuring quality of service, duty of care and dignity of risk are considered when support is purchased.

³ From Productivity Commissions Report on Disability Care and Support (Chapter 5)

3. Self-Directed Support

3.1. What does Self-Directed Support look like?

Self-Directed Support is not a program; rather it is a way of service delivery for Queenslanders with disabilities and/or their families. Self-Directed Support in Queensland is developmental in nature; it will look different for each person and/or family and will change as circumstances change and confidence in self direction grows. Selected “Host” providers will develop in conjunction with a person and/or family, a model of Self-Directed Support that is flexible and responsive to each person’s preference.



3.2. Who can self direct their support?

Most people and/or families have capacity to self direct their support; however some may need some initial support, peer support and assistance. It is assumed that if a person and/or family want to self direct their support, and they receive the right support to do this, they can.

The criteria for Self-Directed Support includes:

- The person and/or family can self direct their supports to a level they are comfortable with (they can use some of their funding to purchase coordination support if required)
- The person and/or family understand the skills and tasks required to self direct their support, and
- The person is eligible for disability services under the Disability Services Eligibility policy

Self-Directed support is initially, for people and/or families who have:

- ongoing (recurrent) funding
- individualised funding, and
- support needs that are considered stable

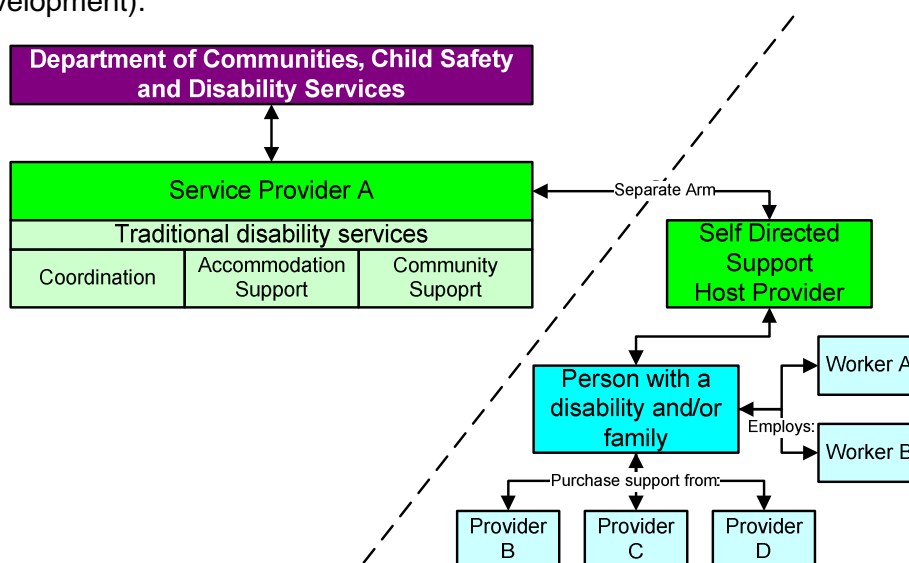
Once a person and/or family decide that they wish to self direct their support, they can request a transfer to a Host Provider. Financial transfers can only occur at the end of a quarter, however, there is an expectation that Host Providers may be brokered in the interim.

3.3. Who can provide Self-Directed Support?

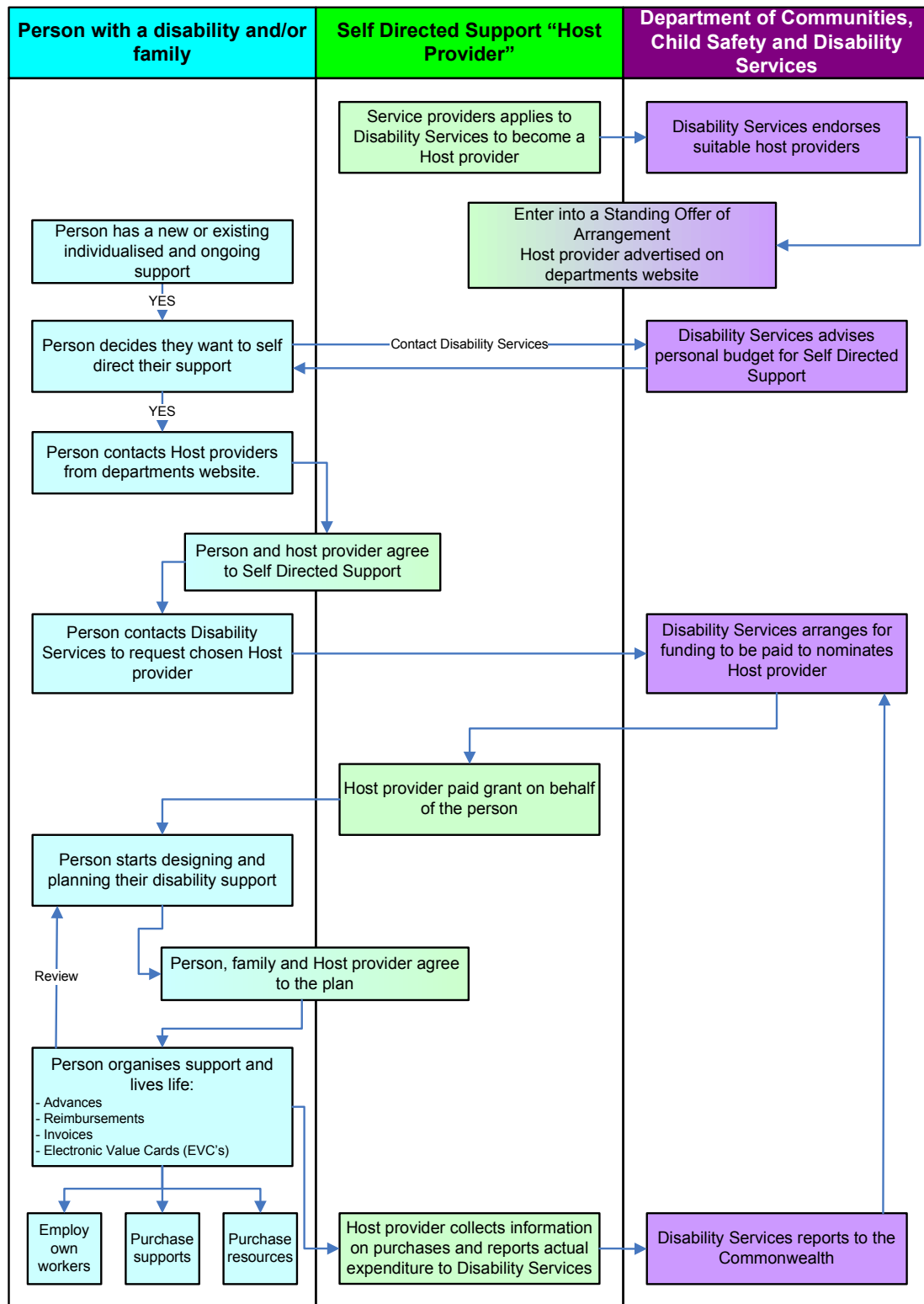
All funding provided under the *Disability Services Act 2006* must go through an approved provider or a person approved to receive funds through direct payments. An approved provider is required to act as an intermediary for people and/or families who want to self direct their support. These organisations are called “Host Providers”.

In order for a provider to become a Host Provider, they need to demonstrate to the department that they:

- can provide a service in line with the principles of Self-Directed Support
- are endorsed by the department to provide a flexible model of support in line with the framework of Self-Directed Support including planning, purchasing and costs of services
- can be directed by a person and/or family (or support this process) with planning, organising and agreeing to their own unique model of Self-Directed Support
- have a separate arm that operates the Self-Directed Support model. This is a reporting structure that sits outside other program areas of service delivery of the organisation for transparency and accountability of Self-Directed Support (see diagram below)
- have experience in facilitating access to services utilising a brokerage model
- can adapt their model to provide as much or as little support and development as required for a person and/or family electing to self direct their support
- have developed a responsive model of Self-Directed Support based on feedback from people and/or families
- have an established fee structure available for people and/or families to Self-Directed their support
- have a clear mechanism to address issues of conflict of interest
- are approved service providers under the *Disability Services Act 2006*
- are approved under service type 2.06 (Case management, local coordination and development).



3.4. Pathways for Self-Directed support through a Host Provider



* Contact Disability Services if you are wishing to self direct through direct payments

3.5. Change of circumstances

People and/or families who are self directing their support are considered to be in or to have stable support arrangements. There is acceptance that changing dynamics are part of everyone's, lives, however, should the persons and/or family's

circumstance significantly change, then they can contact the local Service Centre and request a review of specialist disability services.

If the person is assessed as requiring additional supports, this will be considered within the existing processes and resources for the department.

3.6. Review of Self-Directed Support

Review of plans

It is good practice for plans to be regularly reviewed by the person and/or their family. This is the point where the person and/or family stop and take note of where things stand. This is not just about how much money has been spent, but what changes have occurred in the person's life (outcomes). As with planning, reviews should incorporate key people in the persons and/or families lives.

It is recommended that as a minimum, plans are reviewed annually.

Review of Host Provider

It is important for Host Providers to maintain the integrity of Self-Directed Support. Once a Host Provider has received initial endorsement by the department they can "host" Self-Directed Support as outlined in their application. Should a Host Provider wish to significantly change their model of Self-Directed Support (eg, fee structure, employing own workers, etc.), they will need to re-apply to the department for endorsement of the new model.

It is recommended that Host Providers review their policies, procedures and practices around Self-Directed Support annually.

Review of services

As per the departments *Review Policy* a person who has been receiving specialist disability services on an ongoing basis will have their supports reviewed approximately three years from commencement of specialist disability services.

3.7. Financial responsibility

The intention of funding is to support the principles and framework of Self-Directed Support and to be flexible and responsive in meeting the changing needs of people and/or families. It must also remain within the financial framework of the Queensland Government and the objects of the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

The core financial responsibilities involved in the delivery of Self-Directed support are embodied in the following policy and legislation:

- *Disability Services Act 2006*
- *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard*
- *Public Service Ethics Act 1994*

Host Providers will still need to fulfil their requirements as outlined in the Service Agreement with the department.

4. Related Legislation and Policies

4.1. Disability Services Act 2006

These same rights and principles identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are detailed in the human rights principles and service provision principles listed in the Queensland Disability Services Act 2006.

The Queensland Disability Services Act was also finalised in 2006. This Act guides the provision of services and funding for people with disabilities in Queensland. It is important for people working in the disability sector to be aware of this Act as it reflects current understandings of people with disability and gives clear directions for services. Key impacts of the legislation include:

- the implementation of the Disability Sector Quality System
- the introduction of criminal history screening
- recognition of the Complaints Management System
- the introduction of new requirements regarding compensation
- the requirement for government agencies to develop a disability service plan; and
- the creation of Ministerial Advisory Committees.

The Act also provides the legislative base for funding disability services, that being, funding approved under the Act can only be used for the purposes of providing disability services. It also provides a definition of disability and is the basis for the Eligibility Policy for disability services.

4.2. Other legislation

- Child Protection Act 1999
- Public Service Ethics Act 1994
- Guardianship and Administration Act 2000
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991.
- Mental Health Act 2000
- Information Privacy Act 2009

4.3. Policies

Accessing to services provided and funded by Disability and Community Care Services

The process to access specialist disability services is guided by policies to ensure it is consistent, transparent and responsive to people who are seeking supports. The policies cover a person's pathway through contact, assessment, prioritisation and linking to services.

- Contact
- Intake
- Eligibility
- Needs Assessment
- Prioritisation
- Planning, Offering and Linking to Services

- Review
- Review of Decisions
- Time Limited Response (TLR)

The suite of policies can be found at:

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/support-and-services/accessing-support-and-services/policies>

Disability Sector Quality System

All specialist disability services delivered or recurrently funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services work through a cycle towards independent certification through the Disability Sector Quality System as appropriate to their service type.

Information can be found at:

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/key-projects/disability-sector-quality-system>

5. Feedback

We welcome any feedback on *Your Life Your Choice: Self-Directed Support Framework*. Please provide feedback to:

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