



# **Local Coordination framework**

**Family, friends, community – a good life**

# 1. Local Coordinators

Local Coordinators (Coordinators) assist people with disability to plan, organise and access supports and services which enhance their participation in and contribution to their local community.

In addition, Coordinators work with family members and others involved in supporting people with disability so that they are strengthened and supported in their caring role.

Coordinators actively support positive partnerships between people with disability, families and carers, local organisations and the broader community to build a more inclusive community.

Local Coordinators are available to people with disability that are eligible for Commission provided and funded services and live in one of the WA NDIS trial locations.

## 2. Local Coordination framework

### 2.1 Vision

People with disability, their families and carers will be able to exercise genuine choice and control over the supports and services they need to live a good life in their local community.

### 2.2 Principles

- As citizens, people with disability have the same rights and responsibilities as all other people to participate in and contribute to the life of the community.
- People with disability, their families and carers are in the best position to determine their own needs and goals, and to plan for the future.
- Families, friends and personal networks are the foundations of a rich and valued life in the community.
- People with disability, their families and carers have natural authority and are best placed to be their most powerful and enduring leaders, decision-makers and advocates.
- Access to timely and accurate information enables people to make appropriate decisions and to gain more control over their lives.
- Communities are enriched by the inclusion and participation of people with disability, and these communities are the most important way of providing friendship, support and a meaningful life to people with disability and their families and carers.
- The lives of people with disability, their families and carers are enhanced when they can determine their preferred supports and services and control the required resources, to the extent that they desire.

- Services provided by government and community agencies complement and support the primary role of families, carers and communities in achieving a good life for people with disability.
- Partnerships between individuals, families and carers, communities, governments, service providers and the business sector are vital in meeting the needs of people with disability.
- People with disability have a life-long capacity for learning, development and contribution.

## 2.3 Objectives

Local Coordination has three key objectives for people with disability, their families and carers:

- 1) **Individualised, Self Directed Supports and Services (SDSS):** Increased choice and control for people with disability, their families and carers over their supports and services to ensure their identified needs are met.
- 2) **Good Life Planning:** Increased engagement in planning with people with disability, their families and carers with a focus on a good life rather than funding.
- 3) **Stronger connections with community and generic services:** Enhanced community belonging for people with disabilities in their local area.

## 2.4 Outcomes

Local Coordination seeks to achieve outcomes by changing the process by which planning, service provision and funding occurs. These improved processes are expected to lead to the following outcomes:

- 1) People with disability, their families and carers will have an enhanced sense of control over their lives
- 2) People with disability, their families and carers will be satisfied with the range and quality of services they receive
- 3) Individual plans are developed and achieved
- 4) Individual outcomes are achieved in the most cost effective way possible and lead to the achievement of the Commission's overarching performance higher level outcomes.

## 3. Local Coordination approach

People with disability and their families throughout the State have valued the approach of Local Coordination since 1988. This approach is characterised by the following qualities:

### **3.1 Values and attitudes**

- committed to the Commission vision and based on clear principles
- not 'values-free'
- committed to community
- committed to valued social roles for people with disabilities
- recognises diversity and individuality.

### **3.2 Relationships**

- listens / actively listens / ability to listen
- not an 'authority', not always having an answer
- non-judgemental; non-discriminatory
- builds trusting relationships and shared partnerships
- humility and willingness to learn
- approachable, positive, passionate, open, friendly and respectful
- someone to talk to but not 'best friend'
- respectful of confidentiality
- ability to adapt their relationships to suit different families
- 'in tune' with families; ability to build rapport
- committed to long-term relationships.

### **3.3 Effectiveness qualities**

- creative and flexible
- well-informed, knowledgeable and has an understanding of the 'big picture'
- a 'can do' approach
- focuses on ability rather than deficits
- provides accurate and timely information
- ability to explore goals and dreams
- ability to network and link people together
- ability to assist people to plan for a good life
- supports the empowerment of families and individuals
- strong understanding and skills in advocacy
- stable, personal, consistent
- strong local connections
- meets with people in their homes and community
- being 'the bridge'/'the link'
- work from 'where people are at'.

## **4. Local Coordinator role**

Local Coordinators provide ongoing support to people with disability, their families and carers to help them access information, plan for the future, participate in their community and navigate the disability support system. Local Coordinator role includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Builds and maintains effective working relationships with individuals, families/carers and communities in the local area.
2. Provides accurate and timely information. Assists individuals, families/carers and communities to access information through a variety of means.
3. Engages with individuals and families/carers to identify their goals, strengths and needs, and plan for the future.
4. Supports individuals, families and carers to gain the skills, confidence and expertise required to plan for the future.
5. Facilitates and supports the development, maintenance and review of plans.
6. Supports individuals and families/carers to utilise personal and local community networks to develop practical solutions to meet their goals and needs.
7. Assists individuals and families/carers to access the supports and services they need to pursue their identified goals and needs, including access to funding as appropriate.

### **4.1 Examples to illustrate seven aspects of the Local Coordinator role**

The following examples of typical, every-day activities have been developed to illustrate some of the important aspects of the Coordinator role. They are examples of how the Coordinator can engage with and support people with disability, families, carers and their communities. They are snapshots or insights into the work of the Coordinator without being a prescriptive list of activities that will apply in all situations. It should be noted that these examples are not an exhaustive list of all Coordinator activity.

#### **1. Builds and maintains effective working relationships with individuals, families and their communities in a local area.**

- The Coordinator regularly visits a family home to discuss issues of importance to the person with disability and their family/carers.
- The Coordinator spends time at the local community centre meeting with local people and groups to facilitate the inclusion of a young man with disability into a youth forum to be held in the local community.

- The Coordinator provides the Disability Services Commission with information about trends and issues of importance for people with disability living in their local area.

**2. Provides accurate and timely information. Assists individuals, families/carers and communities to access information through a variety of means.**

- The Coordinator arranges for an experienced interpreter to explain guardianship issues to the elders of a remote Aboriginal community assisting a family and the elders to make decisions about a guardianship application for a young man with a cognitive impairment.
- Following a family's move to an area, contact is made with a Coordinator. Over a period of time the Coordinator links the family to various means of accessing information such as websites, mailing addresses, and the local parent network.
- During the first few meetings with the parents of a child with disability, the Coordinator provides information about Commission programs and services as well as information about other relevant supports and services available in the local area.

**3. Engages with individuals and families/carers to identify their goals, strengths and needs, and plan for the future.**

- The Coordinator is contacted by the family that has recently moved to the area. Their 14 year old son is very keen on soccer, is a talented mathematician and also has Autism. The Coordinator assists the family to explore the educational and recreational opportunities available in the local area that will allow the young man to develop his skills and networks. Through the Coordinator's local connections the young man is given the opportunity to assist the local soccer club with post-game statistical analysis each weekend.
- A Coordinator has been actively involved in a local youth coordinating committee and has established some good connections with local churches. The Coordinator brings together a young woman with a disability who is a talented guitarist, a youth worker and a local church member to establish an inclusive music workshop program. The group apply for and are granted funding which enables the young woman to be employed to teach guitar to other young people in the group.
- A child with multiple disabilities travels from a small country town to Perth on a regular basis to attend specialist medical appointments. The child's parents have had difficulty in getting the medical facilities to co-ordinate appointments to minimise the time spent in Perth. The Coordinator successfully advocates on behalf of the family to ensure that future visits are planned and coordinated.

#### **4. Supports individuals, families and carers to gain the skills, confidence and expertise required to plan for the future.**

- A Coordinator links the parents of a man with a severe intellectual disability living in a country town with a small voluntary organisation that provides practical assistance in the use of planning techniques. This assists the family to plan effectively to meet the goals and needs of the man in the future.
- A Coordinator is a member of the local government access committee and has highlighted a range of issues that restrict the mobility and community participation of people with disability. He has included a young woman with a physical disability who is keen to contribute and take on a leadership role in the local community. In these meetings and will soon vacate the position to be replaced by her.
- The Coordinator assists a person with a physical disability who is having problems gaining required services from a local home and community care agency. The Coordinator provides information about the particular agency, including services available and the eligibility criteria, and assists the person to explore how best to approach the agency. The Coordinator then attends the meetings alongside the person and offers assistance where necessary.

#### **5. Facilitates and supports the development, maintenance and review of plans.**

- A young man with a disability talks about one day living in his own home. The young man, his parents and the Coordinator develop a list of people to invite to an informal planning discussion at the family home over a barbeque. They will be asked to identify opportunities in the local area that will strengthen the young man's networks and to suggest short and long-term strategies which will assist the young man to develop the skills he will need to live independently.
- The Coordinator assists a parent to plan for the transition of their young daughter into the school system. Through a series of home visits over six months and one important visit to the local school the Coordinator assists with the preparation of an action plan to deal with all the issues associated with starting school. Two weeks into the new term the Coordinator and parent touch base to talk about how it is working out and then meet to review the plan after a further three months. Some changes are made to the supports around after school activities and a new plan for the next 12 months is developed.
- The parents of a 57 year old man who has worked five days a week in a local business for many years request assistance from the Coordinator. The man is wishing to reduce his work commitments but his elderly parents are struggling to cope with him being at home more. The Coordinator works with the man and his family to develop a plan that will support him to explore activities and opportunities in the local community that he may wish to pursue as he moves towards retirement. The Coordinator also engages in conversations with the family about the options they have in mind for the man when his parents are no longer able to care for him.

## **6. Supports individuals and families/carers to utilise personal and local community networks to develop practical solutions to meet their goals and needs.**

- The Coordinator uses her knowledge of the local community to link the parent of a child with high support needs with another family in the local area. Through this connection arrangements are made for the child with the disability to be taken to school each day in the family vehicle rather than having to use specialised transport which has proven to be problematic.
- A mature woman with an intellectual disability who lives on her own has recently moved into the area and become socially isolated. The Coordinator gets to know her and finds out she is interested in crafts and attending church. Consequently, the Coordinator introduces her to a local church and craft group and she makes new friends who visit her and are able to provide her with support when needed. She also finds a valuable role in the church.
- A Coordinator assists the parents of a child with disability to explore ways that they might enlist the support of immediate and extended family to more effectively help out during the times when Dad is out of town with his fly-in fly-out employment roster.

## **7. Assists individuals and families/carers to access the supports and services they need to pursue their identified goals and needs, including access to funding as appropriate.**

- The family of a young woman with a disability have recently moved into a new area. The Coordinator provides information about the local services and the young woman is assisted to connect with the local educational organisations to pursue her chosen path of study. She is also given information to assist her in making her own decisions about transport.
- Following an extended period of discussion and planning, a Coordinator assists the ageing parents of a young man with severe and multiple disabilities to apply for funding. Such funding will be used to purchase personal care supports that will enable him to continue to live in the family home safely.
- A woman living in the local area develops an illness which results in permanent impairments to her speech and mobility. She wishes to remain living in her family home and requests assistance in accessing daily support with showering. She would also like several items of equipment (which are beyond the family's capacity to self-fund) in order to maintain a level of dignity and independence. The Coordinator assists the woman and her family to develop a plan which includes liaison with the local Allied Health team and Rotary Club to assist with a portion of the funding required for the equipment. The Coordinator also assists the woman to submit the plan to the local funding allocation process with a request for funding of the balance and personal support required.



## **5. Assumptions underpinning the principles of Local Coordination**

### **1. As citizens, people with disability have the same rights and responsibilities as all other people to participate in and contribute to the life of the community.**

- All people have a contribution to make to society.
- All people should have opportunities to make a contribution to society.
- All people should have the opportunity to take risks in their quest to lead good lives.
- Disability should not be a barrier to citizenship.
- All people should be given the opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, the 'building blocks' of life: education, training, employment, leisure, community life.
- Community connectedness is essential for a good life.
- Segregation, isolation, marginalisation and 'congregation on the basis of disability' are damaging to all people.
- Community participation provides opportunities for people to make valued contributions.
- For all members of society, rights come with responsibilities.

### **2. People with disability and their families are in the best position to determine their own needs and goals and to plan for the future.**

- Families are the most important and enduring support for a person with disability.
- Families generally want what is best for each family member.
- Brothers and sisters can be in a position to support other siblings.
- When resources and supports are chosen and controlled by the person with disability and/or their family, they are more likely to fit in well with family life.
- All people have a desire to pursue dreams and develop trusting relationships.
- All people need other people.

### **3. Families, friends and personal networks are the foundations of a rich and valued life in the community.**

- Active involvement in family life adds richness to the lives of individuals.
- Friendships are the bridge between individuals and community.
- Involvement in friendships, groups and community life enables people to develop valued roles in society.
- Families can gather information and learn from other families.
- Families give on-going commitment, support, security, love, belonging and a values base.

### **4. People with disability and their families have natural authority and are best placed to be their most powerful and enduring leaders, decision-makers and advocates.**

- People with disability and their families have a legitimate authority for advocacy and leadership that stems from their direct involvement in the issues associated with disability.
- Leadership, decision-making and advocacy are most effective when they are based on natural (legitimate) authority.

**5. Access to timely and accurate information enables people to make appropriate decisions and to gain more control over their lives.**

- Information is a powerful tool for decision-making.
- Accurate and timely information is essential for good decision-making.
- All people gain greater control of their lives when they have real choices and can make decisions for the future.
- People with disability and their families gain information and advice from a wide range of sources.
- People receive and process information in different ways. Relevant information should be available in alternative formats and in alternative modes of presentation.

**6. Communities are enriched by the inclusion and participation of people with disability and these communities are the most important way of providing friendship, support and a meaningful life to people with disability and their families and carers.**

- Society is enriched when all citizens are allowed to contribute their knowledge, skills, creativity and opinions.
- Communities need to become more aware of the rights, needs and goals of all people.

**7. The lives of people with disability and their families are enhanced when they can determine their preferred supports and services and control the required resources, to the extent that they desire.**

- Individuals and families are best placed to monitor changing needs and goals.
- All people gain a greater sense of control when they are directly involved in decision-making about their lives.
- All people gain a greater sense of security when they have some control over the resources they need to live their lives.

**8. Services provided by government and community agencies complement and support the primary role of families, carers and communities in achieving a good life for people with disability.**

- Families have their own resources to meet needs and to pursue dreams.
- Additional supports and services may be needed by people with disability and their families to meet needs and pursue goals.

**9. Partnerships between individuals, families and carers, communities, governments, service providers and the business sector are vital in meeting the needs of people with disability.**

- Resources, supports and services should complement the natural resources available to people with disability and their families.

**10. People with disability have a life-long capacity for learning, development and contribution.**

- All people in society should be credited with the capacity to grow, develop and make a contribution to the world around them.

## Further information

### Disability Services Commission

146-160 Colin Street  
West Perth, WA 6005

PO Box 441,  
West Perth, WA 6872

Phone: 9426 9200

Freecall (country): 1800 998 214

TTY: 9426 9315

Fax: 9226 2306

Email: [dsc@dsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:dsc@dsc.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)