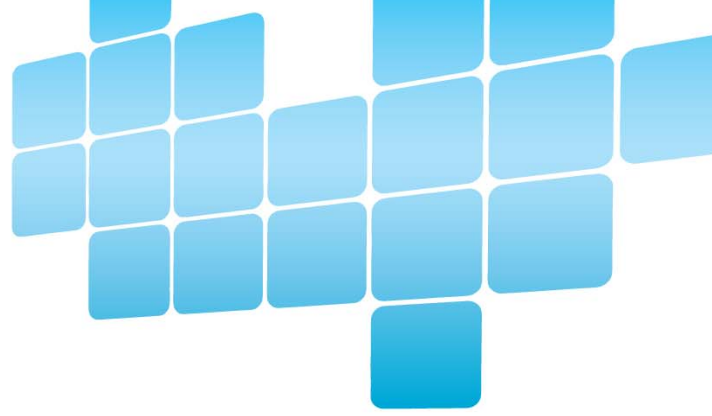


Office for the Community Sector

NEWSLETTER July/August 2009



Update from the OCS Quality & Safety Team

Information Sessions:

The Quality and Safety Team have their bags packed for the upcoming Quality and Safety Standards Framework information sessions, which will take place at a number of locations around the state beginning on the 29 July in Launceston; finishing on 1 September. The sessions will be instructive and assist organisations to meet the Standards Framework reporting requirements, as well as providing a great opportunity to meet up with other organisations. If you have not yet registered and wish to do so, please feel free to contact the Quality and Safety Team on (03) 6336 4132.

Compliance Indicators:

The Quality and Safety Team have frequently been asked what should be included in the workbooks and evidence so that organisations can achieve compliance. To assist organisations, the Quality and Safety Team have sent out a Flyer on Standard 1: Safe Environment that discusses what we will need to see in documentation for compliance to be achieved under this Standards Framework. The Flyer also includes a list of resources and contacts under each Fundamental Element. The Quality and Safety Team will send out a new flyer every six months to help organisations prepare for the Standard that is next due for compliance. It is important not to forget that organisations need to report against every Fundamental Element of every Standard every six months; not just the Standard due for evidence of compliance. Additional documented evidence is required only for the Standard due for compliance.

Final Documents:

The final documents relating to the *Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009-2012* have now been printed and delivered to us. The Office for the Community Sector extends appreciation to all community sector organisations and Agency staff who have provided feedback and assistance in the finalisation of the documentation. A printed copy of the following documents will be forwarded to all organisations over the coming weeks:

- An overview of the Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009-2012;
- Self Report – Initial Workbook; and
- Self Report – Continuous Quality Improvement Workbook.

Copies of these documents may be downloaded from www.communityexpress.tas.gov.au. The Quality and Safety Team welcome any questions or comments and can be contacted by phone on (03) 6336 4132 or via email on quality.ocs@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Watch the communityExpress Space!

There will be four new videos on communityExpress shortly. The new videos will be Minister Lin Thorp, David Roberts (Secretary), Penny Egan (Chief Financial Officer) and Associate Professor Des Graham (Director, Office for the Community Sector).



Message from the Director Associate Professor Des Graham

After an extensive consultation and development phase, we are now moving into the implementation phase. From the 1 July 2009, the new funding agreements were introduced. The new funding agreements clearly identify the purpose and the expected outcomes of the funds. Embedded within these agreements are quality and safety requirements. Organisations will be required to comply with both mandatory and service specialist standards. There is still work to be done in building the infrastructure that will ensure the sustainability and success of the Finance and Performance and Quality and Safety Frameworks. The third platform is the Partnership Framework and we will soon commence work on developing a partnership agreement or compact between the Department of Health and Human Services and its funded community sector organisations. It has been a very busy time and I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff and our community sector partners for their contribution and hard work. I look forward to the future to further work towards our shared vision of the provision of high quality and safe services for all Tasmanians.

The OCS resident goldfish, Michael and Rafael



Update from OCS Finance & Performance

Disability Service Provider organisations will already be aware the government agreed to provide supplementary funding for increased wages paid in 2009-10 under the Disability Service Providers Award. It was recognised that the Award work value case would place a heavy burden on the finances of these organisations without some government financial support.

In June 2009 the DHHS established a process to distribute \$7.0 million in funding for wage supplementation to organisations that are party to the DSP Award. Claim forms, along with Guidelines explaining the process, were forwarded to all service providers in June.

All claims received so far have been analysed and assessed for compliance with the Guidelines. Some anomalies arising from this process have been referred back to the organisations concerned for clarification.

We are still awaiting some claims that were due in the Department by the 25 June 2009 and this is delaying disbursement of funds to the sector. Also, we are awaiting replies to some of the queries sent to organisations.

Finally, it is proposed to undertake an audit of a random sample of organisations to verify their claims and once completed, payment of claims can commence.

Financial Reporting Requirements: by 31 October & 30 November 2009

Service Agreements require funded organisations to provide the DHHS with the following financial reports by the indicated dates. An audited annual grant financial accountability report showing income and expenditure for each funded service to be received by the Finance and Performance Unit by **31 October**. Two forms are available for preparation of the annual financial accountability report. These are:

- Organisations using accrual accounting
- Organisations using cash accounting

These documents can be downloaded from www.communityexpress.tas.gov.au (refer 'Finance & Performance' tab). A set of audited financial statements for the organisation as a whole to be received by 31 October.

Organisations are also required to provide a copy of their annual report (including audited financial statements) by the **30 November**.

Organisations requiring guidance on financial reporting requirements should read the Service Agreement Explanatory notes in the first instance.

'Fit and Proper Persons'

We've received a few enquiries in regards to the intent of these clauses in the new Funding Agreement. The intent of these clauses is to ensure funded organisations employ "Fit and Proper" persons and establish and maintain appropriate employment policies to facilitate this. This is also embedded in the Quality and Safety Standards requirements. The funding agreement provides discretion for organisations to develop appropriate employment policies. If your service does not employ staff or have volunteers who work with children, for example, the requirement to determine if a person has convictions in relation to children is not likely to apply. An

organisation may, however, decide to cover this issue in its own employment policies.

Electronic Incident Monitoring System

In 2008 the Office for the Community Sector was tasked with implementing the Electronic Incident Monitoring System (EIMS) within Human Services by 30 December 2009.

EIMS allows for a consistent approach to the collection and monitoring of incident and feedback data. EIMS involves a systematic approach to enhancing the safety and quality of services through:

- online entry of incidents, near misses and feedback/complaint data;
- assigning of tasks required for the resolution of the incident/complaint;
- automatic alerts for particular types or large numbers of incidents;
- email notification to those who need to know about the incident;
- ready access to information to follow up on incidents that have been reported; and
- assistance to managers in producing both basic and more detailed up to date reports easily.

Concurrent with the Human Services implementation of EIMS, Human Resources are developing an occupational health and safety component within EIMS that will replace existing processes, including the use of the beige 'bathmat' books currently used for reporting OH&S incidents and near misses.

To support the implementation of EIMS into Human Services, training will be provided to staff throughout September – December 2009. The Human Services Quality and Safety Framework Implementation Committee, comprising of key representatives from the Reform Implementation Unit, Disability Child Youth and Family Service, the Office for the Community Sector and Housing Tasmania, recently met to identify staff required to undertake the training and train staff within their work areas. The Office for the Community Sector, Quality and Safety Team will be contacting those persons identified for training in the near future with details on session times and dates.

For general information regarding EIMS, please visit the EIMS intranet page, a link to which can be found under Shortcuts on the Agency Intranet Site.

For any further information on the implementation of EIMS into Human Services, please contact the Office for the Community Sector on quality.ocs@dhhs.tas.gov.au or David Badcock on 6336 4272

Specialist Homelessness Service Sector

On the 20th of July Housing Tasmania hosted a state wide forum for the Specialist Homelessness Service sector.

The Director of Housing Tasmania, Mercia Bresnehan, presented an excellent session titled "New Directions – Homelessness Implementation Plan for Tasmania". In this she described the new agreement between the Commonwealth and the State - National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) – as the biggest investment in Social Housing Tasmania has ever seen.

Mercia provided an overview of the national reforms, State Government reforms, the Homelessness National Partnership Implementation Plan, and the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan.

The national Partnership Agreements have allocated \$18.9 m over five years to homelessness objectives, \$14.6 m over five years to remote Indigenous objectives and \$9.8m to social housing.

The Economic Stimulus Package has \$16m in Stage 1 and up to \$140m in the Stage 2 EOI process plus tenders.

This is the most significant injection of funds in decades and the Commonwealth wants to ensure a range of reforms from this major funding initiative. The Commonwealth has specified 25 areas of reform across the not for profit and social housing sectors.

Reforms are required as a condition of increased Commonwealth funding.

Alex Wilson and Mandy Bosworth from the Office for the Community Sector gave a presentation on the significant differences between the old funding contracts – referred to as Service Agreements - and the new contracts called Funding Agreements.

A major difference is the introduction of mandatory quality and safety obligations for all grant funded community sector organisations from 1 July 2009. For details regarding your organisation's quality and safety obligations please refer to www.communityexpress.dhhs.tas.gov.au or contact the Office for the Community Sector's Quality and Safety team on (03) 6336 4132 or via email through eims.humanservices@dhhs.tas.gov.au.

Swine Flu Update



Open letter to Community Sector Organisations pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus

Dear colleague,

As expected, the number of people in Tasmania who have influenza is increasing steadily, and it is mostly being caused by the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus.

It is vital that the community sector takes steps to protect their staff and clients and help slow the spread of the virus.

The vast majority of people infected with this virus have a relatively mild illness that can be managed without medical treatment or needing to see a doctor. However some people have a serious illness, and the sheer number of people likely to be infected over coming weeks will have a significant impact on every business and organisation.

You can help slow the spread of influenza by:

- **Providing information about how influenza spreads** and how people can protect themselves and others. Resources (including posters) are available for download from www.pandemic.tas.gov.au
- **Encouraging and facilitating excellent hand hygiene.** Conveniently placed pump bottles of alcohol-based hand rub is useful in shared kitchens, reception areas and other common areas for quick hand washing 'on the run' (note,

children should be supervised when using alcohol-based hand rub). Encourage people to wash their hands before touching their face and after nose-blowing, touching used tissues or removing a face mask.

- **Encouraging and facilitating excellent cough etiquette.** Encourage people to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues (or the inside of the elbow if a tissue isn't available), and put used tissues in the rubbish straight away. Endeavour to have tissues and no-touch rubbish bins readily available for staff and clients.
- **Encouraging social distancing.** Encourage people to keep one metre (a very large step) apart at your work-site, and instruct staff to stay home for 7 days from the start of their illness if they have a fever with a cough and/or sore throat.
- **Enhance cleaning routines, with a focus on surfaces that are frequently touched.** The influenza virus can survive on hard surfaces (e.g. steel and plastic) for up to 48 hours.

In light of the prevalence of the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus in the community, it is likely that most people with an influenza-like illness will have pandemic influenza, and testing is no longer required. Prescription of antivirals is at the discretion of the treating doctor after discussion with the client, and will be largely dependent on how sick the person is, the presence of risk factors for severe illness, how quickly the person has presented, and whether or not the person resides in a high-risk setting (e.g. residential group home).

Most staff and clients with influenza will not need to see a doctor, will not need to be tested and will not need medical treatment. They will get better within a week, and medications like paracetamol will help control their symptoms.

For staff and clients who are very unwell with influenza symptoms, or who believe they need to see a doctor, please advise them to phone 1800 358 362 (1800 FLU DOC). They will be put through to a specially-trained Registered Nurse who will be able to assess them over the phone and advise appropriate action including whether to go to a GP, Flu Clinic or hospital if necessary.

For staff and clients who have influenza symptoms and who are at higher risk of severe illness, please advise them to see a doctor as soon as possible. Antiviral medication may be provided, but must be started within 48 hours of the start of illness to work properly. They should phone their normal doctor or 1800 358 362 (1800 FLU DOC).

For high risk settings, including residential group homes and shelters, if one or more clients are diagnosed with influenza, you or their GP will need to make contact with Public Health (within the Department of Health and Human Services) to discuss outbreak management. You can contact public health on 1800 671 738. Managing the outbreak may include provision of antivirals from the National Medical Stockpile for all residents of the facility.

It is important that all DHHS-funded organisations have plans in place to manage infectious disease outbreaks – including pandemic influenza. If your organisation does not have a plan, we strongly encourage you to develop one as a matter of priority. The Tasmanian Government Pandemic website (www.pandemic.tas.gov.au) provides a good range of resources – including printable signs and fact sheets suitable for use - to assist organisations to do this, including links to national documents

relating to business continuity planning. Your Peak Body and/or TasCOSS may also be able to assist you.

Please bookmark www.pandemic.tas.gov.au and visit the site regularly. The website is being updated frequently as the situation develops. If there are additional resources you would like to see on www.pandemic.tas.gov.au, please email pandemic.communications@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Signed by Dr Chrissie Pickin, Deputy Director, Public Health & Assoc Prof Des Graham, Director, Office for the Community Sector, Department of Health & Human Services, July 2009

from the
Secretary



In a time of financial pressure, it is critical that we are clear about what health and human services we require and how we are going to get there. We need to align our existing strategies so we can concentrate our efforts to the greatest effect and deliver sustainable outcomes within the available resources. This was one of the key reasons for the development of the Office for the Community Sector.

The Department of Health and Human Services recently published a Strategic Directions Document for 2009-2012 which sets out:

Our vision:

High quality, safe services for the people of Tasmania when they need them, so they can live well and longer.

Our mission:

To design and implement a sustainable, people- focused health and human services system which supports individuals and communities to be active partners in the management of their own health and wellbeing.

Our five key strategic objectives:

1. Supporting individuals, families and communities to have more control over what matters to them.
2. Promoting health and wellbeing and intervening early when needed.
3. Developing responsive, accessible and sustainable services.
4. Creating collaborative partnerships to support the development of healthier communities.
5. Shaping our workforce to be capable of meeting changing needs and future requirements.

Strategic Directions 2009-2012 also outlines how we aim to achieve these objectives and more importantly, the benefits Tasmanians can expect to experience as a result.

As well as providing strategic direction for staff, it aims to increase understanding within the broader community of the challenges facing health and human services and the strategies and partnerships needed to address them.

The Department of Health and Human Service plans and funding agreements with the community sector will be expected to reflect this umbrella document and future monitoring and evaluation will be closely linked to it. This alignment is crucial because we are partners in providing quality consumer focused services.

I would encourage you all to take the time to familiarise yourselves with this document which you will find on www.communityexpress.dhhs.tas.gov.au.

David Roberts
Secretary

Department of Health and Human Services