

Diversity

Diversity planning and practice

The Victorian HACC program is committed to respecting the diversity of the Victorian population.

The program works to remove perceived or actual barriers to care and support for those who need it, so that they can remain living independently in their homes and communities.

In accordance with this commitment, the HACC program has implemented a policy of diversity planning and practice to:

- improve the accessibility and responsiveness of services to people who are eligible for HACC services and are marginalised or disadvantaged due to their diversity
- improve the capacity of the service system to respond appropriately to their needs.

This approach aligns with person-centred care and an active service model approach.

Both share the common goal of responding to the specific characteristics and circumstances of the person seeking services.

What is diversity?

Diversity is a concept which recognises that each person is unique and has different beliefs, values, preferences and life experiences.

For some people these differences may result in barriers to accessing or using HACC services. Barriers such as a lack of confidence, a lack of information or a belief that a service will be unable to respond to their needs may impede a person's willingness or ability to access a service.

Diversity practice includes consideration of the HACC five special needs groups and the characteristics within and across these groups. Diversity practice also addresses other characteristics that may be a barrier to accessing services such as age, socioeconomic status, gender, faith, spirituality and those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex (GLBTI).

By taking into account the diversity characteristics of individuals and communities, HACC services can better respond to the needs of individuals and communities.

It is also important to recognise that diversity is not a static concept. The characteristics and needs of each group or person may change over time. For example, population demographics may change or people may become more experienced and confident service users so they no longer require assistance in accessing services, or carer's needs or circumstances may change.

For further information see:

- Part 2: 'Eligibility and priority'
- Part 3: 'HACC access and support'.

Diversity planning and practice

Diversity planning and practice is underpinned by principles that seek to achieve:

- equitable access to HACC services by those eligible, regardless of their diversity or disadvantage
- a respectful and responsive approach to planning services that acknowledges the community, group or person's uniqueness and complexity of need
- consideration of diversity as core business, and as central to strategic planning and leadership.

Consideration of factors that influence a person's knowledge of and capacity to access services assists HACC service providers improve equity of access.

Diversity planning helps ensure that services adopt a 'diversity lens' when planning how to make services accessible and responsive for HACC-eligible people.

Diversity planning uses a population planning approach to:

- understand the characteristics of the HACC target population in a catchment area
- map the geographic distribution of groups of people who share these characteristics
- consider implications for how agencies deliver their services.

HACC funded organisations have developed diversity plans for the HACC triennium (1 July 2012 to 30 June 2015). The process of developing and documenting diversity plans required HACC funded organisations to:

- demonstrate an understanding of their catchment's HACC target population
- identify people and groups who may not be accessing services equitably
- provide opportunities for HACC-eligible people and other key stakeholders to inform this process
- set priorities in line with those identified in regional diversity plans
- develop an action plan that has achievable and measurable outcomes
- implement the plan
- monitor the plan against outcomes
- review the plan and use relevant information to develop the next plan.

Successful diversity planning and practice seeks to ensure that:

- appropriate organisational policies are in place
- a skilled and adequately resourced workforce is available to respond effectively to the needs of any person who is assessed as requiring a HACC service.

Organisations are not required to increase the number of people using services or provide extra service hours.

For a detailed guide to diversity planning and practice, information sources, practical strategies, case studies, examples and tools see *Strengthening diversity planning and practice: a guide for Victorian Home and Community Care services* (Department of Health 2011).

For further information see the *Service agreement information kit for funded organisations*:

- section 4.13: 'Language Services Policy'
- section 4.14: 'Cultural diversity guide'.

The 'Cultural diversity guide' includes the Victorian Government Aboriginal inclusion framework and *Enabling choice for Aboriginal people with a disability*.

Reporting requirements

HACC funded organisations are required to provide a progress update to their triennial diversity plan by 30 May of each year. This update can include amended priorities if required.

Links

Diversity planning and practice policy statement

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc/downloads/diversity/diversity_policy.pdf

Strengthening diversity planning and practice: a guide for

Victorian Home and Community Care services (Department of Health 2011)

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc/projects/diversity_guide.htm

Service agreement information kit for funded organisations

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/facs/bdb/fmu/service-agreement
