

TechnologyOne resource paper  
Trends and issues in the  
support services sectors



The move to individualised funding presents challenges and opportunities for organisations, individuals and their families.

Individuals will be given more choice, but may need additional support to make decisions during the planning process. This means they will be seeking more information about services and support options, and any information required to manage their own funds, including invoices.

There will also be an increased administrative requirement for organisations in relation to recordkeeping and acquittals.

These changes will bring an increased focus on people, the clients accessing supports and services and their families. Delivering more individually tailored and flexible responses provides opportunities for an organisation to expand its offering. There will also be opportunities for partnerships and mergers, as organisations look to grow and offer a wider range of services, and the line between the disability and aged care sectors begins to blur. Having effective systems that are scalable and can handle this growth will be critical.

While individualised funding reduces financial certainty and the ability to cross subsidise programs or individuals, better systems and data can deliver the enhanced business and market intelligence required to manage these factors. Understanding client complexity and the true costs of support is vital to developing and implementing business practices to manage cash flow, service agreements and fees (such as administration or cancellation fees).

## Merging of aged care and disability services

There are increasing commonalities in relation to the planning, funding and delivery of supports in the disability and aged care sectors. These commonalities include:

- An increasing focus on choice / consumer direction and the need for providers to be more accountable
- The shift to individualised funding and the need to understand the costs of delivering supports to individuals
- Increased exposure to market competition
- Transition, planning and plan management, including the need to understand people's support needs and unique cost drivers, to understand people's likely individualised funding and to be able to measure changes in support needs and outcomes over time
- Alignment of support types funded
- Quality safeguards and complaints mechanisms

The table below outlines the elements of commonality across the disability and the aged care sectors, including:

- Common themes
- Financial considerations
- Transition planning and plan management
- Purchasing

**Table 1 - Commonality across the disability and the aged care sectors**

Consumer Directed Care	NDIS
<b>Common Themes</b>	
Consumer directed care	Choice and control (Section 4 of the NDIS Act)
Sustainable supports (family, friends, community)	Sustainable informal supports (family, friends, community)
Individual funding package (an end to block funding to outputs)	Individual funding package
Providers need to develop an individual plan with the person	Providers need to develop an individual plan with the person that is linked to the person's NDIA plan
Cannot be used as income (e.g. to pay rent)	Cannot be used as income (e.g. to pay rent) <sup>1</sup>
CDC services require individual invoices	NDIA funded services require individual invoices
<b>Managing the Money</b>	
Standard package sizes	Reference Packages are evolving but are unlikely to be developed to a standard package for the foreseeable future
Providers <u>can</u> invoice for an additional contribution from recipients of the Home Care Package	Providers <u>cannot</u> invoice for an additional contribution from NDIA or participants for services purchased with NDIS funding
Providers <u>can</u> invoice for administration costs, adviser (case manager costs) and support costs	Providers <u>cannot</u> invoice for administration costs, adviser (case manager costs) <sup>2</sup>
People can purchase additional services over and above those funded	There is nothing in the legislation, rules or policy materials that means participants cannot purchase additional services over and above those funded (e.g., participants could elect to purchase additional respite, personal care, therapy etc.)
Means tests apply	<u>No</u> means tests
<b>Transition, Planning and Plan Management</b>	
<u>Rationed</u> system (only a certain number of packages in each funding level available)	<u>Not rationed</u> but based on 'reasonable and necessary' responses
May need to join a <u>waiting list</u> for a Home Care Package	There are <u>no waiting lists</u> but Scheme roll out is staged

Consumer Directed Care	NDIS
Transitioning of service models over a period of time	Immediate change as participants enter the Scheme
Funds sit with the nominated provider who pays for services	Funds sit with the NDIA to manage and/or a Plan Management Provider and/or the participant (nominee) to manage Service providers do not manage funds in their role as a service provider. To fund manage they must register as a Plan Management Provider.
Service provider can act as a lead agency	Plan management (if chosen by a participant/nominee) is a separate service and is not delivered via a lead agency model
<b>The Purchasing Alignment</b>	
Home Care Packages	NDIA funded supports
Personal assistance	Assistance with daily personal activities
General support services	Household tasks, (social & community) participation support
24 hour on call service	Currently not listed but growth potential
Lots of advice about staying at home	Currently NDIA function (planner, LAC) some may be outsourced following evaluation and prior to national roll out
Help to stay healthy	Largely treated as 'Intervention Services'
Nurse visits	Only very high care needs (driven by disability), otherwise health service
Therapy and like services	Therapy and like services
Certain consumables e.g. dressings	Certain (disability related) consumables e.g. continence equipment
Home modifications and equipment	Home modifications and equipment
<b>Other</b>	
ACAT services opening to competition?	Specialist assessments are out-sourced
Complaints and national Advocacy service in place as is a Complaints Scheme	No national complaints or advocacy service

## Impact on systems and processes

The introduction of person-centred approaches needs systems and processes that meet client and funder expectations.

The increased focus on choice/consumer direction and person-centred planning will require changes to systems and processes to translate this strategic shift into day-to-day operations.

Some of the impacts on system and process changes include:

- Ensuring current and potential clients are provided with information in an accessible format
- Individual invoices need to be generated and presented in a way that enables clients to understand them in relation to their funding
- The move to individualised funding includes a shift from receiving payments in advance to receiving them in arrears. This new model requires providers to have systems and contingency plans to manage cash flow, delayed payments and bad debts.

The perception for most organisations is that due to limitations of their current systems, they need to employ additional staff to ensure they meet client and funder expectations. However this poses further risk to organisations, including:

- Manual workaround of data and processes
- Lack of quality data in relation to client support needs
- Inability to measure outcomes
- Inability to support growing and changing business requirements
- Inability to accurately manage individual funding arrangements
- Increased governance and regulatory reporting requirements

## Enterprise system approach

The historical business approach had been for organisations to adopt a piecemeal approach to their systems, resulting in a complex IT environment of:

- Multiple systems/databases needing to be managed
- Duplicate data entry to get information from one system to another
- Inefficient business processes
- Systems not being able to be upgraded/supported due to their linkage with other systems.

While this approach may have worked in the past, the increased complexity and reporting required by the new individualised funding models, coupled with the growth expected in the industry due to partnerships and mergers, will no longer make this a viable option.

An enterprise system approach allows for the introduction of a solution that can manage the front

<sup>1</sup> Funding may be available for rent in limited short-term exceptional circumstances

<sup>2</sup> In some limited circumstances service co-ordination may be a funded service

office interaction with clients – care plans, admissions, clinical and medication management – and flow through to the back office functions of finance, payroll, reporting and KPI analysis. This approach enables the business to focus on providing quality client outcomes, while achieving business efficiencies through:

- Improved processes and workflows
- Single point data entry, which flows information through to the relevant system components
- Single view of the client from an operational and financial perspective
- Capacity to meet ongoing legislative reform requirements from a system capability and reporting perspective
- Ability to calculate cost of service provision at an individual and whole-of-business level to ensure viability of services and the organisation
- Consolidated IT infrastructure footprint reducing the cost and number of systems
- NDIS and CDC framework compliant reporting
- Solution that grows with an organisation and can offer add on functionality to manage the diverse requirements
- Enable staff to spend more time with their clients managing their needs and care plans

## Conclusion

Through the adoption of sophisticated systems, customers are seeing that technology is enabling their business and productivity, rather than being a necessary evil. Applications can be accessed via mobile devices (smartphones, tablets) on site, allowing staff to increase interaction with their clients while still having access to accurate information regarding an individual's funding status. This ensures staff can accurately align the services and associated costs with their clients' needs.

As the line between the aged care and community services sectors continues to blur, the technology needs to have the capability to adapt with the business. An integrated system can provide the flexibility to address the current core business requirements, as well as the ability to handle new functionality as the two sectors merge and providers offer additional services.

An enterprise approach ensures that relevant client and provider data is stored in a location that simplifies the reporting and analysis requirements of the organisation. KPI dashboards and integrated reporting capabilities will be critical for executives in planning current and future business activities. The ability to proactively manage client and business outcomes will be critical to the future of an organisation in this reform environment.

QUALITY ENDORSEMENT - ISO9001 Quality Management Systems - Requirements | ISO27001 - Information Security Management Standard

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