# Speak Out Association of Tasmania

# Speak Out Members' Submission

## Disability Employment Services Reform

23 December 2016

# Cover letter

Department of Social Services,
Disability Employment Reform
https://engage.dss.gov.au/disability-employment-services-reform/disability-employment-services-reform-late-submission/

We are happy to make this submission to the **NEW DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FROM 2018 –** and give consent for it to go on the DSS website.

We have made our submission "Easy English" so that lots of people can understand it.

**Who we are:**
We are members of the Speak Out Association of Tasmania.
Speak Out is an advocacy service for people with disability.
We run self advocacy groups that are made up of people who have an intellectual disability.
We talk about things that are important to people with intellectual disability.
Speak Out does individual advocacy, self advocacy, systemic advocacy and family advocacy.
This means sticking up for people as well as teaching people to stand up for their own rights and have a say in their community.

**What we do:**

- Speak Out Self Advocacy Groups speak out about things that are important to people with intellectual disability (PWID)

- A person with an intellectual disability is on the Board of Management of Speak Out.
- We run monthly self advocacy groups in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart.
- We want to be heard.
- We want to change community attitudes about people with disability.
- We want to show people what PWID **can** do.

**Why we wrote this submission:**

- To make sure the voice of PWID is heard.
- The writing in blue is the exact words of people with intellectual disability.

Thank you for reading our submission.

Regards

Peter Huett (Member's President)

on behalf of members

## What do you think of the ideas we are suggesting?

Speak Out members thought the ideas and changes that are suggested for DES services are good. They thought it was really good that:

- You can:
    - choose your provider
    - change your provider

People said:

"It's about having a choice"

"We can try a provider and make our own decision who to go with, if they work for us and meet our needs"

"If you don't like the provider or something goes wrong you can see what someone else has to offer"

"They may not be doing enough or a good job, so you should go somewhere better"

"They may not listen to you or do the exact opposite"

"If they don't find anything out, you don't get a result. You need choice."

- **You can have more say about how your funds are spent**

Everyone thought this was an excellent idea.

No one in the groups thought they had any control over how their funding was spent now.

- You have more say in your job planning
- You are given more information to help you plan

## Should people who take part in DES be required to go to face-to-face meetings?

Most people thought you should have to go to face-to-face meetings.

Some people said they can't read letters and forms so meeting face-to-face, talking, explaining and hands on were very important to them.

"Yes, because they are slack at coming out to see me"

"I'm more comfortable face-to-face"

"I used to get visits when I started – it was better - currently they come to my work when they feel like it. It’s supposed to be fortnight. They send text messages on Sunday”

When working on a plan, everyone thought face-to-face contact was definitely needed.

Also having a second person with you like an advocate to back you up about your planning.

Other people thought:

“They should work out with the person the best way for the person”

“A face-to-face is a rigmarole – talking by phone is better. It is a hassle getting transport to the DES when you live out of town (and then they change things/run late/aren’t there)”

**Should DES have a minimum number of available:**

- **contacts**
- **hours of support?**

Yes

“Having the hours and knowing them would be good.”

“They should have some responsibility for contact and support”

> “I had a couple of months with no contact. They told me they lost the module I worked on. I had to initiate contact with them. They should have been better and more responsible”

**Is this something that should as part of the Job Plan and agreed between:**

- **the DES provider**

  Yes

- **the person taking part?**

  Definitely

**How can we make sure people are involved in the development of their Job Plans?**

Everyone thought they could and should have a say about their job plan.

People felt very strongly about having a say in how the money is used to support their employment goals. They want accountability around the plan.

> “When you have a plan of what you want to do, DES and trainers are on the same page supporting you and what you want to do”

## What do you need to be/get involved?

People said the attitude of the DES was the key to getting people involved.

“They can have a too hard attitude and put up barriers… need to give people a chance with the plan and ideas from the plan”

“People need to ask you”

“They (DES) need to want you there and mean it”

“At the meeting take an advocate or someone along with you” (lots of people said this)

“Listen to you and take your ideas seriously”

“Want a support person with me when making my plan” “Sometimes I forget all the things I’ve done”

“You need to know when it is happening – it’s a formal process and you should know beforehand so you can prepare and get support/have an advocate there”

“You need a copy of the plan to keep and regularly look at it”

“You need a copy of a plan that is easy to read and understand”

"The plan needs to be clear and say what will happen – with timeframes and who will do what"

"Plans should give times of when they (DES) are going to do things, so you don't wait around for them to call"

"If something goes wrong, go back to it"

"They should have to review it with you – if things in the plan haven't happened they should say why not"

**Casey wanted to be a teacher aide. It was in her plan from College. At the TAFE they put her in a disability class. No one followed the plan.**

**What information would you like to know about DES providers in your area if it was available:**

- **online**
- **through a smartphone app?**

Many people pointed out that some people do not have access to technology.

They were unsure how they could get information on DES if they weren't computer literate or social media savvy.

Some people were interested in face to face DES forums rather than trying to find information online or on an App.

Many people thought information online or through an app was hard if you can't read and write.

They suggested it would need to be fully accessible with speech and video clips of information.

Types of useful information that is useful:

- People thought the ratings of the DES providers should be easy to access
- Where the DES are located and what area they cover
- Kinds of jobs they get people or their specialities e.g. rural/agriculture; retail

**If you were given more say in how money is spent on you, would you know what to spend it on?** If not, what information or support would you need to help with this?

Most people did not know anything about what happens now with money and were very keen that this changed.

People thought there should be information forums and advocacy assistance to help you have a say in how money is spent on you.

Everyone had ideas about how they would like the money used and thought they could take part in this planning and conversations.

“Money needs to be spent on things that help me get different jobs” – transferrable skills.

“Support to work beside you, to give you confidence and help you along”

“Training in Certificate 2 Retail”

“Driver’s License”

“Support to get to work and training”

“Recognition of what I can do now by training places”

Safety hats

Safety clothing

Forklift license

Accredited and non-accredited training e.g. Kitchen hand, food hygiene

First Aid

Clothing, gum boots, shoes

Renewal of licenses

## Would you like DES providers to focus on getting you:

- **a long-term job?**
- **short-term jobs?**

There is a mixed reaction to the idea of long-term or short-term, but people thought it should be up to the person.

But everyone thought the most important thing was having a job.

People (and DES provider) should keep an eye on longer-term goals.

Good things about long term jobs :

"You can get training to make you better and you're not hopping from one job to another"

"You can stay at the job – you can always move on or talk if you're not happy"

Good things about short-term jobs:

"Short term jobs should be ok"

"A short term job may lead to longer-term work"

"Gives you experience"

"Means you get some money!"

"Chance to try something you may not have thought about"

"Short term jobs are ok as I like variety and change"

"I want to know about state-wide and nationwide jobs I want to work in agriculture/livestock. Short-term jobs may lead to longer-term or full time employment. They need to see I work hard"

Not so good things about short-term:

"You just get on the bandwagon and you're looking for another job"

"Short term jobs may not pay well"

"Sometimes it means employers aren't as good (following standards/rules/awards)"

## Did you find it easy or difficult to access DES, such as the registration and assessment process?

If you found it difficult:

- what didn't you like?
- how could it be improved?

People had different experiences.

"I felt nervous"

"I thought it was too hard. Had to go to the doctor, go to Centrelink and have the Job Capacity Assessment"

"I wouldn't have known anything about the DES – a friend told me about them"

"An advocate told me about the DES"

"It was easy – I knew about **** and got help to contact them"

- Registering:

"It was too long ago for me to remember much"

"I was told to go to **** and then told to go to ### - it was confusing and I couldn't understand why I couldn't stay with ****"

- Assessment:

"It was difficult when I started with DES because they wanted to know the ins and outs – hard questions and they seemed random, not really had anything to do with getting me a job. If you have a disability, you have a disability"

"The questions were invasive and daunting"

"It's daunting talking to a person you don't know about your disability and being asked all these questions"

Improvement suggestions:

"I couldn't stay with **** because it was only for people with disability from birth. I think this is wrong because I think they were better for me"

"They should make the questions easier and you should have someone you know or a supporter there. NOT be on your own!"

"You need support to remember what you need to do – take someone with you!"

### If a participant chooses not to tell their employer about their disability, how should DES providers assist them in the workplace?

Some people thought they can't.

Other suggestions were:

"Talk to him after hours, not at work and see how things are going – get their opinion and try to help"

"Can they have a normal conversation with the employer without naming up they are from a DES?"

## What should the provider do to assist if a person’s job is a risk due to their:

- disability?
- injury?
- health condition?

“Keep in touch with the employer and employee”

“Targeted training and help”

“Assist with new skills until they get the hang of changes”

“Increased help and support is necessary”

“DES can help with the conversation between the person and the employer”

## Do you have any other ideas you’d like to share with us?

“People with disabilities do better work than some people without disabilities”

We talked about the need for funding to tell employers the benefits in hiring people with disability:
“Friendly”, Good workers”, “Sometimes people think we can’t do the job”, “Employers scared we will make mistakes”