



Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services Response to Recommendations of the External Evaluation of Future Directions

Please note that where **Future Directions** is mentioned below it refers to the Strategic Policy Framework outlined in the document *Future Directions: A Framework for the ACT 2004-2008*; and where the **Future Directions Structure** is mentioned below it refers to the implementation structure for this policy framework i.e. the Reference Groups and the proposed Strategic Governance Group (abbreviated to the Group). References to the **Review of the Role of Government** relate to the Review of the Role of Government as a Provider of Disability Services.

For quick reference, the Recommendations can be grouped into the following areas:

Proposed Group structure: Recommendations 1, 3, 8, 9, 16 & 18

Proposed Group functions: Recommendations 4, 10 & 15

Proposed Group resources: Recommendations 5, 6, 7 & 12

Proposed Group operations: Recommendations 11, 13 & 14

Proposed Group priorities: Recommendations 2, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 & 24

Disability ACT operations: Recommendation 23

Notes:

The proposed Strategic Governance Group will be referred to as the Group through out this document.

Chief Executive refers to the Chief Executive Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)

Deputy Chief Executive refers to Deputy Chief Executive Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)

Recommendation	DHCS Response	Actions	Timeframes
<p>Recommendation 1 It is recommended that the present Future Directions project review process should be suspended indefinitely along with the Reference Groups.</p>	<p>Agreed. To maintain and capitalise on the positives identified by the Evaluators such as the energy and commitment of the current Future Directions Structure participants, the current structure now needs to be temporarily suspended so that these participants can be re-engaged later and not lost through a gradual decline in enthusiasm.</p> <p>Any confusion regarding roles, purposes and joint governance powers can be addressed through a new Future Directions Structure Terms of Reference (ToRs), negotiated between the Group and the Chief Executive (see also Recommendation 4).</p>	<p>The Group co-chairs will communicate to the Reference Group co-chairs that these groups are suspended indefinitely, pending a critical review and reformulation of the oversight framework.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should develop a designated process to identify the nature of community needs as have already been indicated through prior public consultations and develop from these an initial listing of key overarching system change priorities. This process should create:</p> <p>a) a clear portrayal and analysis of the recurring needs of people with disabilities within the ACT community,</p> <p>b) a set of a small number of relatively long term global and overarching</p>	<p>Noted. Disability ACT has already done considerable work on identifying unmet need in the ACT disability sector through the Precise of Funding Plan (available at www.dhcs.act.gov.au). This plan forms the basis of the 4th Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) negotiations and is available to the Group. New information from the current funding round will assist in updating the plan. The current Future Directions Oversight Group has had access to the Funding Plan.</p> <p>Recommendations from the Review of the Role of Government that have been presented to the Minister for Disability</p>	<p>Disability ACT will forward information from current 2007/08 funding round to the Group. The Group will be updated on the current status of CSTDA negotiations and the Funding Plan.</p> <p>Once the Minister for Disability has provided comment on the Review of the Role of Government</p>	<p>May 2008.</p> <p>May 2008.</p>

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<p>priorities that best address the bulk of needs present; and</p> <p>c) a good description and analysis of the present limitations in capacity, both human and fiscal, to address these needs that are evident in the present.</p>	<p>include further work to be undertaken to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the overarching strategic priorities that will impact on unmet need and effect system change in the ACT; • what the current capacity and capability of the sector is; • where centers of excellence and areas of expertise currently exist across the sector; • which areas require strengthening in both the government and community parts of the sector in order to implement a new service delivery system; and • short and longer term priorities for development. <p>On the recommendation from the former community co-chair of the Future Directions Oversight Group, a 'think tank' was formed to develop the recommendations that were forwarded to the Minister for Disability.</p>	<p>recommendations, the Group will determine the process for progressing the recommendations and, through the Chief Executive, will direct the Executive Director Disability ACT on the steps to be undertaken in the development of the next iteration of the disability policy framework.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 3 It is recommended that the current Future Directions Oversight Group be renamed the Strategic Oversight Group and be given a new five year renewable mandate.</p>	<p>Agreed in Principle. The Future Directions Oversight Group was established by the Chief Executive with the intention that it would operate strategically. The composition of the Group was constructed with this in mind.</p> <p>It is the Chief Executive's intention that once the Group has considered the response to the recommendations, the redrafted ToRs will include a five-year term.</p>	<p>The Future Directions Oversight Group has determined that the new name will be the Strategic Governance Group to better reflect its shared governance model and strategic focus.</p> <p>The Group will present its renewed ToRs to the Chief Executive for agreement. The Chief Executive will seek the Group's agreement to a five-year term.</p>	<p>April 2008.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4 It is recommended that the Chief Executive and the present Oversight Group should jointly update the terms of reference and mandate of the proposed Group that would help clarify more precisely the type of shared governance that is being attempted and that provides for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) overseeing of the development of key global strategic priorities; b) monitoring of the overall systems performance relative to achieving progress on global priorities; c) independent direction to the Chief Executive, on a regular basis, as to any operational conduct that would either inhibit or enhance the systems performance relative to key priorities; and d) preparing and submitting an annual report on strategic progress and impact to the Chief Executive. 	<p>Agreed. New ToRs will be drafted to clarify membership requirements, term of tenure and composition of the Group and incorporate agreed recommendations from the evaluation for negotiation and ratification by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Once the ToRs have been redrafted to reflect the shared governance role, the Chief Executive may need to give consideration to makeup and membership of the Group to ensure that the requisite skills and knowledge are available to execute the role.</p>	<p>The Group will re-draft the ToRs to reflect the precise nature of the shared governance role and forward to the Chief Executive for agreement along with any recommendations in relation to the makeup of the group.</p> <p>The Chief Executive will provide comment on the proposed Group ToRs prior to agreement and if necessary signal to the co-chairs if consideration needs to be given to an expansion of the membership.</p>	<p>April 2008.</p> <p>May 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 It is recommended that the new mandate of the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should enable it to be able to create whatever working groups it may need to complete its task.</p>	<p>Agreed in Principle. Participation from a range of relevant community and government representatives in the form of steering, working and reference groups has always been a feature of DHCS policy development. As these positions attract a paid contribution by Government, the Group would need to identify the annual</p>	<p>Disability ACT's Business Support Manager will work with the Group to determine the annual budget requirements and prepare a brief for the Chief Executive's consideration.</p> <p>To ensure transparency, the Group will develop policy guidelines for the recruitment and selection of</p>	<p>May 2008.</p> <p>May 2008.</p>

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	resource requirement and negotiate with the Chief Executive for the requisite budget allocation.	community and government members onto working groups that clearly outline the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines for participating members.	
<p>Recommendation 6 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should have the ability to seek resources from both governmental and other sources that could assist them in their analyses, research, investigations, consultations and other work associated with their mandate.</p>	<p>Agreed in Principle. The proposed Group would need to prepare an annual work schedule and associated budget for work to be undertaken. The schedule would need to link to the established government priorities and timeframes and be ratified by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Agreement will be determined on current Government commitments, available resources and the synergy between Government priorities and the Group's work plan.</p> <p>The decision-making process would also need to take into account ACT Government procurement requirements.</p>	<p>Pending the outcome of Recommendation 2, the Group will present an initial work schedule for 2008/09 to the Chief Executive for endorsement. The cycle and make up of this schedule will be determined by the Group with assistance from the Policy and Business Support areas of DACT.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should have its own staff for secretarial functions that report to them rather than be reliant on departmental staff.</p>	<p>Not Agreed. The Group will need to determine the best use of current departmental resources and funding to give effect to the most efficient and effective outcome for work that needs to be undertaken.</p> <p>The decision-making process will also need to take into account ACT Government procurement requirements.</p>	<p>The Group has determined that its preference is to have a high level secretariat support from the Disability ACT Policy and Planning team.</p>	<p>April 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 It is recommended that the proposed</p>	<p>Agreed. DHCS recognises the vital role of the</p>	<p>The present community and government co-chair arrangements</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

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Strategic Oversight Group should maintain the present community/government co-chairs arrangement as it both practically and symbolically underlines the key nature of the effort as a joint community/government partnership and upholds the presumption that these two realms can effectively work together.	community sector in developing and providing community initiatives and services in partnership with people with disabilities and Government.	will be maintained irrespective of any agreed changes to the structure and/or composition of the Group (refer also to Recommendation 4).	
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should maintain the present community/government balance in terms of its membership composition, though the incumbents could be replaced on a scheduled periodic basis in the interests of renewal.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>DHCS acknowledges the many positive aspects of the current arrangements outlined by the Evaluation, eg. the presence of a large constituency of interest in continuing the search for an effective strategic forum, the attraction to date of considerable talent and the suitable targeting at a high level within Government.</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities of the joint governance arrangements need to be clarified within ToRs. This should further strengthen meaningful partnership with the community and minimise any role confusion.</p>	<p>The community/ government membership balance will be maintained irrespective of any changes to structure or composition of the Group (refer also to Recommendation 4).</p> <p>The Group operating policy will include but not be limited to term of appointment, recruitment and replacement of members and code of conduct.</p>	Ongoing.
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>It is recommended that the mandate of the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should clearly indicate that its role is to not monitor at the project performance level but rather at the systems performance level subject to strategic priorities.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Recommendations from the Review of the Role of Government that have been presented to the Minister for Disability have also been provided to the Group (refer also to Recommendation 2). Much of the next stage of implementation involves strategic decisions in relation to prioritising, designing and implementing service systems reform. The Group will be able to determine its involvement from the onset</p>	<p>Based on the ACT Government's overall directions, the Group will negotiate and agree with the Chief Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic priorities that will guide the development of the service delivery system over the next seven years (the remaining timeframe of <i>Challenge 2014</i>); and • KPIs (along with the timeframes, 	May 2008.

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	<p>and present its strategic agenda for consideration by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>It will be important that any Future Directions timeframe is in keeping with <i>Challenge 2014</i>.</p> <p>The Executive Director Disability ACT will keep the Group updated on the status of the recommendations and any changes to ACT Government policy direction.</p>	<p>method of monitoring and reporting).</p> <p>These KPIs will be incorporated into Disability ACT's annual business planning cycle and reported on in the proposed Group Annual Report.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 11 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should meet with the Chief Executive quarterly for the first several years until another schedule of meetings seems preferable to both parties.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Group would need to consider the purpose of the meetings with the Chief Executive and set the frequency of meeting times and the agenda accordingly, especially if this is to form the basis of the relationship between the Chief Executive and the proposed Group.</p>	<p>The Group will reach agreement with the Chief Executive on the frequency and purpose of regular meetings.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group and its working groups can seek briefings and dialogue from other parts of government, the community and Disability ACT that might help it with its task.</p>	<p>Agreed. It would be essential that the Group has its work plan and budget finalised by 31 March each year to ensure that key resource requirements, capacity development and constraints upon system change have been identified and form the basis of the negotiation between the Group and DHCS on breadth and volume of workload.</p> <p>DHCS provides this assistance to the Minister's Disability Advisory Council. The model has been successful to date.</p>	<p>Refer also to Recommendations 2 & 6. The Group Secretariat will, under the direction of the Group co-chairs, co-ordinate collection, collation and analysis of information and dissemination to all members.</p>	<p>April 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group can seek an external review of its own performance</p>	<p>Agreed. Given the highly strategic nature of the work undertaken by the proposed Group and the close interface with Government on</p>	<p>Refer also to Recommendation 10. The Group will determine the process for review and reporting on KPIs on an annual basis and</p>	<p>April 2008.</p>

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<p>every three years as resources permit.</p>	<p>policy direction, it will be essential that the agreed KPIs be monitored and reported on not only in Group annual reporting but that they also form the basis of the dialogue between the Group and the Executive Director Disability ACT.</p> <p>In relation to future evaluations, it will be necessary for the Group to establish the framework for evaluation in the first quarter 2008 to ensure that the right information is being collected and collated and to inform trends.</p>	<p>include this in the ToR.</p> <p>The Group will determine and agree the evaluation framework by April 2008 and inform Disability ACT on the required data and the format for presentation.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 14 It is recommended that the Minister of the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Service shall have the option of releasing all or part of the proposed Group's proposed annual report to the DHCS Chief Executive.</p>	<p>Not Agreed. The Chief Executive established the Group to oversee the implementation of the Disability ACT policy framework and as such the Group does not have a direct report to the Minister for Disability. As the Annual Report will be based on agreed KPIs and therefore a reflection of the Group's activities and achievements, the format and content of the report will need to be negotiated and agreed between the Chief Executive and the Group. The Chief Executive wants to encourage transparency in this process and therefore would prefer that the Annual Report be available to key stakeholders and used as a feedback mechanism for the Group against the agreed KPIs.</p> <p>In addition, the public release of the Group Annual Report (or summary report), and the public scrutiny that such an exercise attracts will ensure both appropriate self-</p>	<p>Refer also to Recommendation 10. Along with the KPIs, the Group and Chief Executive will agree the format, likely content, headings and method and responsibilities of public reporting that will be undertaken annually.</p>	<p>May 2008 for release in June 2008.</p>

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	examination by the Group in preparing the report and assist the Group to remain focused on its strategic intent.		
<p>Recommendation 15 It is recommended that the mandate of the proposed Strategic Oversight Group should clearly indicate the expectation that such a group exists as a key safeguard to ensure that even legitimate narrow interests in the system cannot be allowed to, in any way, limit the public's interest in ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities and their families in the ACT are strategically paramount in the system.</p>	<p>Agreed. How the Group is perceived by the sector will determine the creditability given to its output. Specifying of the code of conduct and ethical responsibilities of the Group will provide a basis for both self-monitoring and external monitoring and reviewing of performance as well as management of conflicts of interest that may arise. It will be important that the Group gives consideration to conflict resolution process and embeds these in the code of conduct.</p> <p>To enable the Group to operate within its ToR and deliver against the KPIs, all members will need to have access, from time to time, to highly sensitive information. Clarity must be developed around the responsibilities that govern the privileges of this position to ensure that trust is maintained between the Group and DHCS.</p>	<p>The Group will consider this in the development of its ToRs.</p> <p>The Secretariat will develop a policy for alerting and handling of sensitive information along with a disputes resolution policy.</p>	April 2008.
<p>Recommendation 16 It is recommended that the members and co-chairs of the proposed Strategic Oversight Group be appointed by the Minister of the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Service after consultation with the Chief Executive for staggered five year terms as independent persons seeking to contribute to improved conditions of life for people with disabilities and their families in the ACT.</p>	<p>Not Agreed. (Refer also to Recommendation 14). The Minister for Disability has an established Disability Advisory Council to provide policy advice on issues affecting people with disability, their families and carers. Another group of this nature in a jurisdiction of this size has potential to create confusion and divide stakeholders.</p> <p>The purpose of the Group is different to the advisory role in that there is an expectation</p>	Refer to Recommendations 3 & 4.	N/A

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	that the Group work in partnership with DHCS to determine the policy changes need to effect systemic change.		
<p>Recommendation 17 In conjunction with Recommendation 2, it is recommended that efforts be taken to link persistently expressed community needs with the precise area of needed systems change that are implicated in these needs.</p>	<p>Agreed. Refer to Recommendation 2.</p>	<p>The Group will receive data from the 2007/08 funding round to complement information in the Funding Plan. This information will assist the Group to identify and advise the Chief Executive on persistently expressed community need to be considered in future planning.</p> <p>This recommendation will be incorporated into the Group KPIs.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18 It is recommended that the Future Directions process be extended to 2009 to allow enough time for the more strategic focus that is recommended be given sufficient time to show benefits.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Chief Executive notes the Evaluator's advice that five years is a more realistic timeframe for systems change to become evident. However, Future Directions is the ACT Governments policy on progressing outcomes for people with disability in the ACT.</p> <p>The Group will have a significant role in the development of Future Directions: 2009-2014.</p>	<p>The Group will take advice from the Chief Executive in relation to the ACT Government's preference for the extension of one year for Future Directions. In the interim, the Group will refocus it work plan on initiatives that will have more systemic impacts and corresponds more closely to the aspirations in <i>Challenge 2014</i>.</p> <p>Theses comments will be reflected in the revised ToR and KPIs.</p>	<p>April 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19 It is recommended that the Future Directions initiative invest more energy into investigating non-ACT examples that would show promise in addressing the needs and systems change areas identified in Recommendations 2 and 17.</p>	<p>Noted. DHCS and Disability ACT have invested a percentage of total budget in providing sponsorship internally and externally for individuals to travel nationally and internationally to view and feedback on best practice models. Additionally, Disability ACT sponsors visitors to the ACT,</p>	<p>On advice from the Group, Disability ACT will develop a more formal development program to assist transparency in decision-making. This program will link to the Group KPIs.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>

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	<p>either singularly or in partnership with the community, to engage in a range of developmental opportunities. Learnings from these activities have formed the basis on many small and significant developments in practice over the past four years, which was noted by Evaluator. Both DHCS and Disability ACT intend to continue this valuable practice.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 20 It is recommended that a new Strategic Plan be developed in conjunction between DACT and the proposed Strategic Oversight Group to focus solely upon impacting key systems change objectives. This would be distinct from any annual operational and budgetary plan of DACT.</p>	<p>Agreed. Refer also to Recommendations 10 & 18. The mandate to determine the extent of systems change lies with Government as the duly elected body. It will be important for the Group to ensure that key systems change initiatives are consistent with Government policy as the new Strategic Plan would need to go through a Cabinet process.</p> <p>The Group will need to determine if its role is to develop the Strategic Plan or the policy framework and oversight the development of the Strategic Plan that comes from the policy framework.</p>	<p>Disability ACT will ensure the Group has updated and timely information in relation to ACT Government policy direction to ensure the Group is able to advise Government through the Chief Executive in a timely manner.</p> <p>The Group will provide advice on what it believes its role is and this will be incorporated into the ToRs.</p>	<p>To be agreed.</p> <p>To be agreed.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21 It is recommended that any such systemic change targets as described in Recommendations 17 and 20 results in proposals that sees the ACT system as being a single system as opposed to solving problems only from within established silos.</p>	<p>Agreed. Recommendations from the Review of the Role of Government have a strong focus on a single systems approach for delivering better outcomes for individuals across ACT.</p> <p>Current government members of the proposed Group are at a sufficient level within their organisations to contribute to proposals and actions that have potential to impact on the system as a whole.</p>	<p>Refer to Recommendations 2, 17, & 20.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 22 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group generate linked proposals that would merge funding streams wherever possible, divert more funds towards negotiable individual support arrangements that are under consumer control and that are portable within the ACT system, that allow service users the flexibility of waiving onerous and invasive bureaucratic requirements in the interests of flexibility and responsiveness and generally simplify the system.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Evaluator notes there are some small but significant initiatives already being implemented in the ACT that are under consumer control and have the potential to impact positively on systems change if encouraged to develop. The Evaluator also notes that these initiatives have developed outside of the Future Directions Structure.</p>	<p>Disability ACT will brief the Group on the range of consumer managed arrangements that exist in ACT along with any initiatives that are funded by the ACT Government but have limited departmental involvement.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>
<p>Recommendation 23 It is recommended that all key systems design and leadership roles in the DACT system be optimally filled by people who know most about the lives of people with disabilities, as opposed to having those filled solely with persons with financial and bureaucratic identities, but who lack a sense of what is most needed by people “on the ground”.</p>	<p>Not Agreed. There is a clearly agreed vision for people with disability in the ACT that is articulated in <i>Challenge 2014</i>. This vision is incorporated into recruitment practices in Disability ACT. People within Disability ACT are selected on the basis of their values, attitudes, skills and knowledge.</p> <p>From time to time Disability ACT intentionally recruits people who have no background in the sector, knowledge of the system and/or limited knowledge or exposure to people with disabilities but whose attitude, values and the skills are compatible with the vision. This ensures that the leadership team within Disability ACT and in the community continues to be challenged on its assumptions, directions and relationships with people with disability</p>	<p>Disability ACT will continue to recruit people with diverse backgrounds, skills and knowledge into the team to ensure that the diversity within the disability population is represented and that people with disabilities have access to the best representation possible. Some of these people may not have intimate knowledge of the lives of people with disabilities but will demonstrate attitudes, values and beliefs that are compatible with the vision for all people with a disability in the ACT.</p>	<p>N//A</p>

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<p>Recommendation 24 It is recommended that the proposed Strategic Oversight Group continue with the Future Directions emphasis on strengthening the community service sector, in conjunction with community services leaders and the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, by undertaking work that would reinforce the goal of strengthening community services. This would include assisting existing or newly forming community service providers to become more proficient at working with more empowered service models, more confident and educated about possible innovations, strengthened in creating more socially inclusive models, better able to partner with other agencies, more clear about how to improve quality, proficient with minimally bureaucratic practices, developmental in terms of staff, able to transform from outdated service models and accountable for their governance and stewardship of resources and people's lives.</p>	<p>and the families that support them.</p> <p>Agreed. National Disability Services ACT has included this in its 'Strengthening the Sector' work program, in which DHCS has agreed to provide resources to implement the key strategies. In addition, DHCS has undertaken considerable work through the Joint Government Reference Group and initiatives such as the Support Workers Events, the Disability Workforce Strategy, sponsorship of sector conferences, a service quality framework that includes self-assessments, external audits and annual quality improvement action plans.</p> <p>The Review of the Role of Government has given renewed emphasis on a whole-of-sector approach and further work will be implemented through these recommendations.</p> <p>Disability ACT notes the Evaluator's advice that service delivery investments are generally enhanced by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear development directions attached to implementation targets; • good people development investments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) values training: b) exposure to proven innovations: c) good mentoring and consultation: d) partnership with people with disabilities and families: e) exchanges with best practices locations/persons: f) opportunities to be creative, show leadership, test abilities: g) leadership development; 	<p>Briefings will be provided to the Group on the NDS Strengthening the Sector project and the Joint Government Reference Group recommendations and actions to date.</p> <p>Refer recommendation 2.</p>	<p>April 2008.</p>

Recommendation	DHCS Response	Actions	Timeframes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying quality practice, targets; • creating demonstrations, pilots, etc, and rigorously evaluating and evolving them; • assembling inspired work groups around key challenges; • addressing organisational issues in the light of service development aims and unmet needs; and • developing sector sharing/collaboration and unified efforts. 		