



THE
SUPPORT
LOOP

Managing support plans, client goals and feedback from Community Support Workers to ensure reliable, client focussed care in Home and Community Care services.

A project of the Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership:



in partnership with the HACC Active Service Model Industry Consultants.

An outcome of the Community Support Worker Monitoring and Feedback project. This project was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments under the HACC program.

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The project partners acknowledge traditional owners across the state of Victoria and pay respect to Elders past, present and future.

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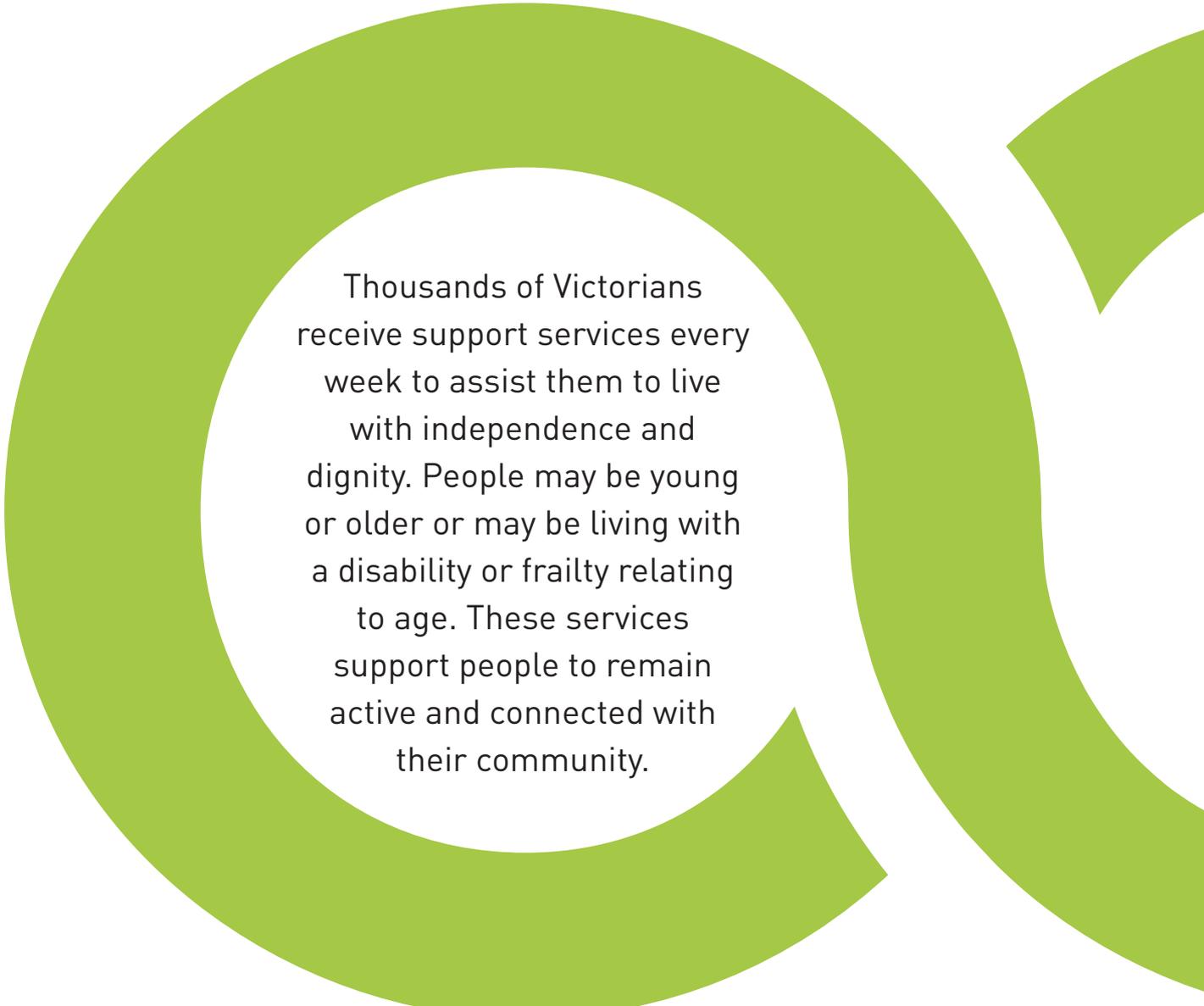
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■ Introduction



Thousands of Victorians receive support services every week to assist them to live with independence and dignity. People may be young or older or may be living with a disability or frailty relating to age. These services support people to remain active and connected with their community.



Introduction

Thousands of Victorians receive support services every week to assist them to live with independence and dignity. People may be young or older or may be living with a disability or frailty relating to age. These services support people to remain active and connected with their community. The type of services provided are determined according to an assessment process. A support plan is developed by an assessment service and/or the service delivery organisation with the person and /or their carer to identify the strengths and needs of the person.

The support plan describes the actions and strategies, either long or short term, to achieve these goals.

Services can be delivered under a range of funding and administrative structures, including:

- Home and Community Care (HACC)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

From 1 July 2016 many of the clients receiving HACC services across Victoria will transition to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

Regardless of the funding source The Support Loop describes good practice and will support the working relationships between the client and the Community Support Worker. The overall architecture of these programs is very similar:

- A person is screened, an assessment is undertaken
- A plan to support the person, based on their strengths and living circumstances, documents support needs and strategies to achieve personal goals
- Information from the assessment and care planning process is provided to a trained support worker who works with the person on their individual goals
- Arrangements for monitoring progress and changes are discussed with the person and there is an agreed process to gather and share feedback
- The feedback may be used at any stage to initiate or inform a change, a review of care or a re-assessment.



Introduction

This resource has been developed with funding from the HACC program around the idea that:

Community Support Workers in the HACC program play a vital role in supporting people to meet their goals whilst monitoring progress and providing feedback. Effective monitoring and feedback ensures that support plans are appropriate, relevant and responsive to the changing needs and circumstances of the person.

The term “Support Loop” has been developed for this resource to describe effective communication systems regarding monitoring and feedback.

This resource builds on the findings of a 2013 Municipal Association of Victoria study which considered the ‘trends and changes in the delivery of HACC ASM services through the role of home support workers’. This comprehensive study revealed significant variability in the structures, systems and even roles of Community Support Workers across Victoria, particularly with respect to monitoring clients and providing feedback.

The Active Service Model Industry Consultants from across the State also noted that some HACC service providers have actively focussed on involving Community Support Workers as members of a team based approach to support planning and review. On the other hand, other service providers have indicated difficulties maintaining a system of reliable communication based on monitoring and feedback by Community Support Workers.

The project to develop this resource has involved a wide range of service providers who have been engaged in a major workshop, a series of consultation interviews and an extensive critical readers group.

This resource has been developed in three parts:

- **Part A: The Support Loop idea**
– an overview of the idea, the principles behind the thinking, a map of the potential benefits and an outline of the ‘system’
- **Part B: Suggested approaches**
– over forty practical ideas have been collected and collated in such a way that service providers can assess current practice and consider improvements; a set of sample tools is also provided
- **Part C: Improvement and change**
– approaches to using the Support Loop system as a mechanism to drive improvement and change are discussed.

Over time, many more providers may be delivering services via two, three or even all four funding streams. This multiplicity of funding sources may necessitate a range of administrative and financial systems to enable sound program management and accountability. One of the advantages of the Support Loop is that it can be implemented across any of the funding systems to ensure that all direct care workers monitor clients and provide feedback in a reliable communication system.



Introduction

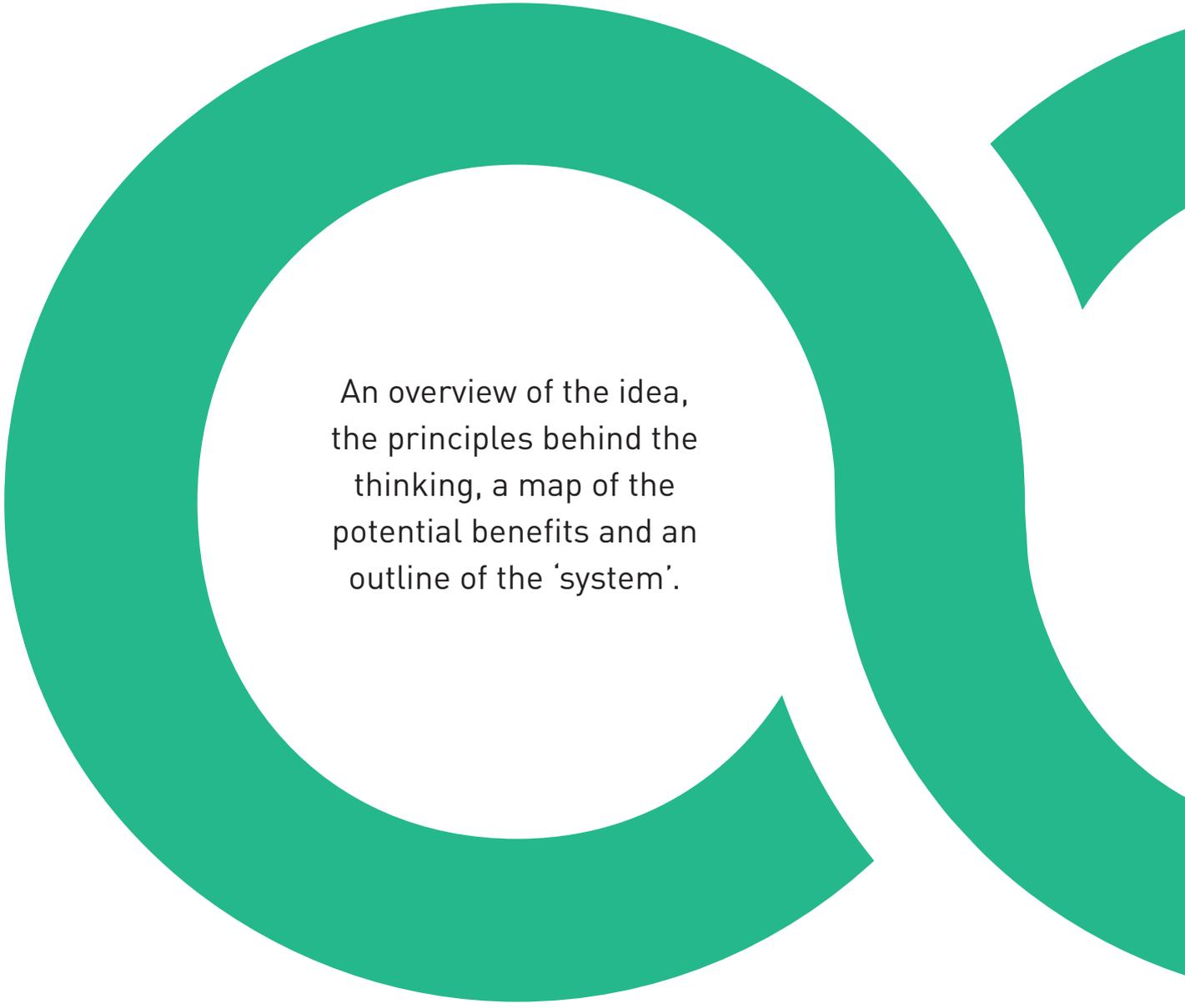
Throughout this resource the following terms are used in relation to the HACC program. It is understood that different terms may be used in other funded programs.

The definitions below have been developed specifically to support the implementation of the Support Loop.

Support Loop	A communication system that involves Community Support Workers monitoring clients and providing feedback within a thoroughly planned and documented set of policies, procedures and tools that clarify roles and expectations.
Community Support Worker	Staff member who delivers a wide range of services: home care, social support, home maintenance, transport and personal care. It is understood that providers use a wide range of titles for these roles.
Team Leader	Staff member who provides support, supervision and co-ordination to a group of Community Support Workers.
Flags	<p>The term 'flags' relates to a set of prompts to assist the Community Support Worker to focus monitoring and feedback. For example: if the person is receiving a short term service following a hospital stay the flag may relate to an agreed level of mobility or capacity, thus flagging the time to cease or scale down the service.</p> <p><i>The term flag is not solely used to describe problems or risks or concerns but any aspect of care that may benefit from careful monitoring.</i></p>
Monitoring & feedback	<p>Monitoring and feedback is the communication exchange that involves the person and the team (and any other services involved) to ensure that support plans are appropriate, relevant and responsive to the changing needs and circumstances of the person.</p> <p><i>This is not restricted to emergency, ill-health or problematic situations – monitoring and feedback that relates to positive progress towards achievement of goals is also vitally important to the support provided to each client.</i></p>
Support Plan	A Support Plan (or Goal Directed Care Plan) outlines significant goals for each person and is a component of documentation completed through the Assessment process. A copy of the Support Plan should be provided to the Community Support Worker.
Summary Information	<p>The Summary Information Form is a template which has been developed to capture summary information that needs to be provided to the Community Support Worker to facilitate the implementation of the Support Plan.</p> <p><i>This can supplement the Support Plan. The tool may also provide a current overview, which can be useful when a Community Support Worker is filling in at short notice.</i></p>

■ PART A:

The Support Loop idea



An overview of the idea, the principles behind the thinking, a map of the potential benefits and an outline of the 'system'.



PART A: The Support Loop idea

What is the 'Support Loop'?

The idea of a 'support loop' is very simple.

Information that is critical to planning and implementing the support of a client is shared with the Community Support Worker. In turn, information that relates to the changing needs and circumstances of the person is fed into a loop that ensures that the person remains at the centre of their care. This system can be summarised in the following diagram:



Community Support Workers are integral to the Support Loop system. It is often said that they are the 'eyes and ears' of any HACC service. Community Support Workers build up mutually trusting relationships with clients and are able to recognise quite subtle changes in health, mood and capacity.

Many service providers involved in the development of this resource have worked diligently to develop and maintain a communication loop and have demonstrated the benefits of working as a team where each role (Assessment Officer, Manager, Team Leader and Community Support Worker) is understood, respected and valued.



PART A: The Support Loop idea

The Support Loop principles

This resource has gathered ideas and input from many service providers who have been working to develop and maintain team work in a structured system that values the role of Community Support Workers in providing feedback regarding clients.

Throughout the consultation process, service providers have discussed four principles that positively support the development and maintenance of a team based monitoring and feedback system. The principles that have emerged through this consultation are:

- A system to ensure reliable monitoring and feedback puts the client at the centre of their care
- The value of a support plan is greatly enhanced by the reliable monitoring of progress to ensure that support plans are appropriate, relevant and responsive to the changing needs and circumstances of the person
- Responsiveness and timeliness in support planning, review and service delivery is supported by an effective system of monitoring and feedback
- Maintaining an ongoing system of monitoring and feedback ensures reliability and accountability for all roles in the service.

Team culture, we are all on the same team, that makes a difference

– **Community Support Worker**

In some ways this is all very simple. We do a lot of work on assessment, why wouldn't we monitor progress?

– **Assessment Officer**

As a Community Support Worker I either get too much information, and no time to read it, or barely any information at all.

– **Community Support Worker**



PART A: The Support Loop idea

The Support Loop benefits

Many of the service providers who have established and maintained well-structured communication and feedback loops have been able to demonstrate clear benefits for all involved.

The comment that 'the work has been worth it' has been made many times by those keen to promote the value of team work, respect and communication. In summary, these benefits include:

Benefits for the clients

- Clients have a clear understanding of the Community Support Worker role and the relationship of that role within the support plan
- A service response can be taken in a more timely manner, changes are noted earlier and the information gathered can be used to identify changes over time
- The balance between safety and independence in the planning and delivery of services is clarified
- The review and re-assessment process is enhanced by the available feedback leading to more client focused support plans.

I love that I get good information back when I provide feedback to the office; it helps because you can follow something through the next time you see the client.

– Community Support Worker

Benefits for the Community Support Worker

- The Community Support Worker feels positive about working within a team where their role is valued and understood
- Opportunities for development of new skills in a learning environment is enhanced
- Accountability is recognised as an opportunity to learn and develop
- Creating positive change for clients, through providing timely feedback, reinforces job satisfaction and pride.

Benefits for the service provider

- A team where all roles are respected and valued is a cohesive and productive team where people want to work, learn and grow
- Satisfied clients reinforce the positive reputation of your service in the community
- A reliable system of monitoring and feedback is a robust quality assurance tool
- Risk management strategies can be developed in a proactive, positive and structured manner
- An effective monitoring and feedback system saves time and money and reduces confusion regarding roles and practices.

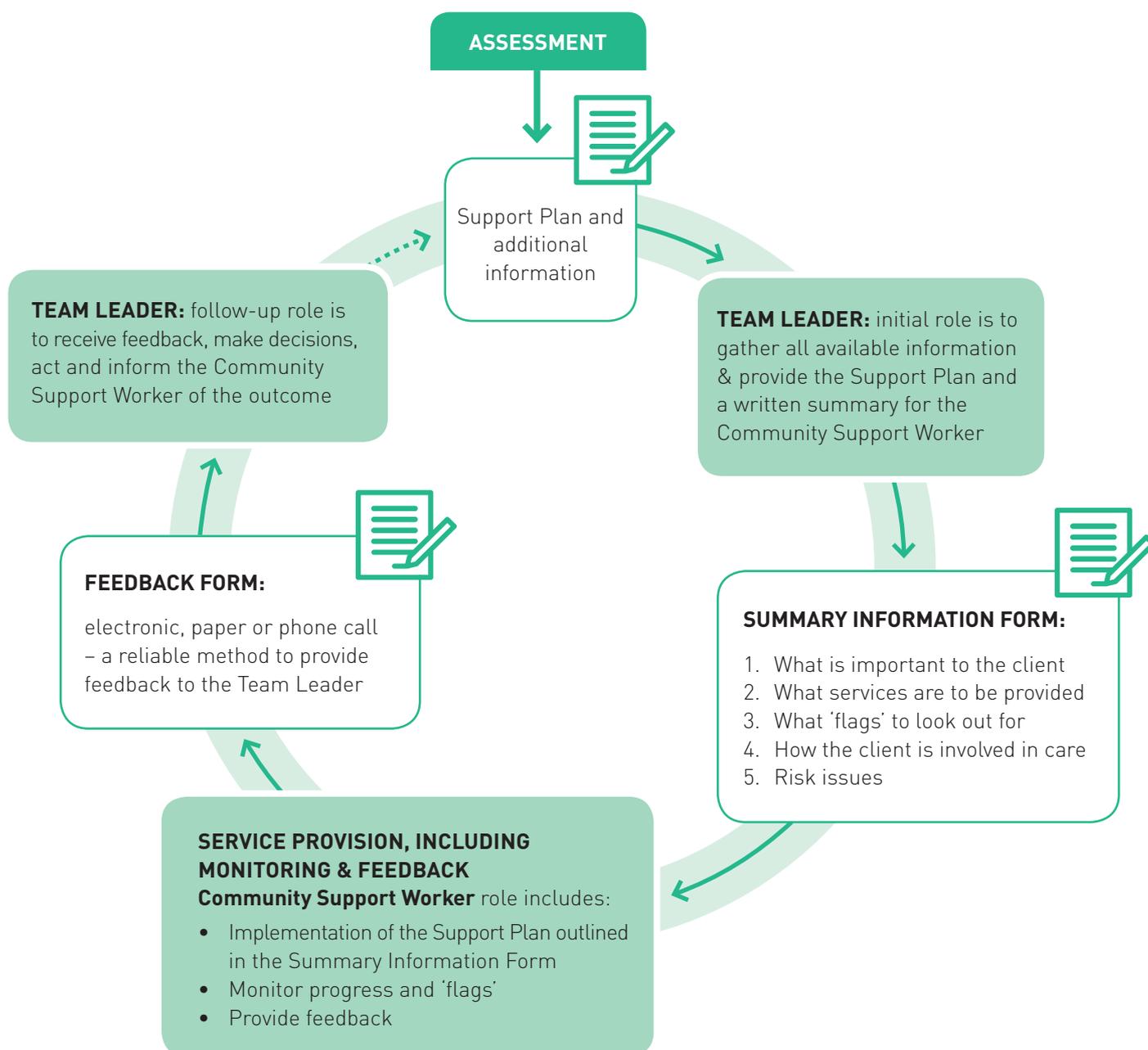


PART A: The Support Loop idea

The Support Loop system

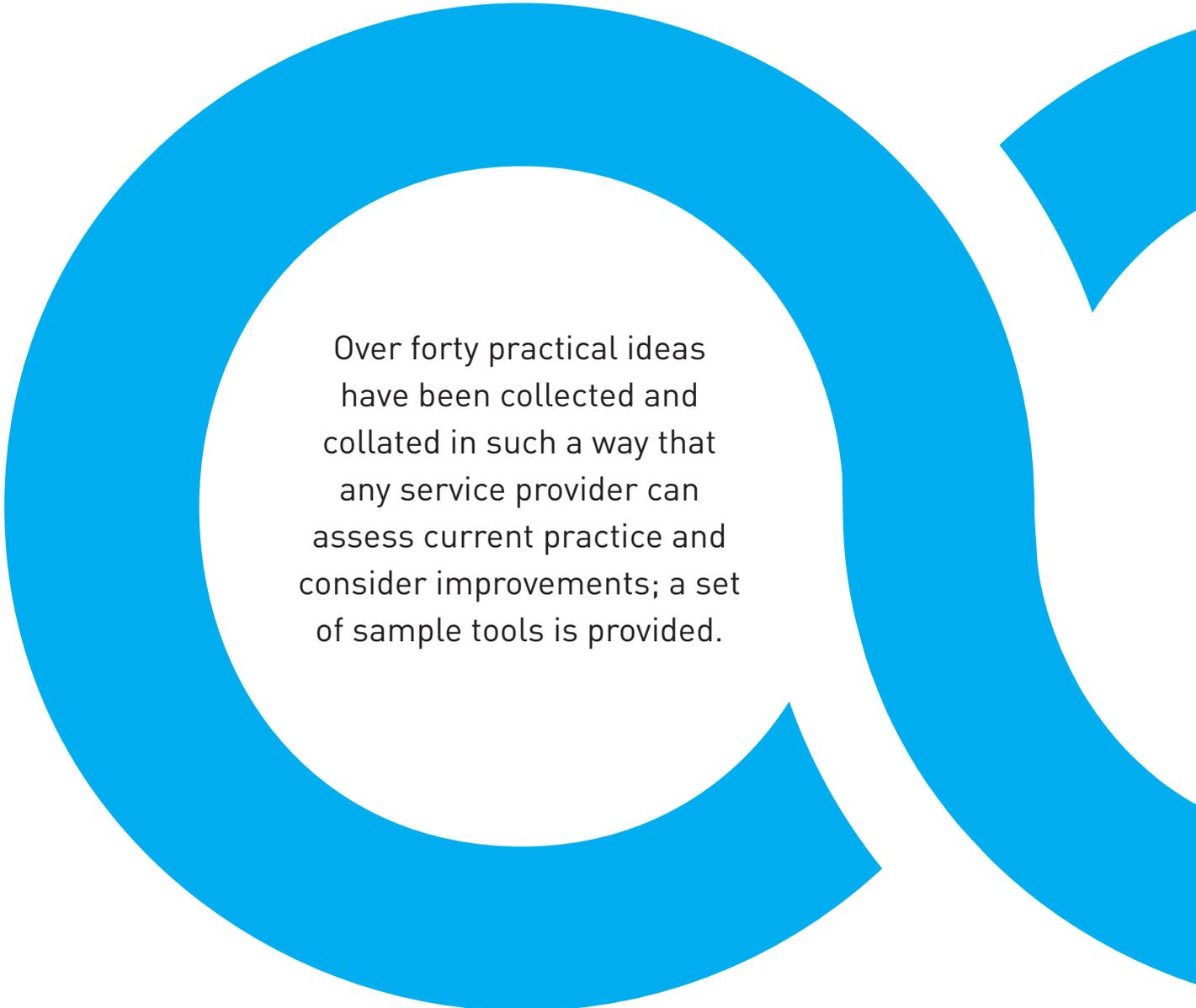
The Support Loop is most successful when reliable systems are in place and understood by all staff in each role.

The following diagram summarises the Support Loop practice and the three key documents: Support Plan, Summary Information Form and Feedback Form.



■ PART B:

Suggested approaches



Over forty practical ideas have been collected and collated in such a way that any service provider can assess current practice and consider improvements; a set of sample tools is provided.



PART B: Suggested approaches

The Support Loop essentials

Many of the service providers involved in the consultation for this resource have been working towards developing reliable systems for monitoring and feedback.

Many tips and ideas were gathered throughout the consultation process and collating these ideas has revealed a set of 'essential elements' that underpin a systems approach to maintaining reliable communication regarding each individual client.

The Support Loop essential elements have been identified as:

People & culture

Staff members feel valued in a positive team environment where everyone understands and respects the skills, knowledge and capacity of all team members

Our clients

Clients are at the centre of their care and we work together with them on the development of and progress towards their goals

Service provision

Services are provided by skilled and informed Community Support Workers who work with the person to monitor progress and provide timely feedback that helps shape future planning

Shared care

Arrangements for inter-agency shared care and the involvement of the Community Support Worker in joint planning and review are strengthened

Organisational processes

The program is backed up by clear policies and procedures, a quality management system and a structured approach to workforce development for all staff in all roles



PART B: Suggested approaches

The Support Loop essentials

The following pages outline around forty suggestions relating to the five essential elements.

Some suggestions may not be appropriate for your setting. Other suggestions may describe current practice in your program.

You may use the templates provided at the back of this document to support your team to identify the ideas for improvement that are most appropriate for your service.

The templates appended to the back of the document are:

- *Appendix template #1: Map of current good practice* – may assist you to track current good practice and indicate evidence that supports quality outcomes relating to the Home Care Standards
- *Appendix template #2: Quality Improvement Action Plan* – may assist you to sort through ideas for improvement in your service.

We all agree; getting a respectful workplace culture is critical. We need to understand and respect each role in the program.

– **Manager**

Why not ask the Community Support Worker; are you getting the information that is most helpful to you?

– **Team Leader**

PART B: Suggested approaches The Support Loop essentials



#	Essential element	Suggestion	What is our current practice?	Ideas for improvement
People & culture				
1.1	Overall culture	<p>Staff members feel valued in a positive team environment where everyone understands and respects the skills, knowledge and capacity of all team members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an 'advisory group' of representatives from across the program to make positive suggestions regarding team culture • Support managers to undertake additional training, eg the Health Coaching course to assist with positive team culture • Managers to keep asking all staff – is your role valued? Provide positive reinforcement of the role • Make sure every role within the service is understood by everyone 		
1.2	Recruiting new Community Support Workers, Team Leaders and other roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that Position Descriptions clearly outline expectations for both monitoring and providing feedback and the role of that position in the communication system • Include at least one scenario-type question involving monitoring and feedback in job interviews – look for staff who have the confidence to do this part of the job and see the value of it • Include the role of monitoring and feedback in the induction process for new staff – reinforce that this is a key role 		
1.3	Making best use of meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep messages to Community Support Workers clear and positive – “you are not JUST Council cleaners” / “your skills in monitoring clients are critical and your feedback is valued” / “the work you do is complex and you need to remember you are not alone” / “we are monitoring the client, not the workers” / “we are all on the journey” • Use collective language in team meetings – our client, our service • Schedule support planning meetings for complex cases 		

PART B: Suggested approaches The Support Loop essentials



#	Essential element	Suggestion	What is our current practice?	Ideas for improvement
Our clients				
2.1	Information to clients	<p>Clients are at the centre of their care and we work together with them on the development of and progress towards their goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure client information (for example a handbook) outlines a clear understanding that the Community Support Worker, in partnership with the client, will monitor progress and provide feedback Consider maintaining a communication book in the home for the person, family members and other service providers and ensure its effective use Ensure all staff members are aware of the information provided to the client (get on the same page) and even use the same words to describe the role and the service and how the person is involved in their care 		
2.2	The assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss monitoring and feedback arrangements with the person and engage them and their carers to participate in the monitoring and feedback of the areas that are most significant to them 		
2.3	Support planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the template used for support plans highlights the strengths / issues / actions / circumstances and flags that need to be monitored The support plan is an agreement that describes the roles of both the Community Support Worker and the person – ensure that the agreement outlines what the Community Support Worker can and cannot do – both verbally and in writing to the person As part of the allocation process of client and Community Support Workers; consider matching hobbies and interests When planning the delivery of care consider the continuity of the Community Support Worker and the opportunity to build a positive long term relationship – we know that most clients prefer consistency (or at least dislike having multiple ‘strangers’ in their home) – consider the role of rostering as a service, not an administrative task – we need to think of our clients as ‘customers’ 		

PART B: Suggested approaches The Support Loop essentials



#	Essential element	Suggestion	What is our current practice?	Ideas for improvement
	Service provision	Services are provided by skilled and informed Community Support Workers who work with the person to monitor progress and provide timely feedback that helps shape future planning		
3.1	Summary for Community Support Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a tool with summary critical information to be read by the Community Support Worker who understands that this summary information is the basis for their supervision and support and service delivery – see the sample 'Summary Information Form below It is not good practice to solely rely on meetings to pass on information regarding the client When a review is scheduled, seek the input of the Community Support Worker Test that the technology used to provide information to Community Support Workers operates effectively Check with the Community Support Workers that the information they receive supports their role and facilitates monitoring and feedback 		
3.2	A Contact Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is a skilled contact person (eg a Team Leader) on the end of the phone for advice / double checking Encourage the positive use of the contact person – train all staff to know how to monitor clients and when to seek support regarding feedback – the decision to provide feedback may be a complex judgement Train up a small number of Community Support Workers to assist with tricky / complex situations where decisions regarding feedback may be particularly difficult – this is a peer support approach 		

PART B: Suggested approaches The Support Loop essentials



#	Essential element	Suggestion	What is our current practice?	Ideas for improvement
	Service provision			
3.3	Providing feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have a 'system' where all feedback is recorded on the client file • Decide as a team how the feedback is to be provided – by phone, in writing, electronically – the actual method you use is not as important as consistency and reliability so that the feedback can be accurately responded to and recorded • Use a consistent tool to gather feedback – see the example 'Feedback Form' below • When the process for providing feedback is in place follow up with training and then more training – focus on scenarios that are 'grey areas' and encourage workers not to be concerned about asking 'silly questions' • Develop a set of procedures, based on practical scenarios, that provide guidance to Community Support Workers regarding the circumstances where feedback is required – including situations where goals have been met, a change in health occurs or a significant change in living circumstances takes place 		
3.4	Action based on the feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear guidelines around action for urgent and non-urgent situations – including a timeline to get back to the Community Support Worker 		
3.5	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of service delivery is beneficial but it can also be wise to introduce an alternative Community Support Worker into a situation to gain a fresh perspective on care – review long term rostering arrangements 		

PART B: Suggested approaches **The Support Loop essentials**



#	Essential element	Suggestion	What is our current practice?	Ideas for improvement
4.1	Shared care Involvement of the Community Support Worker	<p>Arrangements for inter-agency shared care and the involvement of the Community Support Worker in joint planning and review are strengthened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the role of the Community Support Worker when negotiating agreements with other agencies to work in shared care • The information gathered by the Community Support Worker is critical where there is complex, multi-agency care involved; it may be the most accurate and up to date information available – ensure that the Community Care Worker is involved in shared support planning • Where possible it is good practice for the Community Support Worker to attend an interagency planning meeting – even if only the first meeting • If it is not possible for the Community Support Worker to attend case planning meetings; gather the information prior and check if the Community Support Worker is available via phone during a planning meeting 		

PART B: Suggested approaches The Support Loop essentials



#	Essential element	Suggestion	What is our current practice?	Ideas for improvement
Organisational processes				
5.1	Policies and procedures	<p>The program is backed up by clear policies and procedures, a quality management system and a structured approach to workforce development for all staff in all roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies and procedures must support the active participation of Community Support Workers and other team members in the role of monitoring clients and providing feedback Allocate sufficient time to review all policies and procedures - this is time consuming but a great long term investment 		
5.2	Quality & risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The systems for monitoring and feedback could highlight the benefits of being accountable - map monitoring and feedback practice against care standards Ensure guidelines for providing feedback and taking action are developed as evidence of service improvement 		
5.3	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of monitoring and providing feedback can provide a focus for training - for example a training program regarding arthritis can focus on 'what to look out for' so that Community Support Workers feel more confident to provide feedback as it is required Using scenarios is a practical approach to learning / training - Community Support Workers face various scenarios in any week and many of these are complex 'grey areas' where there is potential risk to the client, carer or Community Support Worker Include monitoring for goal attainment and strength development in learning activities - not just decline in capacity 		
5.4	Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of all staff in the process of planning, decision making, systems improvement and quality improvement is essential 		



PART B: Suggested approaches

Sample tools

The following pages outline a set of three sample tools that may be adapted to suit the circumstances of your program and the approach you take to establishing or maintaining a Support Loop.

The sample tools are:

Summary Information Form	<p>This tool describes the suggested minimum information that would assist a Community Support Worker to quickly comprehend the significant information regarding the client.</p> <p>The consultation revealed a range of current approaches to information provision to Community Support Workers from a limited verbal briefing through to documentation that, in some cases, was too extensive for the Community Support Worker to review in the limited time made available.</p> <p>The Summary Information Form may be a useful starting point for consultation with the Community Support Workers and Team Leaders. Please note that the use of the term 'flags' in the Summary Information Form will need to be explained in training and orientation. The term is not restricted to negatives such as ill-health or a decline in capacity. Flags should include feedback regarding positive progress.</p>
Feedback Form	<p>The consultation revealed a range of approaches to forms that gather feedback. The suggested form below could be adapted to an electronic device or a paper based system.</p> <p>The suggested Feedback Form can also be used as part of a team consultation process.</p>
Document review	<p>A review of all program documentation will be essential once a Support Loop system has been designed and developed for your program.</p> <p>The Prompts for Documentation Review template includes a set of prompts to assist with this task.</p>



Summary Information Form

Client name: _____

Contact details: _____

Key dates: _____

1. What is important to this person at this time:

The outcomes sought by the client – based on their goals and their individual strengths and capacity

2. The services we have agreed to deliver:

Activity (What)	Approach (How)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. As part of this agreement the client will:

Record the agreed approach to care outlined in the Support Plan

4. What 'flags' to look out for:

Flags may relate to goals, health, complex care, family issues

5. Risk issues :

Risk management arrangements



Feedback Form

Community Care worker name: _____

Contact details: _____

Date of feedback: / / Urgency Yes No

1. The situation or issue for the client:

2. Suggested action:

3. Goals achieved by the client:

4. Other information:

Signature: _____

Action taken

Action taken by: _____ on: / /

Client information system updated on: / /

Response to feedback provided back to the Community Support Worker on: / /

Date: / / By phone email



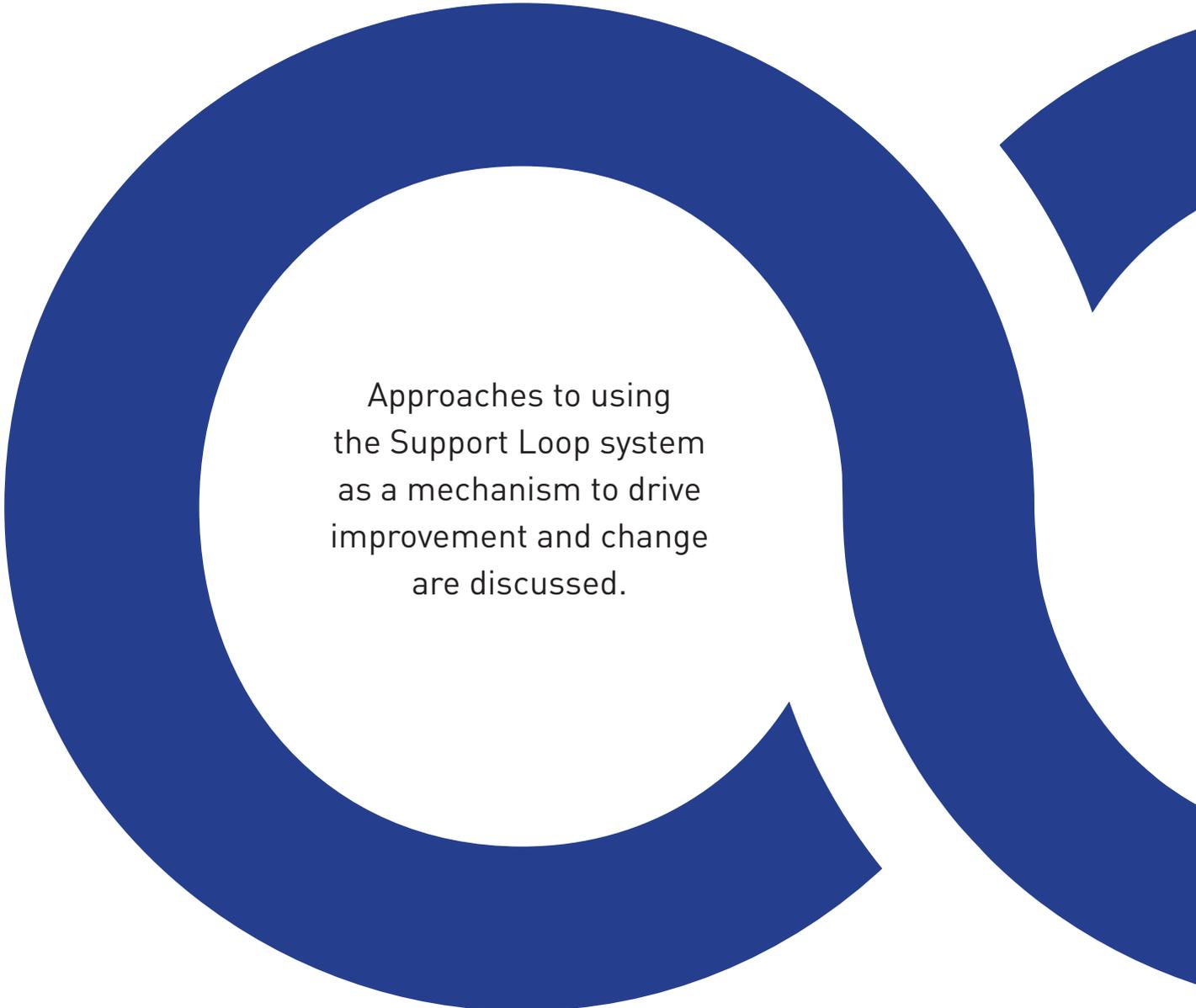
PART B: Suggested approaches

Prompts for Document Review

Documents	Prompts
Position descriptions	Ensure that position descriptions for Assessment Officer, Community Support Worker and Team Leader describe expectations for monitoring and feedback
Recruitment interview	Check for questions that relate to monitoring and feedback – possibly in a scenario format
Client information	Include clear information regarding the process of monitoring and feedback to clarify the role of the Community Support Worker for the client
Assessment documentation	Check that all assessment documentation (including Support Plan) supports monitoring and feedback practice
Information for Community Support Worker	See suggested Summary Information Form as a minimum set of information for every client – check that other information that is available to the Community Support Worker facilitates monitoring and feedback – for example the induction or handbook for staff
Procedure: providing feedback	A clear procedure describing a range of scenarios and the expected level and nature of feedback (including timelines) could be a practical and supportive tool for Community Support Workers
Procedure: feedback response	A procedure for Team Leaders outlining the same scenarios (above) and appropriate responses (including timelines) could be one way to clarify expectations regarding follow up and outcomes
Procedure: recording feedback and action	A procedure to clarify arrangements for recording and managing information regarding feedback and follow up action improve the consistency of information management

■ PART C:

Improvement & quality



Approaches to using the Support Loop system as a mechanism to drive improvement and change are discussed.



PART C: Improvement & quality

The Support Loop & change

After reviewing the list of suggestions on the previous pages it may be clear that there are opportunities for some improvements in aspects of your service.

The following section provides broad advice regarding the process of managing change.

Consult with clients and staff

The involvement of clients and staff members in any decision making is widely accepted as good practice in any contemporary service planning. If people contribute to the change process they are more likely to embrace the changes.

Advice from service providers involved in developing the Support Loop suggested that consultation plays a vital role in service improvement. Some hints include:

- Take the time to allow for consultation – don't rush it
 - One outcome of a well planned consultation process is to clarify and document the roles and functions of each team member
 - At some point you need to involve all of your staff team; at other points it's more effective to only involve a small group of people from across the service
 - Your clients can tell you about how the service affects them, but only if you ask them
- Identify how you are going to make decisions, particularly the difficult decisions, whilst respecting the (varying) opinions of everyone
 - Don't forget to refer to the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) model provided by the Department of Health and Human Services at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/plan-do-study-act-psda-model-workbook>
 - Assume nothing.



PART C: Improvement & quality

The Support Loop & change

Plan for change

The consultation process revealed that a number of service providers have embarked on extensive, planned change management processes to clarify roles and improve communication regarding the client.

Some hints suggested by these service providers include:

1. Document a planning process and timeline (eg over six months or even a year)
2. Develop a communication strategy involving a set of consultation tools – what do you need to know from key people?
3. Identify a process to gather groups of people who represent the different roles and functions across the service – how many groups do you need?
4. Clarify your decision making process before you commence.

The following pages outline two sample tools that may be useful to plan for change:

- A sample approach to planning changes to implement the Support Loop: This tool outlines some step by step activities that could assist you to schedule a set of change processes to implement the Support Loop
- A sample staff consultation tool: This tool outlines one approach to consulting with Community Support Workers regarding key planning and communication issues that underpin the Support Loop system.



PART C: Improvement & quality

The Support Loop & change

A sample approach to planning changes to implement the Support Loop:

Step	Activity	Outcome
1	Contact your Regional ASM Industry Consultant to discuss the Support Loop approach and a schedule for implementation	Background information acquired
2	Use this tool to make an initial list of the ideas that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be implemented at no cost with little effort• Changes that will require significant planning and consultation	Initial scope of potential change mapped
3	Involve the leadership team to identify overall quality improvement requirements and change approach and plan a calendar over a six to twelve month period	Calendar of consultation mapped
4	Develop a communication strategy including your consultation approach – eg working groups, survey, focus groups etc. Identify teams and individuals who need to be involved	Key approaches and people identified
5	Identify and develop the consultation tools required for both clients and staff – see sample following	Consultation tools developed
6	Conduct a staff forum to introduce the quality improvement activity, the change approach and objectives. Outline the calendar of activities to ensure all staff are clear of the process and their role in consultation and decision making. (The ASM IC may assist with this forum)	Clear information provided to all staff – expectations are clear
7	Implement and review planned consultation activities, gather ideas, seek support for initial changes that can be made in a timely manner and provide regular updates to all staff on progress	Initial stages of consultation and change complete
8	Focus the consultation and planning on a range of options available and seek the input of working groups on the relative advantages and disadvantages of these options according to the identified change objectives	Options analysis complete
9	Use the options analysis to drive decisions regarding improvements, structures, systems and resources	Decision making is objective and open
10	Develop communication tools to support a positive agenda for change and the steps to achieve the identified quality improvement objectives	Communicate decisions and change process



PART C: Improvement & quality

The Support Loop & change

A sample Community Support Worker consultation tool:

There are many possible approaches to consulting with staff members. The following sample survey provides just one approach to gauge the overall view of Community Support Workers whilst gathering ideas for improvement.

Community Support Worker Survey: Please rate each statement: 1 (disagreed strongly) to 5 (agreed strongly).		
Statement	Rating	Comment
Your role as a Community Support Worker is valued by the organisation and your colleagues.	1 2 3 4 5	What else would enhance that sense of positive value?
The training provided to you supports your role in monitoring clients and providing feedback.	1 2 3 4 5	What additional training would you suggest?
The day-to-day support provided to you assists your role in monitoring clients and providing feedback.	1 2 3 4 5	What further day-to-day support would you suggest?
The information provided to you regarding each client assists your role in monitoring clients and providing feedback.	1 2 3 4 5	How can information regarding the client be improved?
The feedback you provide to the Team Leader regarding the client is addressed in a timely manner .	1 2 3 4 5	What would you suggest to improve the response to feedback?
The action taken by the Team Leader in response to your feedback benefits the client and you in your role.	1 2 3 4 5	What would you suggest to improve the response to feedback?
Other ideas to improve communication regarding your clients:		



PART C: Improvement & quality

The Support Loop & quality

A well designed and maintained Support Loop, based on consultation with clients and staff, would demonstrate a capacity to address many of the expected outcomes of the quality assurance systems relevant to your program.

A range of quality improvement standards, including the Home Care Standards, are used to assist service providers to measure progress towards quality systems and outcomes. The table below lists the standards and expected outcomes of the Home Care Standards alongside some prompts that may assist to gather the evidence that your program is continuously improving.

Standard	Expected Outcome	Prompts
2: Appropriate Access and Service Delivery	2.1: Service Access Each service user's access to services is based on consultation with the service user (and/or their representative), equity, consideration of available resources and program eligibility.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system, particularly the Summary Information Form
	2.2: Assessment Each service user participates in an assessment appropriate to the complexity of their needs and with consideration of their cultural and linguistic diversity.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system, particularly the Summary Information Form and any other information provided to Community Support Workers
	2.3: Care Plan Development and Delivery Each service user and/or their representative, participates in the development of a care/service plan that is based on assessed needs and is provided with the care and/or services described in their plan.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system, particularly the Summary Information Form and any supervision policies and procedures



PART C: Improvement & quality

The Support Loop & quality

Standard	Expected Outcome	Prompts
2: Appropriate Access and Service Delivery	2.4: Service User Reassessment Each service user's needs are monitored and regularly reassessed taking into account any relevant program guidelines and in accordance with the complexity of the service user's needs. Each service users' care/service plans are reviewed in consultation with them.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system, particularly the Summary Information Form & the Feedback Form, along with all policies and procedures
	2.5: Service User Referral The service provider refers service users (and/or their representative) to other providers as appropriate.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system

Standard	Expected Outcome	Prompts
3: Service User Rights and Responsibilities	3.1: Complaints and Service User Feedback Complaints and service user feedback are dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system is relevant to this outcome, particularly evidence that the system is working effectively eg an audit of responses
	3.2: Independence The independence of service users is supported, fostered and encouraged.	All documentation involved in the Support Loop system provides evidence that the independence of the person is being supported and monitored.



Acknowledgments

The Victorian Home and Community Care service sector has been on a long and engaging journey to ensure that the client is at the centre of care.

In the spirit of this journey the project partners would like to thank all those service providers who have contributed their ideas, enthusiasm and commitment to this project. In many of these conversations the desire to develop even stronger systems to ensure a strengths based approach to ensuring the client is at the centre of care has been very evident.

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- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Baw Baw Shire Council
- Bayside City Council
- Benalla Rural City Council
- Calvary Community Care
- City of Ballarat
- City of Casey
- City of Darebin
- City of Greater Bendigo
- City of Greater Geelong
- City of Greater Dandenong
- City of Manningham
- City of Melbourne
- Colac Otway Shire
- Greater Shepparton City Council
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Horsham Rural City Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Maroondah City Council
- mecwacare
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- Victorian Department of Health & Human Services
- Whitehorse City Council

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The Active Service Model Industry Consultants hope that this project will further strengthen client monitoring and feedback. The Active Service Model Industry Consultant in your region is available to assist you to use the resources and tools in this report to support quality improvement within your organisation. Contact details can be found at:

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/home-and-community-care/hacc-quality-and-service-development/active-service-model/regional-industry-consultants>

Appendix template #1 – Map of current good practice



Across all five 'essential elements', identify where current practice within the program provides documented evidence of compliance with the Home Care Standards.

Essential element	What we are doing well - demonstration of compliance	Standard (1 ,2 or 3)	Expected Outcome
Eg: 3.4 Action based on the feedback	There is a clear system to reliably respond to feedback from Community Support Workers that ensures the independence of the client is maintained	3: Service User Rights and Responsibilities	3.5 Independence

Appendix template #2 – Quality Improvement Action Plan



Map those suggestions for quality improvement that are 'simple' (requiring little effort or change) and 'significant' (requiring planning and resourcing). Identify who will be responsible for these changes along with a timeline.

Nature of change	Essential element	Action	Person responsible	Timeline
Simple changes: changes that can happen within existing resources	Eg: People and culture	Check that the Position Description clearly outlines expectations for both monitoring and feedback	Team Leader	February
Significant changes: changes that will require further planning				

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