Hello Staff, Parents, Carers and friends,

Have you noticed that our days are already getting a little lighter and longer??? With the cold and wet conditions over the last fortnight several staff members and students at the Burnie campus in particular have been absent due to illness. We hope the worst is over and those members of the school community are soon fit and well.

I would like to report on several changes that have occurred since 1st July.

**Reforms in the Disability Sector**

Many families may already be aware that Disability Services have now been absorbed into a new agency – Gateway. The Reform Implementation Unity (RIU) has been working with representatives to look at how intake, assessment and referral pathways to Gateway can best be transferred.

The Gateway will have **three** main functions in relation to disability services as follows:

**Intake and Assessment**

Provide information to individuals and services contacting the Gateway about both generic and specialist disability services within their local area. This will occur through a tiered approach:

- General enquiries, requests for information
- Screening Assessment of need but referral to a generic service
- Targeted Assessment of need referral to specialist disability service

When contact is made with Gateway an initial screening assessment tool will be used. This tool assists the Gateway to determine what kind of response/service is required to meet the needs of the client.

In completing the initial screening it may become apparent that a more detailed assessment is required by applying the Targeted Assessment for Disability Services. This assessment tool gathers more detailed information about the client, from the client themselves, family carers and other previous assessments. The tool also determines eligibility for specialist disability services as outlined in the Disability Services Act 1992.
Active Monitoring

The role of active monitoring in the Gateway will be to work with people with a disability in a range of ways:

- Provide needs based contact with self managed clients who do not need coordination on a regular basis but need to know where to call if they have an issue. A good example of this is someone living in private rental accommodation who attends a supported employment service but only requires assistance when the lease agreement is reviewed.
- Maintain a needs register or waiting list for services. The Gateway will maintain regular contact with people on the waiting list to monitor their needs and potentially look at interim solutions if the needs increase but a service is still not available. This is anticipated to alleviate crisis response.

The active monitoring role of the Gateway will also include working with the specialist disability services sector organizations (Accommodation Support, Respite, Community Access, Individual Support) in relation to the capacity of the sector to accept referrals.

Local Area Coordination

The Gateway will provide a coordination function for clients in the local area. This can occur as follows:

- A single session response to people in immediate need
- Ongoing person centred planning as a result of the targeted assessment prior to referral to services
- Case management to clients who require ongoing support to access and stay connected with services.

Based on feedback from the focus groups there may be clients that receive a small amount of support from the funded service sector, e.g. 1 day a week of a community access service, 6 hrs a week of an ISP. These clients may need coordination from the Gateway to secure additional services or to monitor their needs and this would be an appropriate function of the Gateway.

Brokerage

The Gateway will have access to brokerage funds to provide time limed support and/or crisis intervention where needed. This may occur if access to a funded service is not available, or the client/family require an immediate service response.

Co-located Disability Services Officer

It is proposed to have a co-located DHHS Disability Services Officer in each of the Gateway’s. The functions of this role will be to provide advice and support to the Gateway where there is lack of clarity around eligibility and complexity of referrals. This role will be employed and managed by DHHS and will be a member of the area Team.

In Conclusion

These changes may be very confusing for parents and carers to fully understand at this moment. I suggest that if you are currently seeking support e.g. your child will be transitioning from SOSE NW into a life long pathway i.e. day service provision then please contact Mrs Bronwyn West, the Transition Coordinator for both campuses who will be able to share further information about these complex changes.

Disability Liaison and Mediation Services

The Department of Education has awarded the tender for Disability Liaison and Mediation Services to the Life Without Barriers organization. The service is:

- Accessible to both families and schools in relation to students with disabilities
- Available state-wide
- To support collaborative communication processes between families and school staff
- To assist with conflict resolution mediation.
This service replaces the current advocacy services previously funded by the Department of Education through the Association of Children with Disabilities.

May I take this opportunity to sincerely thank Mrs Diane Ewington from ACD who for many years has provided a most comprehensive and ongoing support service to families across the North West. Whilst ACD were not successful in winning the contract at this time, I am fully aware that Diane will continue in a support role to assist families and carers with problem solving issues.

**Off and Away**

Mrs Sandra Cock will be commencing Long Service Leave today. She will be flying to the UK and then on to Ireland to share in some family celebrations. We hope she really enjoys her holiday and returns safe and refreshed in about one month’s time.

Mrs Keenie Baker will continue in the School Executive Officer’s role in the SOSE Burnie office and Aleisha Barr will undertake a temporary/part-time position until Sandra returns.

**Reminders**

Special Olympics Day - Friday, 16th July - students require lunch, drink, comfortable clothing and footwear suitable for taking part in sports activities.

**Student Free Professional Learning Day**  
**Monday, 19th July.**

All staff will be working at the Devonport Campus with professional leaders.

Grace