



Ending the isolation.

Life Skills & Family Services Annual Report 2010-2011

Service Overview

With the restructure of Client Services, towards the end of 2010, Respite Services were combined with Therapy & Specialist Services to become Life Skills & Family Services. This new department provides Disability Professional Services: Early Childhood Intervention; School Age Therapy; Adult Therapy; Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program, and Respite Services: Family Respite; Holiday Respite and Intensive Family Support.

A significant achievement during the 2010-2011 period was the successful tendering and implementation of the School Age Therapy Program and a new therapy team to provide this service. There has also been growth funding within the Early Childhood Intervention and Adult Therapy programs. The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program was fortunate to again receive substantial non-recurrent funding and has provided training and resources throughout Western Australia on deafblind issues. The Respite Service has reduced slightly over the period but a new Coordinator was appointed in February 2011 which has enabled the programs to remain on track.

A new structure was introduced within Life Skills & Family Services, where a co-ordinator was appointed for all programs. This structure will enable the services to continue to grow in a managed way, ensure effective communication to and from management and provide opportunities for career development.

How Life Skills & Family Services have been working towards Senses

Foundation's Major Strategic Objectives:

Leadership in Service Delivery

- Establishment of Congenital and Acquired Deafblind Consultants, as it is a service delivery model that is considered best practice in the field of deafblindness.
- The Life Skills & Family Services continue to implement a pilot project to investigate the impact Communication Guides have on the quality of life of individuals who have a dual sensory loss.
- Karen Wickham successfully completed a Master of Social Work at the University of Western Australia.
- The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program has again conducted training throughout Western Australia on deafblind issues.

Sustainability

- The Disability Professional Service programs are all fully funded via Disability Services Commission.
- This financial year, the Disability Professional Service program met their combined budgets.
- New School Age Therapy Program has been established, funded by Disability Services Commission.
- Growth funding has been achieved in both the Early Childhood Intervention and Adult Therapy Programs.

Uniqueness

- Senses Foundation is establishing the Australian Deafblind Information Centre. This centre will promote Senses Foundation as the National leader in deafblindness across the lifespan.
- Referrals continue to be received from clients who are deafblind and organisations supporting people who are deafblind.

Governance

- Policies and procedures have been systematically reviewed during team meetings, ensuring all staff are aware and practising within these guidelines.
- The Life Skills & Family Service team conduct three weekly client review meetings where staff can discuss client related issues with other team members and seek opinions and feedback.
- The Life Skills & Family Service department conducted a Team Building Day.

Communication

- New family welcome packs have been devised consisting of the following:
 - "Let's Work Together!" flyer outlining the ways we work.

- A booklet describing the role of the family and each therapist in the team.
- A 13 page booklet of “Useful Community Organisations and Supports”
- Electronic notepads are being used by LS & FS staff to increase communication with our families.
- The Life Skills & Family Services team use an electronic filing system, which enables client information to be accessed by all authorised staff from all areas and locations.

Brand Awareness

- Staff have participated in discipline specific interest groups.
- A number of handouts and publications have been developed by Life Skills & Family Services staff, which are available on the website.
- A mail-out to all local area coordinators was conducted promoting the School Age Therapy Program. This not only increased awareness of the services available but also of Senses Foundation.

Program Information

Respite Service

Respite Sub-Programs	Contract hours	Hours delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client numbers	Clients provided a service
Family Respite	2,307	2,714.50	407.5	14	15
Holiday Respite	874	873	-1	12	11
Intensive Family Support (IFS)	16,636	16,041	-595	14	14

The Respite programs have endeavoured to offer flexible and creative solutions in order to meet the various and sometimes complex needs of the client whom we serve.

During 2010-2011, the Intensive Family Support service became smaller, with a number of families choosing alternative options and organisations. The demand for Family Respite by families however is much higher this year and Senses Foundation has extended its services in this area to accommodate this need. The appointment of Lisa Salloway as the new Respite Coordinator has provided solid leadership and implementation of good administration and supervision practices.

The Respite Services have provided families with support on a regular basis, or with more flexibility depending on the needs of the family. Staff have also been asked to work with the siblings as well as the person with the disability-thus enhancing the support.

Senses Foundation undertook its first "Shared Management" with a family in January 2011. This new model of service delivery enables the family to manage the Intensive Family Support themselves, with some support from Senses Foundation. The family are responsible for employing their own staff and allocating shifts. As this appears to be a model which has been embraced by DSC and social policy, it is expected that Senses Foundation will enter into further "Shared Management" arrangements in the future.



Early Childhood Intervention

Contract hours	Hours delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client numbers	Clients provided a service
1,690	2,765	1075	19	25

The Early Childhood Intervention program provides a comprehensive professional service for pre-school children who have a disability. Over the financial year, an additional 6 places were obtained via growth funding, which increased client places from 13 to 19.

As has been the case over the past three years, significantly more hours (132%) have been delivered within this program than what has been funded by DSC. There has been a change in staff with the departure of two staff members and the change in role with three others. Although this took some adjustment for families, things are again moving smoothly.



This year has seen in moving of HydroActive to a hydrotherapy pool and this was well received by parents. Playgroup has continued with an increase emphasis on getting the children involved in typical childhood activities such as painting. Following grants received last year, a significant amount of resources were purchased for use by the playgroup and during home visits.

This has allowed more families to work towards their goals, particularly around starting school.

The early childhood team have continued to develop the documentation used to support the services provided and ensure clear communication with families, carers and key stakeholders, including the Individual Family Plans. These were recently praised following the Quality Management Framework review. The team are currently trialling the use of digital notepads to increase communication between therapists and families.



School Age Therapy Program

School Age Therapy (contract type)	Contract hours	Hours delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client numbers	Clients provided a service
Recurrent funding (PYE) and Non-recurrent funding (PYE)	1,362	2,495	1133	53	75

The School Age Therapy Program commenced in January 2011, and provides a comprehensive professional service for school-aged children who have a disability of any type. The program began with 32 funded places, and has now grown to 53 places throughout the metropolitan area.



Three therapists (2.5FTE) were initially allocated to the program. With the recent growth in DSC funded places, an additional three staff have been allocated (1.9FTE). All five therapists are new to Senses Foundation, and have greatly contributed to the direction of the Life Skills and Family Services Team.

As with the Early Intervention program, a Key Contact Person role and Individual Family Plan have been implemented within this program. New resources have been developed to support this program, such as the revised Family Welcome Pack and an information pack for schools.

An Easter Family Picnic was held at the end of April to welcome the new families to Senses Foundation. The event was a great success with around 40 attendees.



Adult Therapy Program

Adult Therapy Sub-Program	Contract hours	Hours delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client numbers	Clients provided a service
Adult Comprehensive Service	1,853	1,766	-87	53	90
Adult Transition Service	767	251	-516	7	11
Adult Waitlist Service	751	3	-748	16	7

The Adult Therapy Program provides a comprehensive professional service for adults who have left school, acquired their disability prior to the age of 60 years and require assistance in a functional area such as self care, communication, mobility or decision making. The Adult Transition Service is funded at a higher rate than the other Adult Therapy programs and is for adults three years post leaving school. It is designed to assist the transition of the client from school to their new workplace or Post School Options provider. The Adult Waitlist service is non-recurrent funding designed to service clients on the waitlist and is to be completed over two years. It has continued to attract minimal numbers and contracted hours have not been met.

In preparation for the recent Quality Evaluation an Adult Therapy Individual Service Plan template was developed with a clear link to goals and outcomes and a timeframe for action and review. The plans will be utilized and uploaded onto SWIMS by all Adult team therapists for new clients. There were no required actions from the review.

The Wellness program which was established in 2009 focusing on physical fitness has developed individualised programs for four additional clients.

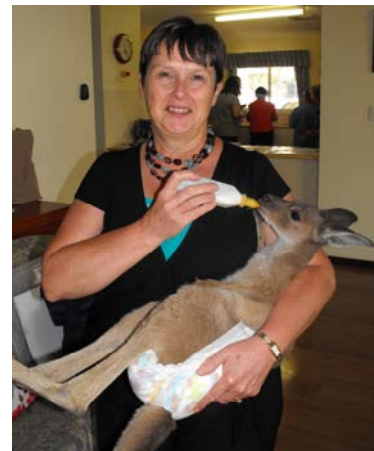


Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program

Contract hours	Hours Delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client Numbers	Clients provided a service
2,231	2,748	517	60	69

The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program provides specialist assistance and support to people who are deafblind or sensory impaired with additional disabilities throughout Western Australia. The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program has been restructured during 2010-2011, resulting in a Deafblind Coordinator (also Acquired Deafblind Consultant) overseeing the program with a Deafblind Project Officer and Congential Deafblind Consultant.

The Rural & Remote Program has continued with trips to the Kimberley's (Broome/ Derby/Kununurra) and the Mid West (Geraldton/Carnarvon). The trips have contributed to a greater awareness of Senses Foundation through networking, delivery of deafblind awareness training and individual consultations with consistent positive feedback. Advice and guidance is being sought regularly from the service by country therapists. DBSC staff members have recently linked up with the Country Networking Forum, one of the outcomes of this network being a joint visit to the Goldfields for the International Day of People with Disability events held in Kalgoorlie at the end of the year.



Communication with Community Living Services has increased with DBSC offering advice on the communication needs of deafblind clients, developing communication plans and delivering training to support workers where the clients have specific needs. There have been frequent requests for deafblind awareness training to external aged care and other agencies working with people with disabilities in the Metropolitan area. DBSC has also participated in the planning and delivery of training to Communication Guides as part of the pilot project.



Staff members are currently developing an information website that will offer information, guidance and resources on deafblindness at a national level.

Fee for Service

Service type	Hours delivered	Clients provided a service
Respite	582	1
Therapy	27	1
Recreation	25	1

Fee for Service is available for all Senses Foundation existing services. Clients enter into a contractual agreement with the organisation, with a schedule of fees provided, which has been calculated to be cost neutral to the organisation. During the 2010-2011 period, Life Skills & Family Services provided Fee for Service to two clients.

One client is a long term client, who recently became ineligible for DSC funded respite services. The family has, on occasion, engaged a Senses Foundation respite support worker to provide overnight care for their child. The other client recently moved from interstate. This client also ineligible for DSC funded services, but had secured some funding and was interested in a hydrotherapy program to maintain his mobility. He approached Senses Foundation to provide this support. One of our physiotherapists developed a program and physiotherapy students were recruited as recreational support workers, were trained and are regularly supervised by the physiotherapist.



Quality Evaluation (previously known as Standards Monitoring)

In March-April 2011, independent evaluators conducted a review of all Disability Professional Services (DPS) at Senses Foundation. This included Early Childhood Intervention, Adult Comprehensive Therapy, Adult Transition Therapy and the Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program. This was the first evaluation for Senses Foundation since DSC introduced the Quality Management Framework in 2010.

Based on observations and corroborative evidence examined as part of this assessment, it is assessed that the service point **meets Disability Services Standards 1-9.**

Good practices

The Independent Evaluators were particularly impressed by:

- The positive feedback about the responsive comprehensive direct therapy according to individual need for children and adults and accompanied by strategies for implementation in the home, workplace, accommodation service and community. The follow up with individuals, families and other stakeholders to review and adjust therapy strategies as necessary. This was favourably contrasted by some transition and adult clients with their former School Age service which had consisted largely of assessment and a program for their implementation.
- The social work, behavioural support and support plans in place for some individuals. The increase in the level of social worker therapy support to one of the clients to assist with dealing with a period of bereavement.
- The prioritisation and review process which classifies clients as active, monitor or discharge and which enables the service to take new clients into adult services. A number of referrals had been made to transition and adult services by Local Area Coordinators, who valued having a service with this capacity.
- The Early Childhood Intervention Individual Service Plans. The formal goal setting involves the family who are involved in and consulted in all decisions. The plan focused on the child as person with a photo, details of the team who developed the plan, information on the child, its likes, dislikes and communication together with details of the siblings, the family and the family aspirations. The therapy plan followed with goals, strategies, activities, people responsible and timeframes.
- The Playgroup and Hydrotherapy group therapy sessions for Early Intervention which were valued by families not only for their therapy but as places where families link, share and form connections which spill over into community life
- The positive feedback about the value and benefits of the Specialist Deafblind service with its support at an individual level for those with vision or hearing impairment and other disabilities; with the statewide training for families, care workers and therapy staff and with a range of specialist resources. Positive feedback was also received about the Usher Syndrome Support group and activities.

- The Welcome Pack about services, which is in easy words and pictures, large print, has photos and is available on request in braille, cd, audio tape and in different languages.
- The website, which is easy to navigate and has a comprehensive range of information and resources.

Key Priorities for Service Improvement

Key Priorities for Service Improvement identify actions to enhance practices in addressing Outcomes for people with disability and meeting Disability Services Standards. The Independent Evaluators identified the following Key Priorities for Service Improvement:

Key Priority for Service Improvement 1

Program and Outcome *Comprehensive Adult Therapy (including Transition) – Independence and Participation*

- To develop documented individual therapy plans for all transition and adult clients linked with lifestyle goals and which they have a copy of.

Key Priority for Service Improvement 2

Program and Outcome *Comprehensive Adult Therapy (including Transition) – Independence and Participation*

- To enhance the implementation of therapy programs for individuals through closer collaboration with Community Living to ensure services have copies of individual plans and staff are supported with modelling, training and reviews as appropriate.

Issues arising

- While some individuals in receipt of transition, adult and deafblind services had very good individual plans with lifestyle goals and therapy plans, there were a number who had evident comprehensive services and whose program was documented in case notes but there were no formal individual plans which the individual and family or the accommodation service had copies of. This lack of documented plans risks compromising common understandings by individuals and families and the service about the goals and the program strategies. It also risks successful implementation of the therapy strategies, particularly where there are changes of staff and the system is relying too much on staff memory.
- Therapy staff are responsible for assessing individuals, for developing therapy programs and for providing direct therapy services as appropriate. Implementation of therapy programs is also the responsibility of families and of support staff. Given the number of individuals living in Senses accommodation, therapy staff have a key role in ensuring staff in the homes, in ATE and in Recreation are trained and supported with modelling and with reviews as appropriate so as to implement therapy programs in daily living activities.
- Senses Foundation noted that there was a change process underway following the restructure into Community Living and Life Skills & Family Services. This

includes significant training, which is currently taking place, for all Community Living staff in person-centred training and the combining of programs and goals. The aim, over time, is for each individual to have a plan with client driven goals and with therapy plans to support these goals as necessary.

- One Senses group home visited was administered through a well-documented management system with policies, procedures and guidelines evident in the home that also contributed towards outcomes. In another home visited the client documentation was very out of date and there was no information about therapy plans or programs in the individual's file.
- While the Deafblind Statewide Consultancy Program service was highly commended, the need for ongoing information and promotion of the service to regional, rural and remote Western Australia was stressed given the high staff turnover in these areas. One suggestion for improvement was that more advance notice be given and that the Disability Services Commission Country Resource Team includes information about the service, its resources and the calendar of events in the monthly email news to all Speech Pathologists.
- A major concern for the family of a child with dual diagnosis approaching school age is that the excellent effective early intervention program will be dismantled when the child commences year one as the child will be attending Carson Street. Under current Disability Services Commission arrangements the child will not be able to continue with Senses and the parents are very concerned that other more generalised therapy services will lead to a loss of progress. The parents have questioned why they are not able to continue with the service of their choice and instead be forced onto a waiting list and to potentially access less satisfactory services.
- A number of issues arose which were outside of the evaluation of Disability Professional Services and related to other services at Senses but which reinforced the need for whole of life planning and support for individuals. A Manager of a group home for another provider has requested a review and re-assessment of the Disability Aged Care support provided through Senses and is seeking clarification of goals and implementation of this part of the service.

Projects & Grants

1. Communication Guide Support for West Australians with Dual Sensory Loss: A Pilot Project

This project continued throughout the 2010-2011, with delays experienced due to linking up with Curtin University and proceeding through their ethics process and recruitment of suitable participants. In the study, 11 participants who have a dual sensory loss, are provided with six months of weekly specialised "Communication Guide" support provided by Communication Guides. The study design is a series of single case studies, using mixed methods including pre-post analysis of quality of life, health and occupational performance standardised measures and grounded theory analysis of interviews. This pilot project was funded by DSC (\$83,216) and the Ian Potter Foundation (\$50,000) and is due for completion in Dec 2012.

2. Rural and Remote Program

Senses Foundation was fortunate to again receive funding from Telethon (\$84,210) to provide training on deafblind issues throughout Western Australia. Key local health and disability stakeholders in regional areas are contacted and training sessions in the regional centres targeting local service providers, family members and carers of people who are deafblind has been provided. Expected outcomes of the training are:

- Increased knowledge and skills of key stakeholders working with people who have deafblindness or vision impairment with an additional disability;
- Development of links with local key stakeholders in regional areas;
- Provision of resources and training on deafblindness to key stakeholders in regional areas.

Further training in other regional areas will continue under the Telethon funding in the 2011-2012 period.

3. Deafblindness in Aboriginal People - Brochure

Senses Foundation was successful in obtaining a \$5,000 grant from Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC) to produce and print a brochure. The information within the brochure provides practical and simple strategies to ensure communication and socialisation are enhanced for those Aboriginal people who are deafblind. The brochure's language uses common Aboriginal terms and suggests equipment that is available to Aboriginal people. This information will reduce the isolation of elderly Aboriginal people who are deafblind and allow others the ability to include them.

4. Little Explorers Resources

Senses Foundation received \$18,156 from Non-Government Centre Support (NGCS) to purchase resources to enable Senses Foundation to deliver enhanced intervention to the children, particularly within the Little Explorers playgroup. Parents can be reluctant to explore equipment or particular strategies with their young children, however within the Little Explorers playgroup, parents have developed a strong social connection with each other and there is a good opportunity to introduce

some equipment and strategies to enhance the areas above in a safe and friendly environment. The resources purchased are available for parents to borrow.

5. Ushers Syndrom Support Group

Helen Leech generously donated \$5,000.00 to support the continuation of this group. The focus of this group continues to be to provide education, support, recreational and networking opportunities to people with Ushers Syndrome. The group has participated in a number of social activities as well as training through the Lets Connect Project. The purpose of the Lets Connect Project was to provide assertiveness training to people with deafblindness, their families and carers, along with deafblind awareness training to sensory specific and generic disability service providers nationally to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of people with both congenital and acquired deafblindness. Mrs Leech has made a similar contribution for the group to continue through to 2012.



6. Success Sensory Garden

In September, 2010 a mixture of adult clients attended “Engage your Senses” at Kings Park and enjoyed an educational workshop and a variety of sensory experiences offered by West Australian Native Flora and Fauna. As an outcome from this successful activity the Adult Therapy Coordinator developed a proposal for the development of a sensory garden for the Success accommodation facility. Initially approaching the Rotary Club of Victoria Park, this large project eventually enlisted assistance from: The Rotary Clubs of Victoria Park, Curtin, Bentley, Attadale and Rotaract in Gosnells. The final finishing touches were completed early May,

2011 and the residents are already enjoying the fruits of all our wonderful helpers and donors' labor.



7. Parents Support Group

On the 31st July/ 1st August Senses Foundation with generous support from the Milton Foundation hosted at Parents Respite Weekend. The weekend was held at The Vines resort and included an overnight stay at the hotel. Prior to the weekend parents were surveyed in regards to their areas of interest, feedback indicated a strong interest in establishing an ongoing parent driven support group. Jacquie Mills facilitated a workshop and came with experience of setting up a similar support group. Since the weekend Senses has been in contact with the Northern Lights Group. Northern Lights is a parents group, north of the river, that was established many years ago to support parents of children with a disability. The children of members of this group have now grown up and they have expressed an interest in passing on the mantle to a new group of parents with young children. The group has some funding (approx \$10,000) which they are also looking to pass on. A meeting with Northern Light along with interested parents occurred on Saturday the 27th of May to discuss this handover further.





Parent Respite Weekend August, 2010

Senses Family Christmas Party: On Sunday 19th December, 2010 Senses families gathered at Bold Park, Perry Lakes to celebrate the festive season. Twenty two people attended including children, parents, siblings and support staff. It was a day of celebration and hope and the perfect opportunity for families to meet up and connect with friends old and new.



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*Senses Foundation - providing services to people with disabilities including unique services for people who are deafblind.
Enabling, Enriching, Empowering.*



ending the isolation

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