



ACT
Government

Justice and Community Safety

ACT CORRECTIVE SERVICES
**DISABILITY
ACTION &
INCLUSION PLAN**
2021 - 2023

3 DECEMBER 2020

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

This Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) sets out the commitment of ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) to ensuring we provide an inclusive and equitable service across our operations. It builds on the important aims of the ACT Government *Disability Justice Strategy 2019-29* to ensure that the justice system provides equal access to all people with disability.

The prevalence of people with disability in our community is significant and the over-representation of people with disability in the justice system requires a comprehensive response. This DAIP aligns with the vision of ACTCS to provide a leading correctional service that provides a safe, secure, decent and humane correctional service with human rights at its core.

Our plan includes a series of actions to address barriers experienced by people with disability, including staff members, offenders and community members. These actions will build on the positive work undertaken to date across our operations. It provides the opportunity to build on previous successes and look to new initiatives that will provide meaningful change for how we support, care for, supervise and work with people with disability. These actions will enhance our service not only for people with disability but for all who interact with ACTCS.

I am proud that ACTCS is a diverse organisation that welcomes people of all ability. We have a critical responsibility to ensure that barriers to participation are removed at all levels and that the rights of people with disability are protected, from staff members to offenders and community members visiting our facilities. This DAIP is an important step to ensuring we meet this aim, and I look forward to the implementation of these actions and building on our successes.



Jon Peach
Commissioner

Contents

COMMISSIONER’S MESSAGE	2
MESSAGE FROM THE ACTCS EXECUTIVE CHAMPION FOR DISABILITY	4
PART 1 – WHERE ARE WE NOW?	5
1. Introduction And Purpose	5
2. DAIP Development	6
3. Focused Themes For Action	6
4. Evidence Base For Action	8
5. ACT Corrective Services – Current Service Context	10
PART 2: WHERE ARE WE GOING?	11
PART 3: WHAT ARE WE DOING?	13
Focus Area 1: Capability, Culture & Attitudes	13
Focus Area 2: Communication And Information	14
Focus Area 3: Physical Environment	15
Focus Area 4: System Supports	16
Focus Area 5: Corrective Services Programs & Supported Initiatives	17
CONTACT DETAILS:	19

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTCS EXECUTIVE CHAMPION FOR DISABILITY

I am proud to be furthering my support for people with disability as the ACTCS Executive Champion for Disability and driving the implementation of the DAIP.

ACTCS is committed to ensuring a culture in which an individual's contribution, experience and development is not unnecessarily limited by an environment that is incompatible with their disability. The principles of equity of access, inclusion and participation are the cornerstones of all human services delivery and critical to providing a correctional service that meets the needs of a diverse community. The DAIP sets out actions for the design and delivery of services that are more cognisant, responsive and accommodating of people with disability.

This work provides a foundation to the current supportive environment for people with disability to ensure that a whole-of-agency focus is given to gap areas, identified service improvements, and to ensuring collective responsibility to supporting people with disability, whether they be staff members, offenders or community members. Considering future service activities through the lens of people with disability will support the normalisation of diversity across our operations and strengthen the equity of our service delivery.

I am proud of the support this work has received across all levels of ACTCS and the engagement in organisational change that will support the implementation of these actions.

I would like to thank all contributors to the development of the DAIP including offenders, their families and friends, service partners in the community and our staff. I would also like to thank our project partners from the Australian Network on Disability (AND) who informed and supported the consultation and development of the DAIP. I acknowledge the support provided by the ACT Office of Disability and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) as well as the team members who have generously contributed their passion, expertise and commitment to this project.

I look forward to continuing a collaborative approach to the implementation of the DAIP over the next three years.



Catherine King
ACTCS Executive Champion for Disability

PART 1 – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

1. Introduction and Purpose

The ACT Government's *Disability Justice Strategy 2019 – 2029* is a ten-year commitment “to achieve equity and inclusion for people with disability in the justice system.” The ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) represents our commitment towards achieving equity in service provision and employment for people with disability across ACT Corrective Services

The Disability Justice Strategy identifies three goals of:

- Goal 1: People with disability are safe and their rights are respected
- Goal 2: The ACT has a disability responsive justice system
- Goal 3: Change is measured and achieved.

In developing the ACTCS DAIP, three key stakeholder groups have been identified where specific focus will support positive cultural and behavioural change

- Existing and potential staff
- Detainees and Offenders in both custodial and community environments
- Visitors to ACTCS facilities (professional and personal)

The ACTCS DAIP identifies actions across five focus areas for implementation over the next 3 years including:

- Focus Area 1: Capability, Culture & Attitudes
- Focus Area 2: Communication and Information
- Focus Area 3: Physical Environment
- Focus Area 4: System Supports
- Focus Area 5: Corrective Services Programs & Supported Initiatives

However, the DAIP does not cover every opportunity to improve our agency. ACTCS acknowledges that there is significant opportunity to enhance our ability to respond effectively to the needs of individual with disability. This action plan aims to build both organisational capability and capacity and exploit those opportunities most commonly reflected in feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

Consideration is also given to the locus of control, where ACTCS has the authority to direct and control the change activity (in contrast to other justice or related agencies) and the feasibility of implementing activities within current resources and service structures.

To ensure that the commitments stated in the DAIP are coordinated, monitored, and delivered, the actions have been prioritised into three tranches. An implementation plan with timeline and deliverables will be developed in consultation with our staff, detainees, offenders, service partners, community members and advocates for people with disability in early 2021.

2. DAIP Development

ACT Corrective Services have partnered with the Office for Disability and Australian Network on Disability (AND) to develop the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). This public document clearly outlines ACTCS approach to diversity and inclusion for people with disability.

The ACTCS DAIP has been informed by consultation with staff, detainees, community members, family members and service partners through surveys, interviews and focus groups. Consultation included:

- Undertaking a survey and interviews with ACTCS staff;
- Undertaking a survey with ACTCS External Stakeholders (e.g. community-based services, families and relatives, and detainees); and
- Conducting focus groups with detainees.

The All-Staff Survey generated responses from 62 staff members from across 15 operational areas of ACTCS, with respondents noting their interest in providing further information via an interview format. Following this, eight (8) individual interviews were conducted by consultants from AND.

A link to an external stakeholder survey was placed on the ACTCS website, circulated through the Prison PCs and community offenders, and added onto the Prisoner's Aid Facebook page with the aim of receiving feedback from ex-detainees and their families. 32 people responded to the survey including current detainees. ACTCS then undertook three focus groups with 16 current detainees utilising questions developed by AND.

These consultation processes informed the development of the high-level goals and actions for ACTCS's DAIP. Limitations to the research have been identified however, including:

- This research did not break down offenders in a custodial or community setting.
- Awareness relating to access and inclusion was self-rated highly, however when probing what access and inclusion initiatives existed or what needed to change, the maturity around Disability Confidence was quite low with most people placing focus on solutions relating to Disability Confidence Training and Premises / Communication Accessibility.
- Detainee focus group questions only focused on physical and intellectual disability.
- Small sample sizes (staff survey n=62, external stakeholders which included 20 detainees n=32, and detainee focus group participant n= 16)

At each stage of consultation, ACTCS Executive were briefed on the key interview findings, with the final meeting in October used to craft the agency's commitments to the DAIP.

3. Focused Themes for Action

The collective feedback served to identify five focus areas that complement each other to form a whole of system approach to improvement. Activities or issues most commonly reflected in the feedback formed the basis of actions initially considered for inclusion in the DAIP. This ensures that the ACTCS DAIP is relevant to the local context and responds to the most significant concerns.

However, in determining priorities for inclusion in the DAIP, the following elements were also considered to ensure the action plan would realistically contribute to sustainable success:

- Priority was given to actions that were within the scope of authority and control of ACTCS. Whilst some suggestions were valid in that they would benefit individuals with disability, some would be better directed to other agencies to progress.
- Fundamental to long term success will be to build organisational maturity in terms of developing capability in ACTCS staff and systems to effectively identify and respond to individuals with disability. As the first instalment of the ACTCS journey of improvement, actions will be prioritised that:
 - Build staff knowledge and capability to respond to individuals with disability;
 - Generate information that helps to identify and support people with disability interacting with the agency and the impact of the interaction with a view to develop more targeted strategies into the future; and
 - Builds a positive and inclusive culture across the agency.
- In anticipation of the economic constraints likely to be caused by the January 2020 Bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic, priority was given to activities that could be readily implemented within current resources, funded programs and existing service structures.

The DAIP actions have been described within five focus areas as follows:

Focus Area 1: Capability, Culture and Attitudes – The activities in this focus area are critical elements from which to build organisational maturity. This could range from actions that raise awareness and understanding of disability in general to targeted training about disability adjustments and specialised practice. Cultural and attitudinal shifts across the organisation comes from consistent values-based leadership and the communication of positive change and outcomes achieved. Improving the knowledge base and experience of staff will be critical to success in this focus area.

Focus Area 2: Communication and Information – This suite of activity considers the varying communication needs of individuals with disability. This might include offering key documents and website material in a variety of formats including large print, plain English or possibly audio or video format. Signage and instructions could be enhanced with braille or textural surfaces, and support could be provided to ensure individuals with disability are comprehending the information they are being given.

Focus Area 3: Physical Environment – ACTCS facilities are modern and comply with structural building codes relevant to disability access. However, other aspects of the physical environment might consider the legibility of signage and potential use of braille or textural surfaces for people who are blind or have low vision. Quality of flooring, acoustics and reverberation, obstacles, and distance across facilities are other elements of the physical environment that could impact people with disability.

Focus Area 4: System Supports – This focus area relates to the systemic elements of ACT Corrective services, such as policies, procedures, operational models, data and information management systems. There is opportunity to review these elements through the lens of individuals with disability, ensuring that the system is not inadvertently working against the objective of improving access and inclusion for people with disability.

Focus Area 5: Corrective Services Programs & Supported Initiatives – Activities in this focus area relate specifically to making adjustments and providing access to support to staff, offenders and visitors with disability. Adjustments support individuals with disability to participate in and access services on a more equitable basis by removing barriers in the environment. Examples might include flexible working hours, ergonomic equipment, program materials written in Easy English, additional time in completing assessments or changing methods of communication from written instruction to video.

Within each focus area, each action is further prioritised into three tranches for the commencement of implementation over the three-year period to ensure improvement is achievable across the short and longer term. In early 2021, the DAIP implementation plan will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders to give detailed transparency of the action required, deliverable and timeline expected for each commitment. Whilst each commitment may start in one tranche, it may be concluded in another, depending on the complexity of the work, alignment to other dependant activities and capacity of the organisation.

4. Evidence Base for Action

The ACTCS DAIP is informed by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which aims to protect the rights of people with disability by focusing on a human rights approach.

ACTCS recognises the definition of disability as:

*Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.*¹

The UNCRPD defines disability within the context of the social model of disability which acknowledges that negative attitudes and environmental barriers impact on an individual's ability to participate equitably in work and life. The Convention contains principles of human rights and capability building so that persons with disabilities have agency to contribute to social and public life.

The ACTCS DAIP is underpinned by this shared understanding of the social model of disability – to remove barriers which create inequity. This is consistent with the values we hold within the justice sector and the expectation that the human rights of all people are respected appropriately. We respect the human rights of all people.

¹ United Nations, 'Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities', viewed 29/10/2020

Disability is far more prevalent across Australia than is often understood: ²

- Over 4.4 million people in Australia have some form of disability. That is 1 in 5 people.
- 17.8 per cent of females and 17.6 per cent of males in Australia have disability.
- The likelihood of living with disability increases with age. 2 in 5 people with disability are 65 years or older.
- Of all people with disability, 1.9 million are aged 65 and over, representing almost half (44.5 per cent) of all people with disability. This reflects both an ageing population and increasing life expectancy of Australians.
- 2.1 million Australians of working age (15-64 years) have disability.
- 35.9 per cent of Australia's 8.9 million households include a person with disability.

Disability in the Justice sector and Correctional environments

While research indicates that approximately 18 per cent of people in Australia identify as having a disability³, almost 50 per cent of adult detainees have a disability⁴. It is estimated that between 8 and 20 per cent of detainees have an intellectual disability, whilst, the rate of cognitive impairment is likely to be even higher due to the number of detainees who report an acquired brain injury⁵.

In 2016, the ACT's Detainee Health and Wellbeing Survey found that 52 per cent of detainees surveyed reported having experienced head injuries which caused a loss of consciousness or black-out. Further, when trialed, the Hayes Ability Screening Index (HASI), which indicates possible intellectual disability, returned positive results for 28 per cent of detainees screened.

It is well documented that disability increases the chance that a person will experience adverse contact with the justice sector as an offender. While the reasons for this are complex, those with cognitive impairment face particular challenges in the ability to recall information, express themselves verbally or fully comprehend what is being asked of them.

The Disability Justice Strategy identifies examples of shifts in the justice and services systems that may assist in addressing the barriers experienced by people with disability. It is in response to this Strategy that the ACTCS DAIP has been developed.

² *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia 2018*, viewed 28 October 2020

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *People with Disability in Australia 2019*, viewed 3 November 2020

⁴ Human Rights Watch 2018, *I Needed Help, Instead I Was Punished: Abuse and Neglect of Prisoners with Disabilities in Australia*, 2.

⁵ Mental Health Commission of NSW, *Towards a just system*, 8 (quoted in Law Council of Australia's *The Justice Project final report – Part 1*, 19).

CURRENT	FUTURE
People with disability are not always able to receive legal information in accessible ways and have their rights upheld	Legal information is accessible and available across all areas of legal need and people with disability understand their rights
Limited awareness of understanding in the justice system of the needs of people with disability	Organisations and workers understand the needs of people with disability and are given the tools to make reasonable adjustments for those needs
People with disability are often invisible in the justice system because they are not identified	There are multiple opportunities to identify the needs of people with disability in the justice system
Services are disjointed with gaps in service provision and few reasonable adjustments are made	Services are informed and skilled and provide coordinated and responsive supports to people with disability
People with disability are over-represented in the justice system	Services and supports are in place early to divert people with disability away from contact with the justice system
Data gathering and information sharing is limited	Services ask if people have adjustment needs and can share information, with consent, to allow reasonable adjustments to be made throughout the system and to support improved data collection for analytical purposes

Table 1: State of the ACT justice and services system⁶

5. ACT Corrective Services – Current Service Context

ACTCS has always been responsive to meeting the needs of people with disability, although this has often been to address an identified problem at a set point in time. Whilst as may expected facilities have been designed to meet mandated legislative standards, a range of service elements to support detainees, offenders and visitors have been introduced over time.

The Assisted Care Unit in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) provides a supported environment for detainees presenting with complex mental health, physical disability, intellectual disability, cognitive impairment and varied vulnerabilities with a primary aim of enabling detainees to achieve optimal independent functioning. This is achieved through engagement in meaningful activities, self-care, employment, education, programs and social interaction. Staff coordinate and provide activities within the unit such as cooking, craft and skills-based interventions. Detainee Peer Mentors are also supported to reside in the ACU to assist in developing and assisting their peers. In addition to these services, the Justice Health Service works closely with ACTCS to identify adjustments for detainees who present as frail or with other health concerns.

⁶ Disability Justice Strategy 2019-2020, viewed 30/10/2020

Consideration of support needs for community offenders, visitors and staff is also evident. Flexible and supportive work arrangements, alternative security screening methods and inclusion of support persons are standard practices across the service.

However, with the exception of the Assisted Care Unit, accommodating disability needs is often reactive to the reported needs of an individual, in contrast to an all-inclusive approach. With the small economy of scale, and the inherent constraints within a correctional facility, this may be the most appropriate approach to responding to people with disability interacting with ACTCS. Notwithstanding there remains clear opportunity to enhance service provision through addressing policy gaps and building staff awareness and capability/

PART 2: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Establishing the ACTCS DAIP is our next step of our journey towards equity in access and participation for individuals with disability interacting with ACT Corrective Services.

ACTCS recognises the wealth of expertise, insight and in some cases, resources to support the agency's journey of improvement. Therefore, the next steps in progressing our commitment is to consult with individuals and agencies who have this insight and expertise to help craft how ACTCS can best meet our commitments and determine the deliverables to be implemented. Secondly, collaboration with community and service partners will be important in ensuring ACTCS activity is not silo-oriented and is working in a complementary manner to other initiatives and programs across the ACT. This collaboration will also ensure that the deliverables reflect best practice principles and is leveraging existing resources in an effective and efficient manner.

Early in 2021, ACTCS will commence implementation planning with stakeholders to determine the deliverables relevant to each commitment and considerations pertinent to the implementation process including leadership, timeline and methodology.

Monitoring progress and communicating progress against the DAIP will also be important to demonstrate and celebrate change over time and recognise challenges and learnings for future development. Internal monitoring and reporting on the progress of the DAIP will be the responsibility of the Executive Champion for Disability and will be reported to the ACTCS Executive Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. Utilising these systems will not only ensure efficiency of process, it will also integrate the activity into the normal fabric of the organisation as a shared responsibility. A Disability Reference Group will also be established to provide expertise to implementation activities and will further inform the timing and format of reporting progress to the broader sector and external stakeholders.

The following tables outline the ACTCS commitment for change over the next three years to 2023. Each table represents a priority area with high level strategic connections, objectives and outcomes. The statements of commitment give a defined scope of activity to be addressed, the lead responsibility and the tranche for implementation.

Tranche 1 – Implementation to commence in 2021

Tranche 2 – Implementation to commence in 2022

Tranche 3 – Implementation to commence in 2023.

A communications plan will ensure dissemination of information is provided to stakeholders in a timely and transparent format. Focus will initially be directed to Tranche 1 activities to ensure they are incorporated into the business and operational plans for relevant service areas. However, Tranche 2 and 3 activities will need early consideration to ensure any preliminary preparation critical to the success of long-term objectives can be realised.

PART 3: WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Focus Area 1: Capability, Culture & Attitudes

Objective:	To develop staff capability and organisational maturity in relation to disability awareness and confidence.
Outcome:	• ACTCS Staff are able to demonstrate an understanding of disability and appropriate practices that respect and support people with disability. • ACTCS is an employer of choice for staff with disability.
Feedback tells us:	• A consistent response received from all stakeholders (including staff) was the need to improve disability awareness, understanding and the response capability of staff to build confidence in their practice to support a more inclusive and compassionate culture across the agency. • Targeted recruitment and employment strategies for staff with disabilities was also highlighted, building a responsive organisation that provides flexible adjustments. • Engaging with individuals with disability, advocacy groups, families and carers as part of a core consultative framework was suggested, as was establishing a peer support network for people with disability. Aged/elderly detainees were particularly highlighted as a vulnerable group.
Link to Disability Justice Strategy:	DJS Focus Area 2 – Education and Guidance. Specifically relating to staff capability, the DJS seeks to develop justice services that are aware of, and understand the impact of, disability and furthermore, is able to identify and respond to the needs of people with disability.
Link to ACTCS Strategic Plan	Dignity - Decision-making is transparent, fair, equitable and consistent. Excellence - Investment in employee capabilities meets current needs and future aspirations. Public Sector values are upheld to the highest standard. Organisational achievements are shared and celebrated. Building organisational maturity and staff capability to better identify and respond to individuals with disability will also support a positive and inclusive culture across the agency that reflects public sector values.

Commitment	Responsibility	Tranche
1.1 Develop and deliver staff disability confidence and response training to ACTCS staff in alignment with ACTCS training frameworks.	EBM Operational Support	1
1.2 Establish a consultative Disability Reference Group (including people with disability in the membership) with internal and external stakeholders to inform future service improvement.	EBM Operational Support	1
1.3 Investigate the interest and viability in establishing a peer network for staff and/or offenders with disability.	EBM Operational Support	1
1.4 Review current ACTCS recruitment and employment strategies to identify and consider barriers for people with disability to become more inclusive to attract and retain staff with disability.	EBM Corporate	2

Focus Area 2: Communication and Information

Objective:	To ensure equitable access to all ACTCS communication and information.
Outcome:	Information will be accessible and inclusive for individuals with disability.
Feedback tells us:	- A consistent theme across the feedback from participants highlighted the need for simplified information for all stakeholders. Suggestions included simplifying information on the website, information for detainees, program materials, and visitor information. - Providing information in alternative formats was also highlighted, including video recordings for key admission information, audio books for visitor information, audio loop of instructions in waiting area and TTY facility for individuals with hearing impairment. Plain English, braille and/or large print documentation was also highlighted. - Seeking regular feedback from visitors and other stakeholders was recommended as a useful mechanism to better understand the stakeholder experience.
Link to Disability Justice Strategy:	DJS Focus Area 1 - Information and Communication. The DJS highlights the importance for individuals to be able to receive and comprehend information as well as be able to express their views and be understood by the justice system. The DJS also recognizes the value of sharing information for consistent support through the justice system.
Link to ACTCS Strategic Plan	Safety – Strong collaborative partnerships and information sharing with criminal justice agencies protect offenders, staff, the community and victims. Dignity - Operational practices are informed by the Human Rights Act and Human Rights Principles. Stakeholder (including families and visitors) engagement experiences are positive and valued. Where appropriate, sharing information on individual disability experiences, strategies and supports can provide stable and consistent support for individuals with disability transitioning through ACTCS services and into the community. Equitable access to information is a basic value within a human rights framework that empowers individuals and fosters self-determination. Effective communication strategies at ACTCS will also support a positive visitor experience and promote personal and professional connections with offenders and staff.

Commitment	Responsibility	Tranche
2.1 Audit visitor print materials and stakeholder information (ACTCS website) and develop content to ensure critical information is accessible, inclusive and alternative formats available.	EBM Operational Support & Office of the Commissioner	1
2.2 Establish sustainable feedback mechanism relating to accessible communication and information in the ACT Corrective Services environment.	Director, Office of the Commissioner	1

Focus Area 3: Physical Environment

Objective:	To develop strategies that mitigate or remove barriers for people with disability accessing ACTCS facilities.
Outcome:	ACTCS facilities and premises will be accessible for staff, offenders and visitors with disability.
Feedback tells us:	A diverse range of feedback was received in relation to the physical environment of ACTCS facilities. It is noted that there are provisions in place for addressing some of these concerns, highlighting that there may be an issue with the communication of the available alternative options. Feedback included: - Participants recognised the accessible cells available in each unit but suggested opportunities for further improvement including accessible bathrooms for visitors in the city office building and AMC, accessible furniture to accommodate wheelchairs in visitor areas and lowering telephones and directory information for easier reach in facilities. - Heavy doors were noted in several responses, as was the distance to program and health services on the AMC campus. - Challenges with access for visitors with disability (including mobility-aid users or those with health conditions impacted by security scanners) was also mentioned. - A review of signage in ACTCS facilities was recommended, with suggestions to offer large print and textural alternatives such as braille and tactile surfaces. - The accessibility of parole reporting was highlighted for review and personal emergency evacuation planning for offenders with disability was also suggested. - Maintaining Zoom visits was also requested as a positive change generated out of the pandemic response.
Link to Disability Justice Strategy:	DJS Focus Area 4 - Better Service Delivery. The Strategy gives high level advice about ensuring the justice service system meets the needs of individuals with disability, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, children, women, victims and detainees.
Link to ACTCS Strategic Plan	Safety - A safe environment contributes to rehabilitation and reintegration. Dignity - Facilities are well maintained, clean, decent and humane. Improving the physical environment of ACTCS facilities for individuals with disability promotes greater participation in all aspects of ACTCS service provision, whether the individual is an offender, visitor or staff member.

Commitment	Responsibility	Tranche
3.1 Engage the Disability Reference Group to ensure issues relating to people with disability are considered in the operationalisation of the Reintegration Centre.	Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations	1
3.2 Conduct a dignified access audit (considers the user experience) of the physical environment in ACTCS facilities (encompassing office space, visitor areas and prison facilities).	EBM Corporate	3

Focus Area 4: System Supports

Objective:	To ensure policies and processes are inclusive and accessible for people with disability.
Outcome:	ACTCS processes and policies will support an inclusive environment for individuals with disability.
Feedback tells us:	- Key policy recommendations included building knowledge of best practice for services to offenders with disability and improving the screening and assessment of offenders to enable a more responsive service delivery. - A key limitation to current efforts is the lack of information to inform decision making. Building data on the prevalence and diversity of individuals interacting with ACTCS will support further targeted strategies into the future.
Link to Disability Justice Strategy:	DJS Focus Area 4 – Better Service Delivery. Developing justice systems that actively target service improvement from the perspective of people with disability. The DJS specifies the establishment of an ACTCS Disability Framework to ensure offenders have access to support and adjustments to support participation and better outcomes (Action 4.6). DJS Focus Area 5 – Data, Research & Review. Improving data capture on individuals with disability interacting with the justice system will enable the ACT to evaluate current efforts and develop more targeted strategies into the future.
Link to ACTCS Strategic Plan	Reintegration - Evidence based practice informs intervention design and delivery. Dignity - Operational practices are informed by the Human Rights Act and Human Rights Principles. Decision-making is transparent, fair, equitable and consistent. Excellence - Decision-making is informed by data, analytical capability and quality assurance. Strong governance drives service delivery and organisational performance. Reviewing policies and procedures through the lens of an individual with disability ensures a values-based service. Future design of services will be better informed by improved data capture and strong leadership and governance will drive positive change across the agency. Privacy and confidentiality will play a strong part in protecting people's personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

Commitment	Responsibility	Tranche
4.1 Develop and implement the Disability Offender Framework in consultation with relevant stakeholders.	EBM Operational Support	1
4.2 Investigate opportunities to improve data capture on individuals with disability interacting with ACTCS (eg. onboarding survey, disability screening/assessment tools), noting the need for consent and transparency of data usage.	EBM Corporate	1
4.3 Review policies and procedures through a disability lens to ensure appropriate consideration, intervention and adjustments have been considered.	EBM Operational Support	2

Focus Area 5: Corrective Services Programs & Supported Initiatives

Objective:	To identify and provide access to adjustments and supports for staff, visitors and offenders.
Outcome:	- Access to disability support services is supported across ACTCS. - Disability support services are included in offender management planning to support positive reintegration outcomes.
Feedback tells us:	- The primary focus of feedback related to the ability to provide access to disability support services and accommodate adjustments for offenders with disability throughout their interaction with ACTCS services. - Flexibility to accommodate individual differences was highlighted for both staff and offenders, with mental health support and access to NDIS services listed as priority areas for improvement. - Support for personal care, employment and education was highlighted for both custodial and throughcare environments, with emphasis on changeover/transition planning and discharge to ensure detainees with disability are supported. - A suggestion for embedded support people was put forward, including the establishment of Disability Liaison Officers, support networks and community contacts. - Services for people with comorbidities (e.g. physical and mental health) was highlighted, but not included in the ACTCS DAIP as it is also an action of the Disability Justice Strategy, to be led by the ACT Health Directorate.
Link to Disability Justice Strategy:	<i>DJS Focus Area 3 - Identification, Screening & Assessment. DJS Focus Area 4 - Better Service Delivery.</i> DJS emphasizes the need to create psychologically safe environments where people with disability feel safe to share information, disability support needs and request appropriate adjustments. DJS acknowledges that individuals with disability may choose not to self-identify as having disability due to fear of stigmatisation (among other reasons).
Link to ACTCS Strategic Plan	<i>Reintegration - Individualised interventions, opportunities and supports encourage offenders to lead positive, constructive and law abiding lives.</i> A key element to achieving equity of access and participation is to ensure individuals with disability are given the appropriate support and adjustments to remove barriers that create disabling environments to people with disability, and to ensure a more positive experience and outcome from their interaction with the DJS service.

Commitment	Responsibility	Tranche
5.1 Establish Disability Liaison Officers in the custodial environment (tranche 1) and community environment (tranche 2)	Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations, Assistant Commissioner Community Corrections	1 & 2
5.2 Investigate options (including navigating NDIS services) to connect offenders with disability support services in custodial and community environments.	EBM Offender Reintegration	2
5.3 Promote accessibility and participation in service delivery for participants with disability through reasonable adjustments.	EBM Offender Reintegration, Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations & Assistant Commissioner Community Corrections	3

ACTCS Disability Action & Inclusion Plan 2021-2023

Summary of ACTCS Commitments:

TRANCHE 1 Commitments			
1.1 Develop and deliver staff disability confidence and response training to ACTCS staff in alignment with ACTCS training frameworks.	EBM Operational Support	3.1 Engage the Disability Reference Group to ensure issues relating to people with disability are considered in the operationalisation of the Reintegration Centre.	Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations
1.2 Establish a consultative Disability Reference Group (including people with disability in the membership) with internal and external stakeholders to inform future service improvement.	EBM Operational Support	4.1 Develop and implement the Disability Offender Framework in consultation with relevant stakeholders.	EBM Operational Support
1.3 Investigate the interest and viability in establishing a peer network for staff and/or offenders with disability.	EBM Operational Support	4.2 Investigate opportunities to improve data capture on individuals with disability interacting with ACTCS (eg. onboarding survey, disability screening/assessment tools), noting the need for consent and transparency of data usage.	EBM Corporate
2.1 Audit visitor print materials and stakeholder information (ACTCS website) and develop content to ensure critical information is accessible, inclusive and alternative formats available.	EBM Operational Support & Office of the Commissioner	5.1 Establish Disability Liaison Officers in the custodial environment	Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations
2.2 Establish sustainable feedback mechanism relating to accessible communication and information in the ACT Corrective Services environment.	Director, Office of the Commissioner		
TRANCHE 2 Commitments			
1.4 Review current ACTCS recruitment and employment strategies to identify and consider barriers for people with disability to become more inclusive to attract and retain staff with disability.	EBM Corporate	5.1 Establish Disability Liaison Officers in community environment	Assistant Commissioner Community Corrections
4.3 Review policies and procedures through a disability lens to ensure appropriate consideration, intervention and adjustments have been considered.	EBM Operational Support	5.2 Investigate options (including navigating NDIS services) to connect offenders with disability support services in custodial and community environments.	EBM Offender Reintegration
TRANCHE 3 Commitments			
3.2 Conduct a dignified access audit (considers the user experience) of the physical environment in ACTCS facilities (encompassing office space, visitor areas and prison facilities).	EBM Corporate	5.3 Promote accessibility and participation in service delivery for participants with disability through reasonable adjustments.	EBM Offender Reintegration, Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations & Assistant Commissioner Community Corrections

CONTACT DETAILS:

Comments or queries in relation to the ACTCS Disability Action and Inclusion Plan can be directed to **Catherine King, ACTCS Executive Champion for Disability** as follows:

By email: ACTCSOpsSupport@act.gov.au

By paper mail: ACT Corrective Services GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601.

By phone: (02) 6207 0888

Contact ACTCS through the **National Relay Service or NRS**.

Call the NRS Help desk **1800 555 660**

Go to the NRS website **communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs**

If you require this Action Plan in an alternative format, please get in contact with us on any of the above avenues.



ACT
Government

Justice and Community Safety

ACT CORRECTIVE SERVICES