

Frequently asked questions

What is the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*?

The *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* defines the practices, processes, protocols and systems which support Service Coordination across Victoria. It replaces all local and regional Service Coordination Practices, Processes, Protocols and Systems (PPPS) manuals. The manual:

- articulates Victoria's Service Coordination vision and practice standards.
- documents clear expectations for agencies and practitioners.
- provides information on systems and other supports available to agencies involved in Service Coordination.
- guides the implementation of Service Coordination at an agency level.
- provides a resource for managers and practitioners involved in Service Coordination.

The manual also provides the basis for monitoring and continuous improvement of Service Coordination across Victoria enabling individual agencies and Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) to:

- Compare existing practice against statewide practice standards.
- Ensure Service Coordination is conducted in accordance with the statewide vision and practice, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) *Better Access to Services: A Policy and Operational Framework*.

How was the manual developed?

The manual was developed as part of the Statewide Service Coordination Practice Manual Project conducted in 2006. The project was an initiative of the Statewide Primary Care Partnership Chairs Working Group and was funded by the Department of Human Services Primary Health Branch. The *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* is based on:

- the document *Better Access to Services: A Policy and Operational Framework*.
- a review of the scope and content of the 16 Service Coordination PPPS manuals in use in June 2006.
- feedback from a range of regional and stakeholder consultations, undertaken in June and July 2006.
- feedback on draft materials distributed to the sector in August, September and November 2006.
- input from General Practice Divisions Victoria (GPDV) and the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) through working groups which were established to support the project.
- input from a range of DHS programs via an internal reference group established to provide feedback on draft materials (a list of the participating program areas can be found at the back of the manual).
- guidance and direction from the Project Steering Committee and Project Management Group (a list of Steering Committee and Management Group members can be found at the back of the manual).

The significant work by PCPs and agencies over the past six years to develop regional or local Practice, Process, Protocols and Systems (PPPS) manuals, forms the cornerstone of the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*.

Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual

What's the difference between the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* and our local PPPS?

The *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* defines the practices, processes, protocols and systems which support Service Coordination across Victoria. It replaces all local and regional Service Coordination Practices, Processes, Protocols and Systems (PPPS) manuals (16 different manuals were in existence in May 2006).

Because the manual is based upon the work PCPs have done over the past six years, many agencies will find only limited differences between the new manual and their local PPPS. An important step for PCPs will be to map where there are key changes required for practice.

PCPs may decide to develop local protocols to complement the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*. For example a protocol could be developed to define and document agreed practice for electronic referral, consumer pathways for chronic disease management or specific requirements for culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Will there be benefits for clients/consumers?

The development of agreed practice across the human service system has enabled more streamlined access for consumers across agencies and sectors. A key evaluation of Service Coordination work completed by KPMG in 2004 identified that consumers benefit from consistent practice through Service Coordination in a number of ways:

- they are provided with better information about services and intake processes
- consumers are better informed about their rights and about privacy and confidentiality
- they experience consistent intake and assessment processes
- consumers receive attention in less than one day
- providers are able to respond better to consumer urgency and have increased capacity to respond to consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The report also noted that Service Coordination allowed practitioners to spend less time on administration and more time on working with consumers. This is good news as we move to even more consistent practice with a statewide approach.

Are there practical resources to support the manual?

Yes, there are two key supporting resources:

- *Good Practice Guide for Practitioners*
- *Continuous Improvement Framework*.

The *Good Practice Guide for Practitioners* sets out the agreed good practice for the implementation of Service Coordination across Victoria. The guide has been designed for practitioners involved in the implementation of Service Coordination. It is based on the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* and complements the *Continuous Improvement Framework*.

The *Continuous Improvement Framework* is a tool to assist agencies in Victoria implementing Service Coordination.

The framework has been designed to:

- support agencies to monitor and continuously improve their Service Coordination implementation and practice.
- enable an agreed process for Primary Care Partnership (PCP) member agencies to monitor Service Coordination implementation for reporting and planning purposes.

Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual

- assist new program areas to assess their Service Coordination readiness and identify infrastructure and practice changes that are required.
- provide a mechanism for PCP Service Coordination groups to assess and improve compliance with Service Coordination practice standards if the need arises.

Copies of the *Good Practice Guide for Practitioners* and the *Continuous Improvement Framework* can be downloaded from <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pcps/coordination/ppps.htm>

How does the manual affect current agency practice?

Adoption of the practices outlined in the manual is an opportunity to shift to working in a common way with other agencies across Victoria. The good news is that there was already a lot of consistency in practice so for many agencies this will mean only some minor changes to your day-to-day practice.

As a part of your PCP, there will be an exercise to look at where there will be significant changes between your old manual and your new manual. Bear in mind that your new practices will mean that, across the state, clients experience a consistent practice for Service Coordination.

As a manager of a service, what do I do with the manual?

The key step for managers is to look at what changes will be required for your staff and where there may be different expectations from agencies that you generally work with because you have clients in common.

You will be assisted by your PCP to introduce the manual.

What will we do with our local PPPS?

The *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* replaces all local and regional Service Coordination Practices, Processes, Protocols and Systems (PPPS) manuals. The steps for the manual to replace your local PPPS will be decided through your PCP. Contact your PCP for more information.

Is there a timeframe for my agency to implement the practices/processes in the manual?

The timeframe for adoption will be determined by 3 things:

- When your DHS program area requires adoption
- Agreement as a group of agencies as part of your local PCP or region
- The amount of change required within your agency. For some agencies, there will be less work, they are already on the road to changing practice or have already implemented their current manual. Other agencies may be new to this way of working.

It is anticipated that most regions will have adopted the *Victorian Service Coordination Manual* by the end of 2007.

Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual

Will adoption of the manual be a requirement of agency accreditation?

No, adoption of the manual is not a requirement of accreditation and use of the *Continuous Improvement Framework* is optional. However, it is envisaged that use of the framework will complement quality and accreditation processes of each agency.

The framework is based on:

- the continuous improvement cycle: Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA).
- the knowledge that agencies already have quality assurance systems in place and the *Continuous Improvement Framework* may complement but not replicate these.
- the assumption that all agencies will regularly undertake a self-assessment of their performance using the good practice indicators set out in the Victorian Service Coordination Practice Standards, which are contained in the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*.
- recognition that Service Coordination Continuous Improvement Criteria may change as the Service Coordination system evolves and develops.

Note that some agencies may be required to adopt the manual by their DHS program area.

What if our agency is not a member of the PCP – how will we implement the new manual?

An important part of implementing the practice detailed in the new manual is to work in partnership with other agencies (particularly those agencies that share the same clients). Your local PCP is a way to access a wide range of agencies to focus on Service Coordination issues and do this in a supported environment.

If your agency decides not to become a member of the PCP, other possible resources:

- The Continuous Improvement Framework is an implementation tool for Service Coordination.
- Your program area may provide guidance about implementation.

Where can I find out more about the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* and how it will be implemented?

There are a number of places you can find out more about the manual & its implementation, including:

- Your local PCP
- <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pcps/coordination/ppps.htm>

Where can I find out more about Service Coordination in general?

There are a number of resources to assist you to find out about Service Coordination. These are listed on page 37 of the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual* at

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pcps/publications/sc_pracmanual.htm