



DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2009 – 2014

Upon request, this document can be provided in alternative formats.

BACKGROUND

Overview of MIDLAS Information Debt and legal Advocacy Service Inc.

Our Vision

Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Service (Inc) (MIDLAS) meets diverse needs of all eligible people. MIDLAS promotes individual empowerment by providing confidential information, options, referral, individual advocacy and support to assist clients navigate barriers so they can achieve a better way of life. MIDLAS is non discriminatory and promotes inclusive participation and integration into the community.

Our Services

MIDLAS has six core services that provide clients with the knowledge and tools necessary to stabilise their lives and work towards a better and more self sufficient future. Many clients who attend MIDLAS have multiple issues; often requiring immediate intervention to resolve critical concerns.

1. Financial Service

MIDLAS employs qualified Financial Counsellors who offer assistance to people in financial stress. The Financial Counsellors help with anything from personal budgeting skills through to debt management and bankruptcy information. They also negotiate with creditors and seek to provide options to better regulate the financial situation of the clients.

2. Tenancy Service

Tenancy Service is available for tenants in the private rental market as well as those in public and social housing thanks to funding from the Department of Commerce. MIDLAS tenancy advocates provide information to tenants on their rights and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA) and negotiate with property agents and owners to secure an improved outcome for the tenant. Where appropriate, MIDLAS provides court representation if the tenant is unable to advocate for themselves.

3. Legal Service

MIDLAS provides a quality, free legal service focused on assisting victims of family and domestic violence, including initial assistance and advice in family law (not property), criminal injuries compensation and other matters. For anything that exceeds the scope of the MIDLAS Legal Service, the solicitor will facilitate a referral and transfer to a suitable, alternate legal practitioner.

4. Emergency Relief Service

MIDLAS offers limited assistance for people in immediate crisis. As part of the wider financial services offered by MIDLAS, the organisation also provides some Emergency Relief to people in immediate need. MIDLAS will provide a limited number of blankets, food vouchers, pharmacy vouchers, and other assistance as deemed appropriate.

5. Disability Service

Our Disability Advocacy Service provides individual advocacy for persons with a disability. The disability advocate will provide guidance and support to individuals, having regard to their rights, including access to services, discrimination, alleged abuse and neglect.

6. Information Service

MIDLAS provides an Information Service for disadvantaged and vulnerable people to empower them with the relevant information required in order to ensure the crisis does not reoccur. MIDLAS provides all its clients with free telephone, face to face and written information about our services and our networks.

The Agency's stakeholders

MIDLAS assist some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Prisoners/former prisoners (and their families)
- Problem Gamblers
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Clients

- Seniors
- People with Disabilities
- The homeless
- People participating in Income Management
- People who experience Financial hardship
- People on Income Support
- People who experience relationship stress/breakdown
- Victims of Domestic Violence

Further, MIDLAS engages with a number of community groups, local, state and federal departments to ensure ongoing delivery of core programs, as well as initiating new programs as needs arise or change in the local community.

The tables below lists the postcodes and MIDLAS eligibility zones within the North East of Perth service area:

Financial Service

Eligibility / zone: City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring

Aveley	6069	Bailup	6082	Ballajura	6066
Baskerville	6056	Beechina	6556	Beechboro	6063
Belhus	6069	Bellevue	6056	Boya	6056
Brigadoon	6069	Bullsbrook	6084	Caversham	6055
Chidlow	6556	Cullacabardee	6067	Darlington	6070
Ellenbrook	6069	Gidgegannup	6083	Glen Forrest	6071
Gorrie	6556	Greenmount	6056	Guildford	6055
Hazelmere	6055	Helena Valley	6056	Henley Brook	6055
Herne Hill	6056	Hovea	6071	Jane Brook	6056
Kiara	6054	Koongamia	6056	Lexia	6065
Lockridge	6054	Mahogany Creek	6072	Malaga	6090
Malmalling	6556	Middle Swan	6056	Midland	6056
Midvale	6056	Millendon	6056	Melaleuca	6065
Mount Helena	6082	Mundaring	6073	Noranda	6062
Parkerville	6081	Red Hill	6056	Sawyers Valley	6074
Stoneville	6081	Stratton	6056	South Guildford	6055
Swan View	6056	The Lakes	6556	The Vines	6069
Upper Swan	6069	Viveash	6056	West Swan	6056
Whiteman	6068	Woodbridge	6056	Wooroloo	6558

Tenancy / Disability & Legal Service

Eligibility / zone: as above plus Town of Bassendean and Shire of Kalamunda

Ashfield	6054	Bassendean	6054	Eden Hill	6054
Bickley	6076	Canning Mills	6111	Carmel	6076
Forrestfield	6058	Gooseberry Hill	6076	Hacketts Gully	6076
High Wycombe	6057	Kalamunda	6076	Kewdale	6105
Lesmurdie	6076	Maida Vale	6057	Pauls Valley	6076
Pickering Brook	6076	Piesse Brook	6076	Walliston	6076
Muchea	6501	Wattle Grove	6107	Wundowie	6560

Planning for better access

Disability affects one third of the Western Australian population.

By working toward creating a community that is accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities, the effect of a disability on an individual can be minimised.

Our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) outlines the way in which MIDLAS ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Progress toward Compliance with Disability Service Standards

MIDLAS participated in a Disability Services Standards Audit in June 2009. The development of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan plays a vital function in meeting these set standards.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT

MIDLAS is committed to maximising access to our services for everyone within our agreed target group. We identify and address barriers to access and provide equal access for people who need our services. We endeavour to optimise access to our services and activities within available resources. MIDLAS endeavours to have our workplace fully accessible for all clients. MIDLAS intends to achieve this by ensuring:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities to access our agency and its services.
2. Information and documents can be provided in alternative formats.
3. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service.
4. People with disabilities have the same opportunities to make complaints to MIDLAS.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in any forum or consultation MIDLAS may undertake.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN (DAIP)

Responsibility for the planning process

The Executive Officer will oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. This plan has been approved by the MIDLAS board.

Consultation Process

MIDLAS have historically collected performance information from individual clients at the closing of cases, or when a client has expressed dissatisfaction with the service or the work of an advocate, via the Client Complaint Procedure. In addition, through agency linkages, MIDLAS has sought feedback from other local agencies where clients may have been referred or simultaneously assisted.

All staff provide a feedback form to all clients to complete at the end of the interview. These feedback forms are collated and are used to identify gaps in services and improvements in the quality of service MIDLAS offers. If needed, staff can assist clients in completing this feedback form. The feedback form can also be accessed and completed on line, with the assistance of staff if required.

This information will be collected by the Information Coordinator, who with assistance from the Executive Officer will prepare an analysis of the feedback highlighting service improvements that require immediate attention and plan for those that may require longer term solutions. This information will be provided to the MIDLAS Board as well as to staff.

All staff are responsible for identifying service gaps and for ensuring that arising issues are identified and resolved appropriately. At the fortnightly staff meetings the Executive Officer and MIDLAS team members discuss issues that arise.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

The Executive Officer will hold ultimate responsibility for implementing the DAIP. All staff are responsible for ensuring that all actions relevant to their program are implemented.

The Executive Officer will include any relevant issues presenting in the monthly report to be presented to the Board.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

A copy of the MIDLAS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be available on our website for clients and service to comment on. Assistance will be provided for individuals who require help to participate in providing comments.

Review and evaluative mechanisms

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be reviewed at least every five years.

The DAIP may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect the progress of implementation and the inclusion of additional issues as they arise.

The Executive Officer will conduct a six monthly audit of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and incorporate information from Client Complaints, additional feedback received from agencies and inputs from other individuals and agencies. Where necessary the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be updated by the Executive Officer or nominated team member.

Reporting on DAIP

The Executive Officer will prepare an annual update on the effectiveness of strategies incorporated in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan as part of the Strategic Plan review. Further information will be incorporated into the annual reporting process for the AGM.

MIDLAS reports to FaHCSIA using a supplied template and has periodic service review meetings. Information regarding the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan outlines:

- Its progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- The progress of staff and volunteers toward meeting the desired outcomes; and
- The strategies it used to inform its staff and volunteers of its DAIP.

Ensure reporting mechanisms for DAIP are scheduled into the Executive Officer management plan.	ongoing
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STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

OUTCOME 1

People with disabilities have the same opportunities to access our agency and its services.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE
Develop an agency Access and Inclusion Policy to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disabilities, including a regular opportunity for clients to provide feedback.	Reviewed 6 monthly
Ensure MIDLAS' client rooms are accessible and meet the legislative and access standards for accessibility.	Reviewed 6 monthly
Ensure MIDLAS staff and volunteers are aware of facilities available to people with disabilities, eg, toilets, access ramps, etc.	Reviewed 6 monthly

Ensure that signage is clear and easy to understand.	Reviewed 6 monthly

OUTCOME 2

People with disabilities receive information in a format that will enable them to access the information and be able to utilise it.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE
Ensure clients individual needs are met by supplying information in alternative formats on request.	Reviewed 6 monthly
Develop a ready range of client documents, policies and procedures and forms in an alternative formats such as Easy English, Large print, etc.	Reviewed 6 monthly
Provide innovative ways for clients to use the ipad and other enabling technologies to assist in accessing MIDLAS information.	Reviewed 6 monthly
Train staff to use new technologies	Reviewed 6 monthly
Ensure that our website is user friendly and meets the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	ongoing
Commit to making publications as accessible as possible with plain English format.	ongoing
Ensure all MIDLAS staff are made aware of how to access information in alternative formats.	ongoing

OUTCOME 3

People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from our employees.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE
Ensure employees and volunteers are aware of disability access and inclusion related policies and relevant information.	Ongoing
Disability Advocates address team meetings to provide informal professional development to improve employee knowledge, skills and practice of all accessibility issues.	Ongoing
All staff share information at team meetings to provide summaries of formal and specialised professional development attended.	Ongoing
Staff training to assist with complaints from people with a disability.	Ongoing
Update staff on relevant information and training opportunities external to MIDLAS	Ongoing
Staff work holistically to resolve clients issues.	Ongoing

OUTCOME 4

People with disabilities have the same opportunities to make complaints to MIDLAS.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE

MIDLAS Clients Complaints Procedure is accessible for all people regardless of their ability.	Ongoing
All staff are trained to assist any person to make a complaint in a format other than in writing.	Ongoing
All clients regardless of ability are invited to participate in clients feedback surveys at the time of interview. All staff can assist clients	Each client interview
Annually – telephone consultation with clients selected randomly	

OUTCOME 5

People with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in any forum or consultation we may undertake.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE
Ensure ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure its implementation and the meeting of outcomes.	Ongoing
Ensure inclusive opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in any public consultation we may undertake	Ongoing



Customer Feedback Questionnaire Jan - March 2011

1. Client Feedback Questionnaire

To help us improve upon our services, we would greatly appreciate your input and feedback on your experience with MIDLAS. Please complete the following questions and return it to your advocate once completed or you may take the form away with you and post it to us at a later date. We can even help you to complete the form if need be and you may remain anonymous if you wish.

1. Date

Date

2. Who did you see at MIDLAS?

- Charu
- Chrissy
- Craig
- Danielle
- Darlene
- Jaswant

- Justine
- Sally
- Taryn
- Trish

3. Why did you come to MIDLAS?

- Financial Counselling
- Disability Advocacy
- Legal
- Tenancy
- Emergency Relief

4. After I contacted MIDLAS, my appointment was

- Same day
- 1-5 days
- 6-10 days
- 11 days or more

5. MIDLAS gave me the information I needed.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. I understood the information given to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. The information or advice was helpful to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. MIDLAS staff treated me well.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. I am happy with what MIDLAS has done for me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. If you are not happy with the service given to you by MIDLAS staff you are welcome to lodge a formal complaint. Do you wish to do so?

- Yes
- No

11. I would come back to MIDLAS if I needed help in the future.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. I would recommend MIDLAS service to my family and friends.

- Yes
- No

13. How can we make our services even better?

14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



We value our Clients here at MIDLAS so your feedback is very important to us. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire as your assistance and cooperation is very much appreciated.

Done