

Keeping on track with your self-directed support - the importance of governance

The term, governance, is most often used in organisations but governance is an important consideration when you are directing your own supports or directing on behalf of a family member or friend. Governance is about the system you establish to make decisions about your self-directed arrangements and to ensure that you are doing what you said you were going to do. Who makes the important decisions? How are these made? Who is consulted? How do you keep everything on track?

The governance structure required for a large service provider is very different to that of a small family- or person- governed organisation however, the principle of governance remains the same. Whatever processes you put in place it is important to remember that the vision for your life, and what is important to you and your family, should guide choices about your supports and services and how these are governed.

These five principles offer a way of managing support and governance in alignment with your vision:

1. Home is a private place and privacy must be respected at all times.
2. Family and friends have natural authority in people's lives.
3. Desire for a typical life is respected.
4. The principle of valued roles directs planning.
5. Bureaucratic processes are minimised in the life of the person and their personal networks.

Governance operates on a number of levels. Dr. Michael Kendrick describes two levels of governance as:

Delegated programmatic governance - the assignment (with support) of specific oversight authority over service design and implementation to service users and families and typically includes the delegated conditional power to design and guide all service development matters relative to meeting their specific personal needs.

Self-management / administration of services - direct "hands on" operational management role by service users and families (and allies). This role may be in regards to some or all aspects of service and may be shared and supported with any combination of others including staff.

These two levels of governance can apply when you direct your own supports under Your Life Your Choice.

1. If you have "delegated responsibility to govern or have oversight authority over the design, implementation of your supports and services" this could involve planning the kinds of supports you need and how these are best organised. This role is like that of a director of a company who oversees operations but does not get involved in the practical, hands-on administration work.
2. If you have the "option to administer your service as well" this could involve practical matters such as recruiting and managing staff, payroll and financial reporting. Disability Services has established conditions or rules that guide how you manage these responsibilities.

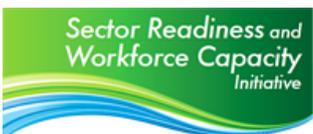
You can read more about levels of governance in the summary report from a Think Tank on Collective Family Governance, "[Empowerment and Self Direction Relative to the Design and Governance of Personalized Service Arrangements](#)".

The following articles explain in more detail what it takes to govern your own or another person's self-directed arrangements:

[Knowing your business](#) - Individuals engaged in self-direction, on their own or with the support of people they trust, have the natural authority to direct their support under a self- or family- governed model.

[Elements of directing your own support](#) - In self-direction it is important to keep authority over the decisions that affect your life or the life of the person whose arrangements you are directing.

[Taking care of business: some ideas for governance in self-directed arrangements](#) - Self-direction involves a range of tasks requiring different skills and abilities. You do not have to do it all on your own.



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