

Media release – 13 August 2015

New research shows giving people control over their government funding is better for everyone

Newly released research shows that giving disabled people more choice over how they use their government funding is more economical in the long term, and gets better outcomes for people.

The two pieces of research (quantitative and qualitative) focused on people who receive funding from the Ministry of Health's Disability Support Services under a scheme called *Individualised Funding*. People who get this type of funding have more control and choice over when, where, how and who provides their disability support services.

"Individualised Funding has been operating in New Zealand for ten years," says Marsha Marshall, CEO of Manawanui InCharge who commissioned the research. "This research is a first step in understanding more about the impacts of disabled people having control over their government funded support and will hopefully contribute to the ongoing development of self-directed approaches to funding."

"This is the first research of its kind in New Zealand and provides valuable information that supports the recent Productivity Commission report recommendations for *More Effective Social Services*."

The research will be formally launched at Te Papa on Thursday 27th August at 4pm.

Key findings

1. Over time, disabled people who manage their own funding tend to use *less of their allocated funding*.
2. The *uptake* of Individualised Funding by eligible people has *increased* from 4% in 2010 to 21% in 2014.
3. The *cost per person* using Individualised Funding has *decreased* over the same period.
4. People who have high and complex needs who move onto Individualised Funding tend to have lower costs overall than those who move into Residential Services.
5. Individualised Funding users with high and complex needs are less likely to transition to Residential Care than people not using IF. This means that IF slows down the movement of people to higher cost services.
6. One of the most significant challenges for people transitioning to Individualised Funding is grasping the extent of the options available and understanding what a good life looks like for them.
7. Sharing knowledge through stories is seen as a critical part of a successful transition process
8. People choosing Individualised Funding identified four main themes that influenced this decision:
 - Building natural supports/networks
 - Mobility and technology
 - Having a home of their own
 - Being productive.
9. Families who transitioned to Individualised Funding felt they were now able to live a meaningful life while making a difference in their community and leading social change.

For more information contact Julz Britnell, Communications Manager, julz.britnell@incharge.org.nz, 021 662074 or Marsha Marshall, CEO, marsha.marshall@incharge.org.nz, 027 2253357.

Additional Information

About the research

1. The quantitative research focused on a cost analysis of Individualised Funding. It focused on the school leaver to 65 age group and looked at differences in initial and ongoing costs for people choosing Individualised Funding with those using other service streams. This paper can be read at [Individualised Funding Cost Analysis](#)
2. The qualitative research used a narrative storytelling approach to look at people transitioning from traditional services to Individualised Funding, what was important to them, what the challenges were and the differences they felt Individualised Funding had made to their lives. This paper can be read at [Facilitating the Transition to Individualised Funding](#).

Both research papers can be downloaded from [Manawanui In Charge - Research](#).

What is Individualised Funding (IF)

IF is a funding mechanism for disability supports. It is based on a philosophy of person centred control, in which people should be empowered and enabled to live ordinary lives and have control and choice over that life. IF can give a person more choice, control and flexibility as they decide how, when, and who provides their support. With IF a person's needs are assessed and supports allocated. These are then translated into an annual budget which the disabled person controls.

Manawanui InCharge

Manawanui is New Zealand's largest IF Host Provider. They co-designed and piloted the Individualised Funding programme with the Ministry of Health in 2005/6. As a Host Provider, Manawanui acts as a conduit between the funder and the person receiving funding. Manawanui helps people across New Zealand to manage their funds either through a payroll or expense claim service and provides ongoing support to the person around budget management, recruitment and planning. Manawanui has contracts with the Ministry of Health and a number of DHBs across the country.

Dovetail

Dovetail was created by Dr Adrian Field as a vehicle to support positive social change in New Zealand communities. An experienced researcher and evaluator, Adrian was part of the Synergia team that evaluated the Ministry of Social Development's 'Think Differently' programme and was involved in an earlier evaluation of Individualised Funding for the Ministry of Health, the Luí Ola regional Pacific Disability network and Te Whiringa Ora for Healthcare NZ. Adrian has a PhD in public health and more than twenty years experience in research and evaluation.

Co-researcher Michael McGeachie specialises in the development and delivery of bespoke modelling, analysis and financial consultancy projects in health and social care. Michael is a Chartered Accountant and over the past six years he has devoted his time to the development of evidence based modelling methodologies and analysis within health and social care environments in the UK and New Zealand. Michael has been involved in several modelling and analysis projects with the Ministry of Health and Individualised Funding providers. Michael reviewed the impact of transition upon patterns of activity, costs and service utilisation for the Individualised Funding review and has worked on the initial development of a new IF funding allocation pilot in the Bay of Plenty for disability support services.

Annick Janson

Dr Annick Janson is Research Associate, Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research at Victoria University of Wellington and studies the impact of social innovation. She was the inaugural Research Director of the New Zealand Leadership Institute, at the University of Auckland Business School and Research Director for Microsoft NZ Partners in Learning. Annick has a PhD in leadership in Management Systems and three decades experience developing leadership in the Health and Disability sector.