

Good Practice Guide 2012

A resource of the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*

What is service coordination?

Service coordination places consumers at the centre of service delivery to maximise their opportunities for accessing the services they need. Service coordination enables organisations to remain independent of each other, while working in a cohesive and coordinated way to give consumers a seamless and integrated response.

Service coordination is underpinned by the following principles:

- a central focus on consumers
- partnerships and collaboration
- the social model of health and the social model of disability
- competent staff
- a duty of care
- protection of consumer information
- engagement with a broad range of service sectors
- consistency in practice standards.

Tools and supporting resources

A range of resources have been developed to support service coordination.

This guide is one of a set of four publications designed to support the implementation of service coordination in Victoria. It summarises the key elements of good practice in service coordination. For a comprehensive description of service coordination, including good practice indicators, see the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*. For planning and achieving quality improvement in service coordination, see the criteria and points of evidence listed in the *Continuous Improvement Framework*. For decision support and a guide to using the SCTT 2012, refer to the *SCTT 2012 User Guide*. These resources are all available at <www.health.vic.gov.au/pcps/coordination>.

Service Coordination publications



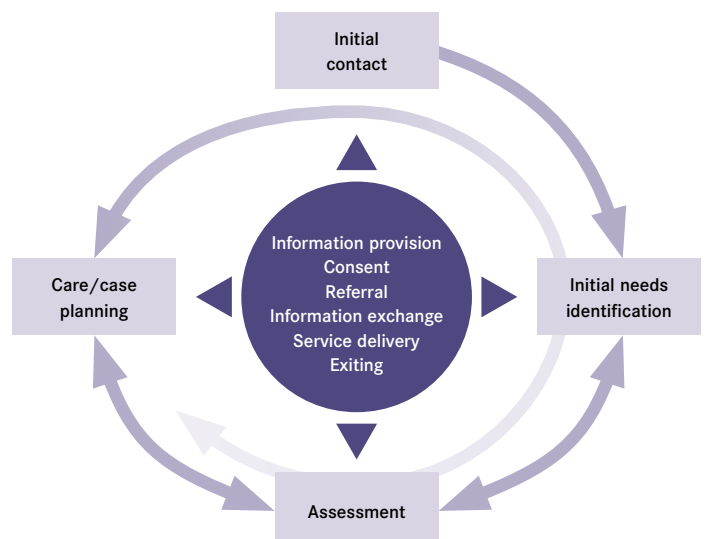
In addition to these four publications there is an extensive range of supporting resources and tools to support the practice of service coordination. A full list of these resources can be found in Section 5 of the *Victorian Service Coordination Practice Manual*.

The Service Coordination Framework

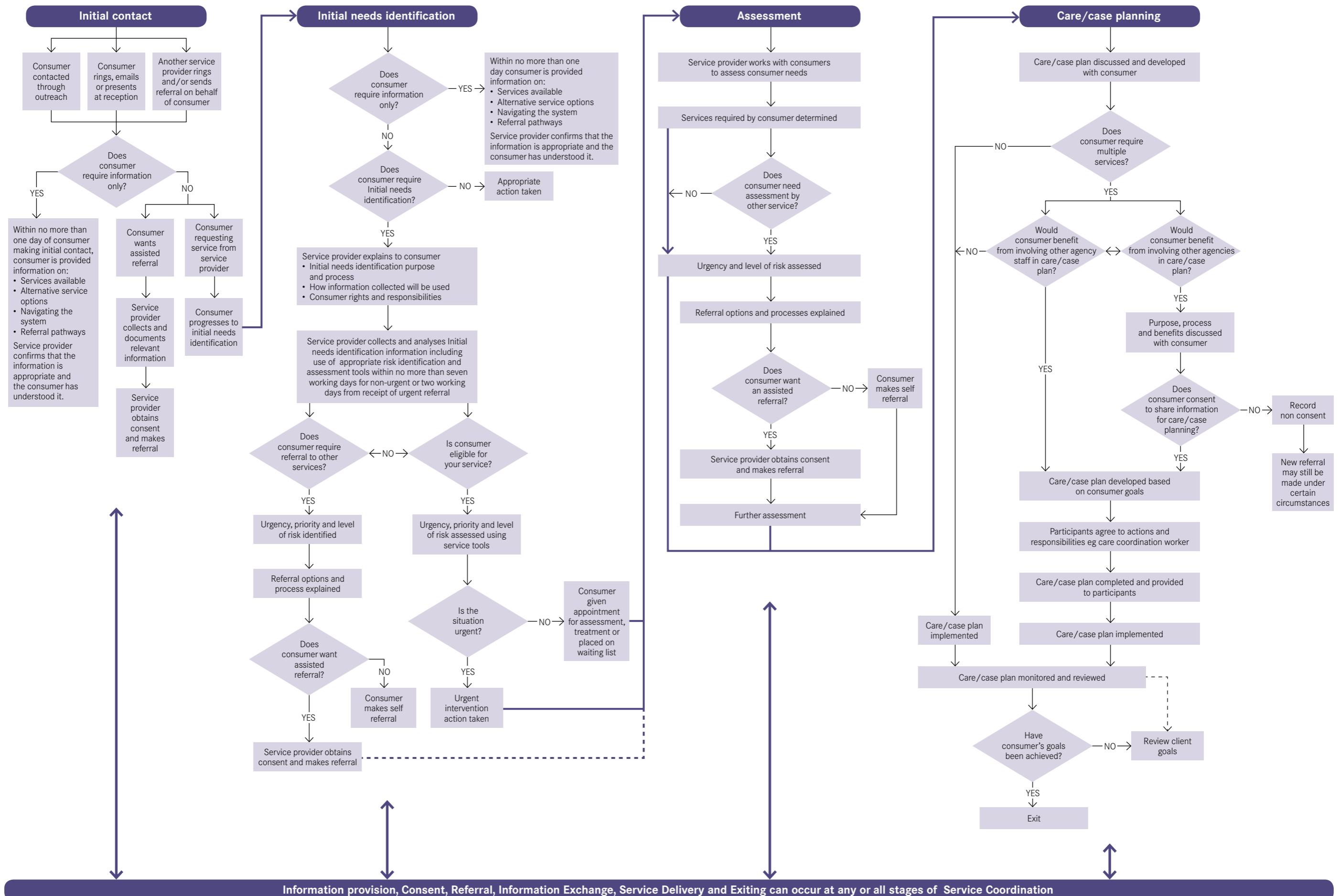
The operational elements of service coordination, as described in the *Better Access to Services: A Policy and Operational Framework* are depicted in Figure 1. Initial contact, initial needs identification, assessment and care/case planning are the key service coordination elements. Additional processes such as information provision, consent to share information, referral, information exchange, service delivery and exiting can occur at any stage.

Service coordination elements are implemented in a range of ways according to the consumer, the service provider and context in which services are provided. For example, in some services, initial contact and initial needs identification are carried out by the same person and assessment is conducted by a different person; in other services, one person may conduct both initial needs identification and assessment processes at the same time.

Figure 1: Service coordination elements



Consumer pathway through Victoria's Service Coordination Model



Initial contact

Initial contact is the consumer's first contact with the service system. It is an important function of every service provider, and usually includes the provision of accurate, comprehensive service information and facilitated access to initial needs identification.

Initial needs identification

Initial needs identification is a brief, broad screening process to uncover underlying and presenting issues. Initial needs identification canvasses the consumer's needs as well as opportunities for intervention and information provision early in their contact with the service system. The service provider engages in a broad conversation to identify these needs. It is not a diagnostic process, but includes identification of the consumer's risk, eligibility and priority for service. Initial needs identification involves a whole-of-person, consumer-centred approach.

Assessment

Assessment is a decision-making methodology that collects and interprets relevant information about the consumer. Assessment is not an end in itself, but part of an ongoing process of delivering services. It is an investigative process using professional and interpersonal skills and in-depth inquiry to identify relevant issues that will guide a responsive intervention.

Care/case planning

Care/case planning is a dynamic process that incorporates assessment coordination, care/case management, referral, information exchange, review, reassessment, monitoring and exiting. Care/case planning involves balancing relative and competing needs, and helping consumers make decisions appropriate to their needs, wishes, values and circumstances. Care/case planning may occur at an individual provider level, and both within and across agencies.

Additional processes

Information provision

Providing information that is relevant to the consumer's needs may be undertaken at any and all stages of the service coordination process. When choosing the type and complexity of information to provide, service providers will be receptive to and guided by the consumer's needs, learning styles and their capacity to understand information (taking into account issues such as preferred language and visual or cognitive requirements). Service providers will check that consumers have understood and importantly, are able to utilise, the information that is being provided.

Consent to share consumer information

Privacy legislation requires the protection of an individual's personal information and their right to decide how the information is used, disclosed to or shared with others. Consumer consent is a compulsory part of the information exchange process. The primary purpose of information collection is the purpose for which the information was originally provided, while the secondary purpose is any additional use that is not directly related to the consumer's original disclosure. Consumers must agree to the disclosure of information for secondary purposes.

Referral

Referral may occur at or result from any stage of the Service Coordination process. Referral is the transmission, with consent, of a consumer's personal information from one service provider to another for the purpose of further assessment or service provision.

Information exchange

Information exchange is essential to provide consumers with a seamless, coordinated service delivery. Information exchange includes acknowledgement that a referral has been received and the subsequent action to be taken as well as provision of summary information to other service providers at key points in the consumer's pathway.

Service delivery

Service delivery is generally undertaken in accordance with local protocols and in keeping with the needs of the consumer and the level of skill of the person providing the service.

Exiting

Exiting can occur at any stage of the service coordination process and is generally managed in accordance with local protocols.