

# Uniting

## Supplementary questions

Uniting Centre for Research, Innovation & Advocacy

Uniting Disability

Uniting Local Area Coordination

19 October 2018

## NSW Legislative Council

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**Inquiry into the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the provision of disability services in New South Wales**



We would like to thank Uniting (NSW.ACT) staff who participated in consultations and made other contributions as part of the preparation of this submission.

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## Introduction

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear on 2 October 2018. This submission responds to the supplementary questions we received following our testimony.

## Questions

### 1. Are you aware of any specific groups of people with disability who are not being captured by the NDIS and thus not receiving NDIS funding? Please describe these groups by their disability/medical/health condition?

#### a. How are these groups accessing the support and services they need, if not by the NDIS?

We are aware of the following groups who are not “being captured” by the NDIS. We also indicate the kinds of support and services we believe they may be accessing, based on our experience as a LAC and service provider. Please note that this list of services is based on information which has come to our attention in the course of service delivery, and does not represent the findings of a comprehensive or systematic survey.

Groups of people with disability	Disability/Medical/Health Condition	Support and services outside of NDIS
Individuals acquiring traumatic injury / compensable individuals	Acquired injuries, conditions continuing treatment and rehabilitation	Family and unpaid supports Inpatient / Outpatient / Health NSW icare Welfare Rights Centre / Community Legal Centres
Mental Illness People previously accessing PHAMS services		Family and unpaid supports Community Health, Inpatient Mental Health, Advocacy Organisations Community groups providing information & referral e.g. Uniting MSIC, Wayside Chapel, Anglicare’s Rough Edges, Baptist Care’s Hope Street Many people with psychosocial disabilities are accessing the New Start or similar Centrelink support and using Medicare to access the supports they need The Ability Links model is well placed to assist this cohort as these people require someone to work with in a flexible and person centred manner whilst breaking down the barriers and focussing more on building on their own strengths and unknown skills.
Medical conditions and degenerative conditions affecting physical abilities, stamina, exertion, communication,	Stroke, Parkinson’s Disease, Fibromyalgia, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), Cystic fibrosis, Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal injuries and	Family and unpaid supports Inpatient / Outpatient Health Private means Aged Care

Groups of people with disability	Disability/Medical/ Health Condition	Support and services outside of NDIS
skin integrity, memory and consciousness	back problems, obesity, Alcohol/Other Drugs induced dementia,	Welfare Rights Centre / Community Legal Centres Companion Card
People aged under 65 years and living in Residential Aged Care (RAC).	Wide range of issues, including spinal cord injury, degenerative neuro conditions, early onset dementia	The Summer Foundation had some funding to visit facilities and provide education/support to people under 65 to access the NDIS. This is a limited time project, but there just hasn't been the information or resources available to support people in RAC to transition.
Undiagnosed individuals, co-morbidity, untreated conditions	Low IQ / learning difficulties Communication difficulties, dyslexia	Family and unpaid supports Health, General Practitioner, Medicare Dept. of Education Ability Links NSW Department of Social Services National Disability Advocacy Program
Autism Spectrum Disorder	Autism Level 1	Family and unpaid supports Early Childhood Early Intervention Education department Family Referral Services FACS Family Support, Intensive Family Support, Brighter Futures

## 2. Regarding planners:

It is important to distinguish between NDIA Planners and Uniting Local Area Coordinators. NDIA Planners are NDIA employees whose role is to prepare a participant's funding package for the provision of supports, adopting an insurance-based approach, informed by actuarial analysis. Once the participant's plan has been prepared, it is sent to an authorised NDIA delegate for approval.

Uniting delivers local Area Coordination under a Partners in Community grant agreement with the NDIA. This agreement was renewed as at 1 July 2018, and under it we employ Local Area Coordinators to:

- Facilitate community engagement and awareness activities, to support people with a disability, their families and carers to engage with, access and transition to the NDIS and link to community and mainstream services;
- Gather information and data identified by the NDIA as required to enable an NDIA Planner to prepare a participant's first plan for approval by an NDIA delegate;
- Support the participant to understand and self-direct their plan, exercise choice and control, use the MyPlace Participant Portal and build capacity to manage their own funds (as appropriate);
- Connect participants to mainstream and community services, including linkage and referral as required to support people with disability to have the skills,

confidence and information they need to get involved in the community; and build the capacity of community and mainstream services to be inclusive of people with a disability;

- Conduct scheduled reviews (and unscheduled reviews as required), gathering all information and data identified by the NDIA as required, developing a draft plan for review by an NDIA planner and forwarding to an NDIA delegate for approval.

**a. How much training is a planner required to have?**

In relation to the training required by NDIA planners, this question is best directed to the NDIA.

In relation to the Uniting's Local Area Coordinators, we can advise that we have an extensive training program for all staff. This includes:

- A five-week starter program including NDIA and Uniting-specific modules:
  - Australian Public Service Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct
  - Security
  - WHS
  - Privacy
  - NDIS & NDIA Overview
  - Disability Awareness
  - Customer Focus
  - Pathway Overview
  - NDIA & NDIS Legal Overview
  - Introduction to the NDIS Business System
  - Introduction to Mainstream Interfaces
  - Introduction to Early Childhood and Early Intervention
  - Business System Overview
  - NDIS Business System Pre-Planning & Information Gathering
  - Payment Integrity
  - Engagement and Access
  - Proof of Identity (POI), Nominees and Guardians
  - Building Relationships with Participants
  - Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC)
  - Pre-planning
  - Plan Management
  - Reasonable and Necessary
  - Typical Support Packages
  - In-Kind Funding
  - Plan Approval
  - Quality
  - Plan Implementation and Monitoring
  - Scheduled and Unscheduled Reviews
  - Psychosocial Disability
  - Mental health recovery
  - School Leaver Employment Support (SLES)
  - Housing (Identifying Housing Solutions (IHS), Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), Supported Independent Living (SIL)
  - Self-Management
  - Customer Aggression

- Retraining from the NDIA to maintain our knowledge of its business systems and processes;
- Mandatory Uniting-wide training on:
  - Preventing Bullying and Harassment - Employees
  - Child Protection
  - Code of Conduct
  - Critical Incidents
  - Introduction to Child Wellbeing
  - National Information Privacy Awareness
  - Reportable Conduct and Incidents
  - Work Health and Safety Fundamentals
  - Working Safely
  - Workplace Emergency Response - General Occupant Training
- Specialist Uniting LAC training on:
  - Time management and communication skills
  - Effective Business and Interaction Writing
  - Participant Sub-status
  - Plan implementation
  - Presentation Skills
  - Rust Out Burn Out
- A Uniting-specific Ongoing Training Curriculum, to be completed within the first six months of working with us, covering:
  - Accidental Counsellor
  - Person Centred Training
  - Supported Decision Making
  - Supporting Children 7-16 years old
  - First Aid and Fire Warden (role specific)
  - Aboriginal Cultural Awareness
  - CALD Awareness
  - Self-Management
  - Living our values
  - Leading self

In addition, Uniting has recently achieved Gold Standard Mental Health accreditation awarded for over 20% of the workforce being trained in Mental Health First Aid. We are also collaborating with local peak bodies to provide specialised training in customer disability groups, so that we can match staff subject matter experts to customer cohorts.

**b. The NSW Ombudsman said, “We note that qualifications are no guarantee of quality, and it is important that values-based recruitment is coupled with thorough induction processes and training.” Do you believe this is happening?**

We agree that, while qualifications are one indicator of likely quality, they are not in and of themselves a guarantee. We are not in a position to comment on the practices of our peers in this sector. We can, however, confirm that we practice values-based recruitment at every stage of the process.

Following an initial phone screen, recruitment candidates progress to a behavioural-based assessment centre and individual interview in front of a panel to ensure compatibility with Uniting’s values of Bold, Respectful, Compassionate and Imaginative. Successful candidates undergo extensive induction as outlined above, which includes both Uniting and NDIA training. The full Uniting Induction Program continues for three months to

support new employees and includes peer mentoring and close supervision and support from line managers.

Uniting LAC is proud of our Workforce Diversity Strategy and current statistics reflect our success in recruiting CALD, Aboriginal and Persons with Disability to our LAC program. We have also recently undergone LGBTI Rainbow Tick Accreditation.

We are careful to adopt culturally appropriate strategies when targeting CALD and Aboriginal candidates, and remain agile and flexible to cater for candidates with disability. Out of a total workforce of 360, Uniting LAC at the date of this submission, currently employees:

- 20% people with disability;
- 15% carers of a person with disability;
- 26% people from CALD backgrounds;
- 4.5% people from Aboriginal backgrounds.

**c. How much time do they have with each individual?**

In relation to NDIA planners, this question is best directed to the NDIA.

Uniting LAC supports approximately 19,000 participants. Under our grant agreement with the NDIA, we have a high volume/low touch approach to supporting each individual. Routine LAC services are provided face-to-face or over the telephone as required, for between 7-12 hours per participant, per year. However, we are committed to maintaining a degree of flexibility within the constraints of our funding, and seek to meet the individual support needs of each participant where possible.

**d. How is the staff cap influencing the quality of service individuals receive from their planners? And more broadly from the NDIS?**

As the staffing cap relates to the NDIA, this question is best directed to the NDIA.