

QUESTION ANSWERED

QUESTION ON NOTICE – Inquiry into the implementation of the NDIS and the provision of disability services in NSW – 2 October 2018 Hearing

RURAL AND REGIONAL DIAGNOSIS AND ASSESSMENT SERVICES

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you have a time frame for when they will be in place?

Ms KOFF: The tender is out at the moment for us to put them in place, but there is always referral to the metropolitan diagnosis and assessment centres that we have, which are staffed by therapists with physicians with specialisation in developmental disability and assessment that develop the ongoing plans that still can be delivered locally once they have had the initial assessment.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You said that there is a tender out.

Ms KOFF: Yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you have a start date for when services will be available?

Ms KOFF: No, I do not know. I can take that on notice.

ANSWER

- NSW Health received funding in the NSW Government 2018-19 Budget to improve access to assessment and referral services for the families of children with developmental delay living in rural and regional NSW.
- NSW Health is working toward implementation of the RAS on or before 1 January 2019. In the meantime, children with developmental delay continue to be supported via assessment, referral and treatment services provided by existing NSW Health Child and Family Health units.

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Ms Kym Flowers

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I want to return to Ms Koff. After today, what can be done for Ms Flowers? I wholeheartedly agree with the Chair and ask that the question of aged care facility be taken off the table, but what next? What is NSW Health doing for Ms Flowers?

Ms KOFF: We are continuing to support her current needs, which is critical. As I understand, she was in a home beforehand and when she had acute exacerbation of her condition she was admitted to hospital. It would appear that the support that she required then was withdrawn while she was in hospital, hence she has been maintained in hospital. I think that should be our first property, to support her in her current condition. We will continue to advocate and escalate, because I do not think, as I have mentioned, that the hospital is the appropriate environment. We will continue to liaise with the local NDIS providers and escalate it by the formal channels. I am sure there is precedent, to my understanding, about the insulin injection that has come forward in other cases, which should set the policy going forward.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I appreciate that, but it is still not being applied to her case. If you can take that on notice, I would appreciate it, and I am sure her family would as well.

ANSWER

- NSW Ministry of Health and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District staff are actively engaged with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to seek a solution while Ms Flowers remains in Sutherland Hospital awaiting review of her National Disability Insurance Scheme plan, including funding for her diabetes care.
- Weekly meetings between Ms Flowers, her family and her treatment team are held to discuss her care plan, and the NSW Ministry of Health maintains regular contact with the Flowers family.
- The NDIA, Ms Flower's Support Coordinator, and service providers have been investigating a number of residential accommodation options that could provide Ms Flower's with the support she requires to live in the community.
- A service provider has recently offered an accommodation option for Ms Flowers and her family to consider.

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INDIVIDUALS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NDIS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: According to the NDIA submission, 27 per cent of people who were not previously receiving disability support are now receiving support from the NDIS. How many people who were previously receiving support from State-based disability services are not receiving support from the NDIS?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I should take that on notice to give you an accurate response.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: When you take it on notice, can you tell me who is receiving less support and who is receiving none at all.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: There were 4,000 existing clients largely of the Community Care Support Program that did not get access to the NDIS. I think we touched on that last time.

ANSWER

- I am advised that approximately 4,100 existing NSW clients were deemed ineligible by the National Disability Insurance Agency.
- These clients were supported through the Continuity of Support Pathways Project.

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NDIA CRISIS CAPABILITIES

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do they provide services on a geographic basis?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I need to ask the NDIA to provide information that I, in turn, can provide the Committee.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: They have not been called upon. What is the process of calling upon that provider?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: There is an escalation pathway within the NDIA that can be activated by health or justice colleagues. It can be activated by families, support coordinators and the like. I will ask the NDIA to describe the mechanism for you because it is their mechanism.

ANSWER

- Interim after-hours crisis response capabilities have been established by the NDIA in NSW to support people with disability and their families.
- The capabilities include an after-hours phone number, and providers on call to provide particular services in the short-term. These are available across NSW.
- The after-hours phone line is contactable by health services and emergency services in NSW. It is not available to the broader public.

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FUNDING OF OXYGEN TANKS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I specifically ask around the funding of the oxygen tanks. Who will pay for the oxygen tanks?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I will take that question on notice and respond to you.

ANSWER

- The Council of Australian Government agreed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Applied Principles and Tables of Services describe the responsibilities of the NDIS and mainstream service systems including health.
- I am advised the residents of Summer Hill are participants of the NDIS, and their supports are funded through the Scheme. This includes the provision of their piped oxygen support.

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PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT RATES OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I am happy for you this question to be taken on notice. I am interested in what your target is for people with disability within your departments and what the current levels of employment are across your departments?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The government-wide target is 5.6 per cent of the public sector workforce identifying as people with disability. The levels of disability employment vary greatly by cluster and the year- on- year targets for improvement, and while they sum up to that 5.6 per cent they would be different for different agencies based on the state of reform: Are they getting smaller or getting bigger? What are the opportunities to better open up the workforce for people with disability? There are some agencies that have some kind of clearer earlier opportunities to really +be an employer of choice for people with disability.

Mr REARDON: We have a Public Service Commission that is fairly focused on this in terms of us driving across the 10 clusters the target of 5.6 per cent. The same as we put quite explicit effort into women in leadership roles and Aboriginal leadership roles, it is the same with people with disability—we want more and more people within the public service to reach that target. It is similar to the action plans that clusters put in place. So in areas such as transport, if you think about the transport system and what we hold ourselves to account for in disability access standards for buses, ferry wharves, train stations, et cetera, we will put the same level of effort into ensuring that we bring more people with disability within the New South Wales public service because there is a lot of opportunity.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I will not miss a chance to plug Bardwell Park station when you are coming up with the list—my local station. If you could provide the Committee on notice with those figures across clusters, agencies, however you want to break it down. If 5.6 per cent is the target, who is meeting it and who is not meeting it? What are figures for each one of those?

ANSWER

- *Jobs for people with disability: A Plan for the NSW Public Sector* aims to increase the number of people with disability employed across the NSW Public Sector from 2.7% to 5.6% by 2027.
- The most recent data is publically available.