



Standing Committee on Law and Justice

2022 Review of the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FROM HEARING ON 18 NOVEMBER 2022**

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I might quickly ask about the attendant care issue. I understand the contracts for the panel of attendant care providers is up for renewal. How many providers are currently there on the panel?

RICHARD HARDING: I'll let Dr Allsop answer.

NICK ALLSOP: I think we have—and don't quote me on the exact number—around 80 members of the existing panel. But you're absolutely right. We're going through a tender process to engage a new panel of providers and the level of interest has been above that current provider number.

ANSWER

There are currently 32 providers on the Lifetime Care attendant care panel. These providers operate across one, two or three categories reflecting the needs of participants - Physical Assistance, Cognitive and Behaviour Support, and High Clinical Needs. All providers have a base in NSW.

The current Request for Proposal tender has attracted a significant response from providers in the market, and evaluation is reaching completion. The new expanded panel will ensure quality service provision across the three service categories, and geographical coverage.

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Just in terms of the spread, how many workers are engaged by those 80 providers? What are we talking about in terms of the numbers of workers?

NICK ALLSOP: I'd have to take the exact number on notice.

ANSWER

It is not possible to determine the number of support workers engaged by the 32 providers currently on the Lifetime Care attendant care panel, either as an entire workforce, or in terms of workers supporting Lifetime Care participants.

Panel providers deliver services to a number of funders and private clients. Many support workers are engaged by a number of providers on a casual basis, and work patterns will be determined by client needs, which can vary from week to week.

For Lifetime Care participants, the number of support workers staffing a program will vary, depending on the timetable/pattern that fits their injury related needs, lifestyle and choices. The number of workers staffing a program can also fluctuate to reflect changes in the participant's needs.

In addition, support workers have choices in relation to their work patterns to accommodate their availability.

Care programs vary in size and range from two hours per week to 24 hours per day, and some participants require the support of two workers simultaneously. As such, there can be a range of support worker numbers, from one to more than 12, on a single program.

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is it fair to say that the five largest providers represent, perhaps, 80 per cent or so of the attendant care workers? Or is it more distributed than that.

NICK ALLSOP: It's a little bit difficult to quote an exact figure and it will depend on whether you're looking at—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: On notice, if you could provide the data, that'd be useful, just in terms of the spread.

NICK ALLSOP: Yes, certainly.

ANSWER

The size of an attendant care provider organisation is not necessarily an indicator of the volume of work or number of support workers engaged to staff Lifetime Care programs. Each provider has their own business model and focus priorities.

There are more than 800 Lifetime Care participants currently receiving attendant care. 13 of the panel providers provide support workers for around 85 per cent, or 680, of these participants. Each of these 13 providers currently support 25 participants or more. Of the 13 providers, three are highly specialised in working with people with traumatic brain injuries, which is Lifetime Care's largest participant cohort.

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I just wanted to ask if you could provide us with some details about how you ensure these attendant care providers are meeting their industrial relations requirements. How does Lifetime Care satisfy itself that these providers are actually paying award rates of pay and meeting their industrial—

The Hon. WES FANG: How does that relate to the terms of reference?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You're wasting time, Wes.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's on notice.

NICK ALLSOP: Yes, we're happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

Lifetime Care's contract with attendant care panel providers requires that they meet their industrial relations obligations, and that they be certified with the Australian Community Industry Standard (ACIS) and maintain this certification throughout the life of their contract. This provides assurance of appropriate organisational practices, and that services are being delivered in line with industry requirements.

The provider contract allows Lifetime Care to audit against contract compliance at any time, and to review records and systems as a means of verification. From February 2020 to May 2022, icare and KPMG carried out monitoring visits with 18 providers who deliver services to a significant number of participants to review their approach across five key areas – safety, service quality, financial management, participant experience and governance.

Prior to each visit, two participant files were selected by icare, and providers were required to demonstrate in the sessions how each of the systems and processes in place were applied in relation to those participants. They were also asked to identify any operational challenges and how they were addressed. This provided the opportunity to gain insight on providers' experience in working with icare, and to discuss adjustments that can be made to address any issues. For each selected participant, icare interviewed two support workers involved with their care program to obtain feedback on their experience working for the provider.

To ensure broader insight across the entire provider panel, icare conducts monitoring telephone calls to all providers delivering services to less than 10 participants. These providers were contacted in late 2020, to align with the end of the initial three-year term of the provider contract and assess whether an extension was appropriate. During these calls, which were generally with the head of each organisation, discussions focused on their service delivery to participants, their experience in working with icare, and any issues they had experienced.