

Submission
No 236

**INQUIRY INTO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND THE PROVISION
OF DISABILITY SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Aged Persons Younger People with a Disability and Carers
Forum

Date Received: 9 August 2018

The Aged Persons, Younger People with Disabilities and Carers Forum is pleased to provide this submission to the inquiry into the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) the provision of disability service providers in New South Wales.

The role of the Forum is to stay abreast of our community members needs and relevant government policies, assessing the impact on the target group (frail older people aged 65 years and who need assistance with daily living, people with disabilities and carers) responding to facilitate efficient and effective utilisation of resources to ensure maximum benefit for our community members”.

Our Local Government Area Maitland was an NDIS trial site. Many of the Forums members have been involved with supporting participants to transition from their block funded service providers to the NDIS and providing NDIS information and education to carers and some members are also NDIS participants. The Forum members welcome the NDIS as an insurance scheme to provide long-term care and support to people with disabilities.

Key Points

NDIS Systems and Processes- The Scheme are demonstrating they do not have effective and accountable service management to achieve timely outcomes for NDIS participants and their carers and disability providers. The pricing structures have many inadequacies that devalue the expertise of the workforce required.

Communication with NDIS participants, plan nominees, service providers

- The 1800 call Centre's are unable to connect participants with their NDIS planner. They inform the participant that they can send an email. Most times the participant does not receive a call back.
- The 1800 call Centre's staff informs you they are sending the message to the relevant person/Department. After waiting a week to be contacted many participants are calling back on the 1800 number only to be informed there message left has not been recorded. They are required to relay the message again. Some participants are having to make the call each week over a five month period with no results.
- Service Providers are finding they have a lengthy wait when they call the 1800 number and the outcome often being “ your message will be email to the relevant department” with no response that day or the next to the query or even acknowledgement from the NDIA staff member of receiving the query. Service Providers have reported that may be calling 1800 call Centre's for the same query 5-10 times before an NDIS staff member responds.
- Service Providers have been informed by NDIS planners that they have not been given the messages from the 1800 call Centre's.
- Whilst sending an email you receive any acknowledgement that it has been received. Then this is no timeframe when NDIS will respond to the query.
- The 1800 call Centre staff informs NDIS participants when they express their frustration to go to their local member. Referring the problem to another party.
- The Local Area Coordinators do not inform NDIS participants who they are employed by or explain the partnership role with the NDIS participants.

Participants believe they are speaking with a staff member from the NDIA .this is not an open and transparent way of doing business.

Recommendations

- 1. NDIS develop policy and procedures for communication with NDIS participants and their carers that have timeframes for responding.**
- 2. NDIS develop information sheets in relation to their communication procedures that can be provided to participants and their carers.**
- 3. NDIA 1800 call Centre's to provide callers with a receipt number to ensure that all phone conversations are recorded by the staff member.**

Plan Reviews – There are a large number of NDIS participants that are requesting plan reviews immediately after receiving their reviewed plan.

- NDIS participant plans are having supports reduced or removed from their plans with no explanation from the planner or Local Area coordinator as who they have assessed and determined will be providing the support.
- NDIS participants identify their goals and the planners and local area coordinators ask to change the wording of their goals to fit in with the NDIS systems to be able to receive support?
- NDIS plan reviews requests are not responded to in a timely manner (4-7 month) putting more pressure on carers to be the provider of the support until the participants plan is reviewed.
- The plan reviews often are considering the same information that was provided at the planning meeting and second time around are approved as reasonable and necessary.
- NDIS participants have commented that they are asked so many multiple choice questions by the planner that there is little time for them to have discussion. The process does not focus on the participant.
- NDIS participants are requesting face to face plan reviews in their home and informed this is not possible. Yet when they complain to their local member they received a response from NDIA apologising and explaining they can meet at the participant's home for a plan review.

Recommendations

- 1. Participants have the choice of a meeting in their home or over the phone or at the local office for their plan review meetings.**
- 2. Participants are provided with the multiple-choice questions a fortnight before the plan review meeting to complete and return to NDIS to enable the meeting to have**

the time available for a person centered discussion Re: Participants goals and reducing any barriers that may be preventing them from reaching their goals.

3. Procedures to be developed with timeframes for NDIS participants Re: plan review requests.

4. Information sheet to be developed explaining the process and timeframes for plan review to provide to NDIS participants

Quality Skilled Workforce

- There is a high risk of viability in the area of service delivery for NDIS participants with complex care requirements.
- The pricing structure makes it near impossible to invest in a business infrastructure that can provide training, mentoring, coaching, provide adequate support supervision to attract and retain quality skilled workers.
- The pricing structure does not allow providers time to report on incidents and to be able to respond with corrective actions to meet the quality and safeguard system.

Recommendations

1. The pricing structure to be reviewed with the aim of being able to provide a quality skilled workforce to support NDIS participants.

2. Safeguards to be developed to ensure NDIS participants with complex care requirements have the same access to choice of supports.

NDIS Portal

- The capacity of the NDIS portal to; process information is not efficient.
- Disability providers are required to use a software system that is not cost efficient to their operations.
- NDIS participants have no face to face support to understand how the portal functions.
- Current information sheets do not problem solve why the portal functions are not accessible or working.
- NDIA staff does not have the same screen format as participants or service providers therefore are not seeing the same information to assist.

Recommendations

- ***NDIS participants have access to talk directly with an NDIS Information & Technology technician to work together on solving the problem.***
- ***NDIS undertake a review of the current software available Re:***

processing data speed.

- *NDIS offices to have an IT technician available for NDIS participants to meet with to be supported to understand the functions of the portal, to resolve any portal challenges.*
- *All parties to have the same screen layout to access information.*