

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES – 16 FEBRUARY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Clients with a Mental Illness

Question reference number: HSW 65

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 29 March 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) What training does Centrelink provide for its employees in terms of managing interactions with clients who suffer from mental illness?
- b) Is this training ongoing?

Answer:

- a) Department of Human Services (DHS) staff are currently provided with Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Awareness training products to assist in their interactions with customers with mental illness.

In addition, a suite of social inclusion learning products are being developed that include information on working with customers with mental health issues.

As announced under the National Mental Health Reform package 2011-12 Federal Budget measure '*Increased employment participation for people with mental illness*', DHS is working with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to build the capacity of employment services and DHS frontline staff. The training will help staff to identify and assist people with mental illness to gain employment and better connect them to appropriate services. DHS will receive the completed e-learning package from DEEWR by 1 July 2012, with roll-out of the training to DHS staff to begin in the second half of 2012.

Reference material covering mental health awareness is available to all staff to help them better engage and support customers.

- b) These training products are delivered to staff on an ongoing basis.