



PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE

SCHEME

Question on Notice

Inquiry

Services under the NDIS for People with psychosocial disabilities related to a mental health condition

Reference No: SQ17-000163

SUBJECT – MENTAL HEALTH INQUIRY

Question: Have you experimented with a dedicated mental health planning team in the ACT? If so, what were the results?

Answer:

People accessed the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) during the trial based on 'ages and stages', meaning people with disability enter the NDIS according to either their date of birth or, for school-age children, their academic year.

In preparation for phasing in people with psychosocial disability, the ACT trial site provided participant readiness activities for this cohort from October 2015 to December 2015. The ACT trial site then designated a planning team to support the transition of this cohort until December 2016.

The designated planning team improved consistency within the ACT trial site in supporting people with psychosocial disability in the development of their NDIS plans. The designated team also strengthened the relationship between the ACT trial site and the ACT mental health sector during the transition period.

The planners participated in a National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) psychosocial community of practice and provided information to the group about the ACT approach.

The NDIA is undertaking considerable work to progress the understanding of psychosocial disability within the NDIS and to disseminate more widely existing materials and develop an easy guide to 'access' for people with psychosocial disability as part of participant readiness and engagement activities.

The NDIA has a national Mental Health team with extensive mental health expertise which includes the Strategic Adviser, Mr Eddie Bartnik. This team engages with key stakeholders, undertakes identified projects with the focus to build 'Subject Matter Expertise' across the staff network.

The NDIA has recently appointed Subject Matter Experts within the access, planning and technical advisory teams, all who have a strong background in mental health services.

Appropriate practice guidance to assist NDIA staff to work with participants with psychosocial disability has been developed for both the Access and Planning teams and range of ways to embed the guidance in practice is being explored within teams to suit their unique regional needs.

The NDIA will complete further work in the coming year to redevelop the Community of Practice in line with regional needs to enhance practice for people with psychosocial disability.

Developing relationships with local services including mental health services is part of the role of NDIA Engagement staff and the NDIA partners. Appropriate guidance and resources for Regional Engagement teams have been developed and ways to further engage with the mental health sector in regions are currently being explored.

The NDIA has established Mental Health Sector Reference Group to engage with the sector and provide up to date information and the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues as they arise. The NDIA has also collaborated with the mental health sector in a range of projects such as the joint Support Design Project with Mental Health Australia and the Online Psychosocial Resources project with the NSW Mental Health Coordinating Council.