

Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS
NDIS Planning Inquiry - Public Hearing Sydney

9.00 am, Wednesday 9 October 2019

ALLIANCE20 CASE STUDIES (names changed)

1. Carol wants flexibility in her plan

- Carol had a goal to move out of a supported accommodation service (SIL) and move in with her boyfriend
 - Carol asked for a six-month plan which included her ongoing supports but also with extra core funding to assist her move out.
 - Carol's Planner declined as to fund the extra supports as it was seen as a duplication of supports
 - It was up to Carol's Alliance20 service provider to provide the additional supports to make it work. But it was a case of fitting Carol's needs to the plan, not the plan to Carol's needs.
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- Carol had the clear goal to change her living arrangements within the duration of her plan. Carol wanted her plan to support these changes but the current framework does not allow for this type of flexibility without undertaking a process of plan review.
 - Existing plan reviews are onerous and time consuming
 - In Carol case her original identified goal did not change but because the line items of support changed, this meant that she was required to undertake a review.
 - If we are to implement three year plans, we must build into the process simple ways of initiating reviews, but more importantly, where the goals have not changed allow flexibility to change items of support within the plan and budget.

2. Wendy's Journey – a tale of plan, three reviews and needs not met

- Wendy has complex needs and lives on her own in the community. Wendy lives in the Hunter region which was part of the NDIS pilot area.
 - Wendy was late to transition with her initial NDIS plan being completed May 2018.
 - Delays in transitioning to the NDIS was in part due to NDIA not being able to determine which catchment area between two offices was responsible.
 - Wendy's first NDIS plan did not meet her needs from the outset as it was based on assumptions of a typical support profile, disregarding Wendy's support requirements at that point in time.
 - In her first NDIS plan Wendy needed high levels of support to meet the complexity of her needs. As Wendy had significant issues in engaging in the broader community, she required 1:1, 24/7 support.
 - Consequently, to meet her needs, Wendy was required to seek a plan review on three separate occasions. On two occasions the plan was updated to accommodate Wendy's support needs and the third request for a review was declined as the support requirements were considered responsibility of the provider.
 - On each occasion of a Plan Review, evidence was provided including assessments and reports from OT, Speech pathologist, physio and behaviour clinician. Despite evidence provided, the revised plan was still not correct.
 - Wendy is now about to have her first scheduled plan review where again supporting evidence submitted to inform the plan includes assistive tech request, assessments and reports from behaviour clinician, OT, physio, speech pathologist and SDA which comes with its own comprehensive SDA assessment document written up by an OT who specialises in SIL and SDA.
 - Wendy hopes that the next plan will meet her needs by enable access to a purpose built home which will support both her behavioural and mobility needs, and will allow her to live nearby to peers to form friendships and social connections beyond those with paid staff.
- Wendy's journey highlights a number of considerations that need to be taken into account if we are to make the introduction of three year NDIS plans work for participants.
 - As we have mentioned in our submission **Planning is the gateway to the NDIS**. It is critical that the initial Plan is reflective of a participant's reasonable and necessary support that is going to meet their needs. By getting the initial plan right this minimises the risk of repeated, onerous and time-consuming reviews.
 - With this consideration in mind; the level of evidence required to inform the initial plan is critical.
 - It is Alliance20's experience that providers' opinion and assessments are not consistently sought as part of the process to inform the plans. In the case of Life Without Barriers, our experience would indicate that this is more reliant on individual relationships rather than integrated as an element of the planning process.
 - The committee should note that the planning process has certainly improved since the roll out of the scheme but it remains that providers, where in some cases are in the best position to know the needs of the participant, are still not regularly included to assist in the process as a standard protocol.

3. Kevin – a story of a carer finding the NDIS planning process “ghastly and life consuming”

- Kevin’s recently had a scheduled plan review which was completed in early August 2019 and new plan approved at the end of August 2019. Kevin’s new plan was reduced by \$40,000 from his previous plan.
 - According to Kevin’s family his needs have not changed and they have decided to continue with Kevin’s current level of STAA support but are unsure how they are going to fund this support this year.
 - Kevin’s mum is aging (70 years old), and is Kevin’s sole carer. Kevin’s mum has contacted the NDIS, their LAC, and their local MP, but is unsure if their application for a review is going to be approved.
 - Kevin’s mum was very upset and has expressed that this planning process has been “ghastly, and consuming her life”. Kevin’s mum feels unsupported and not able to navigate the NDIS service system, she feels defeated and exhausted.
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- There are many carers that were looking at the NDIS providing certainty and security for their loved ones with a disability.
 - Kevin’s experience is not unique, where carers find the NDIS planning process onerous and time consuming and difficult to navigate. In Kevin’s case his carer is unsure and unclear what she can do to have Kevin’s plan reinstated to its previous level.
 - Three year plans in Kevin’s case would in part address his mum’s distress with the NDIS planning process by providing greater certainty on Kevin’s support over a longer period of time.