

NDIS ICT Systems

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Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the ICT Systems for the NDIS.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the NDIA on the rapid roll out of the NDIS, a major change in the Disability Sector. While there have been teething issues, I am in no doubt that the continued efforts to improve the NDIS will eventuate in greater benefits for people with Disabilities and the Australian public as a whole.

I am new to the NDIS. As a provider in private practice it took several months for the NDIA to process my application. It appears that my application, uploaded through the MyPlace Portal was so impressive that the reviewers thought that I must be a large business. I am not. I am a sole provider that employs reception staff for the office I, and several other private providers, work out of. There was no personal contact to clarify why I, as a sole provider, employed these reception staff and so my application lay in limbo, until I received a letter in April requesting I contact an accreditation agency to fulfil the Qld requirements. I contacted the NDIA and established that I did not have to go through this expensive and arduous task as a sole provider. Despite this it took until July for my application to be approved.

I then found out that I was unable to see my participant's plans, nor make allocations as per our service agreements unless they had provided permissions, while this is important clients that were self-managed did not know how to do this and clients that were plan managed appeared to have their plan managers reluctant to provide this option through the portal.

I have found that without allocating the funds in this way some clients have had their funds used by other providers leaving them short on the agreements that had been signed.

The process of signing a service agreement is not aligned with the Portal process. Who is responsible for the costs in the service agreement if, through the planning process that sum is lumped into a single bucket that other providers can access? How is the service agreement protected in this system?

Many participants struggle with these organisational processes (indeed many providers appear to struggle as well). Unless a participant is capable or has supports that are capable of navigating this portal then there are challenges. I believe that the portal requires an immediate contact process (similar to the 'chat to someone now' that many web sites have) to facilitate questions on the portal.

I have had one participant tell me that they had a plan developed in another city. While he had a participant number he could show me on a letter he had, he was unable to provide me with access through the portal. He had moved to my area to be with his pregnant girlfriend and had no supports. All I could do was to put him in touch with the NDIS local area coordinators. I have not heard about him since and do not know if he was able to make that connection or not.

A 'chat with someone now' may have alleviated this participant's dilemma.

I look forward to the outcomes of the Committees deliberations.