

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2016 – 2017 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome:** National Disability Insurance Agency

**Question No:** NDIA SQ16-000060

**Topic:** Advanced payment

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Siewert,** asked:

Has the Government withdrawn the provision of Advance Payments to those self-managing their NDIS packages?

- a) Why was this change made?
- b) Was there consultation with the disability and carer sectors and what assessment was there of the impacts it would cause to people with disability, their carers and families?
- c) Can you identify how many people have been unable to access services or supports or exercise consumer choice because they can't afford the upfront payments required as a result of this operational change, especially in circumstances where the NDIA payments system has not been working properly?
- d) Have you received complaints about this issue?
- e) If so, how many?
- f) What are you doing to address the situation?

**Answer:**

a) This change resulted from a recommendation from the Liability Review, an independent review commissioned to assess the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) operations with regard to core functions including participant access, planning, payment and provider management, with a particular focus on controls, strategies for scalability and managing the liabilities of the NDIS within its intended function.

b) No. However, the National Disability Insurance Agency (the Agency) provided self-managed participants with information via:

- a factsheet loaded onto the NDIS website to assist them understand the change;
- providing information during planning appointments and other interactions with participants; and
- the “self-managing my NDIS plan” module of the NDIS website, which was updated to reflect the change.

c) As self-managed participants have control over their support budget, there is no way to directly capture the number who have been unable to access services or supports as they cannot afford upfront payments. As of 6 November 2016, the payment success rate for the NDIA) payments system was 97 per cent.

d) Yes, the Agency has received complaints about advanced payments.

e) The Agency has received a total of 14 formal complaints relating to Advanced Payments.

f) The Agency has designed a number of alternatives to give participants more choice and control over how they manage their NDIS funds.

Self-managed participants have three options to pay providers:

- Option 1: Self-managed participants can negotiate with providers to pay invoices within seven to 30 days as part of their service agreements. When they receive their invoice, they claim the expense through the NDIS and then pay the provider.
- Option 2: Self-managed participants can submit a payment request prior (within one week) of receiving the support if the participants have an established service agreement and the provider requires payment on day of service. The NDIA payments system is being enhanced to ensure self-managed participants can access this option through myportal.
- Option 3: A self-managing participant can choose to pay a service provider upfront and claim the expense back through the NDIS.

The NDIS will pay claims, once received, within two to four days.

The Agency participated in a self-management workshop facilitated by the Independent Advisory Council on 4 November 2016. The workshop considered the broader topic of self-direction as well as how to make it easier for people to self-manage under the NDIS. At the workshop the Agency agreed to progress a range of strategies to reduce barriers to self-management.