20 July 2018

The Autism Advisory Group (AAG) met on 6 July 2018. Members committed to working in partnership and to developing a trust-based and collaborative relationship within the group and with the sector more broadly.

In that spirit, it was agreed that improving life outcomes for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (both participants and non-participants) should be the Group's core guiding principle.

Against that background, the first AAG meeting was positive with all members sharing their perspectives and moving to a shared and agreed understanding of the key issues and priorities.

Four key priorities were collaboratively developed by the AAG.

What is the most appropriate approach for assessing NDIS eligibility and improving outcomes for autistic people?

- through the way autism is diagnosed
- through appropriate functional assessment tools for autism
- by providing greater clarity around criteria for eligibility
- by providing funding for reasonable and necessary supports
- by being flexible in the nature of supports

How can the NDIS participant experience for autistic people be improved?

- by recognising that autism is a complex disability and that many autistic people have other disabilities and conditions
- by recognising the changing needs over a participant's life cycle
- by recognising that the support needs for autistic people may fluctuate during their lifetime e.g. during periods of transition
- by focusing early on whole of life outcomes (and specifically for children)
- by evaluating the need for a specific autism stream

How can the skills of NDIA staff, Local Area Coordinators and Early Childhood Early Intervention staff be enhanced for the benefit of NDIS autistic participants?

- by having appropriate autism specific skills and expertise
- through robust training and development approaches
- by using amongst others, experts and autistic people in the design and delivery of autism training

What improvements can be made to provide greater mainstream and community inclusion for people with autism — both participants and non-participants?

- through more consistent and connected interfaces between the NDIS and mainstream health, education and local government within the context of the National Disability Strategy
- through more employment opportunities
- through more targeted Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grants
- through more responsive and appropriate systems that recognise the impact of those systems on people with autism
- through greater advocacy and support for people with autism who are not eligible for the NDIS

Further, the AAG committed to genuine engagement with the autism community more broadly.

The AAG will now develop a work plan to guide the AAG's priorities and stakeholder engagement program, along with a 12 month calendar of meeting dates

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