10 September 2020

The National Mental Health Sector Reference Group met on Wednesday 26 November, 2020 by video conference. This is the fourth meeting of this Reference Group for the year. Gerry Naughtin (Chair) welcomed Tully Rosen from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission and noted apology from Complaints Commissioner Robert Griew.

Key highlights and issues discussed:

Independent Assessments

Trent Tolra provided an update on Independent Assessments. Key points:

- On Monday 24 November 2020, Minister Robert announced the release of a Department of Social Services (DSS) paper on the proposed changes to the Act to support a range of reforms to the Scheme, including those proposed in the Tune Review. The paper is available on the DSS website .
- On Tuesday 25 November the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) released a number of consultation papers on the NDIS reforms, including the implementation of independent assessments
- Independent assessments will be required as part of the access process from mid 2021 and as part of the planning process by the end of 2021.
- Access and eligibility policy for independent assessments: The paper outlines how an independent assessment will be used to determine whether a person has substantially reduced functional capacity in order to be granted access to the Scheme.
- Planning policy for personalised budgets and plan flexibility: The paper focuses on the new planning process and how an independent assessment will be used to help determine a personalised budget with more flexibility.
- There will be three month consultation period. The NDIA will be meeting with a range of stakeholders and will receive feedback and submissions until 23 February 2021. You can have your say and get regular updates on the NDIS website.

Recovery coach support item

Malitha Perera presented data from September 2020 in relation to recovery coach supports. Key points:

- September 2020 saw 90+ providers providing recovery coach support.
- Local Area Coordinator (LAC) and Planner training to support implementation of Recovery Coaches is underway and will continue from February 2021.

- An information flyer has been developed in collaboration with participants with psychosocial disability. It is available on the Psychosocial Recovery Coach Information page.
- There are a number of recovery coach training courses starting being delivered by:
    - Disability Services Consulting
    - Flinders University
    - Swinburne University of Technology

NDIA Psychosocial Disability Recovery Framework

Gerry Naughtin presented information relating to a national psychosocial recovery framework. Key points:

- This framework is proposed to improve the response for participants experiencing psychosocial disability in the Scheme.
- The purpose of the framework is to:
    - Provide a statement of the policy directions and principles for the management of psychosocial disability in the Scheme
    - Recommend changes to operating guidelines for NDIA management and staff and LAC partners. These recommendations can be used by NDIA management in strengthening a psychosocial recovery approach for NDIS participants with psychosocial disability.
    - Outline priority actions in implementing the proposed policy directions.
- There are three key papers as part of this process:
    - Project plan
    - Consultation plan
    - Discussion paper
- Consultation will seek feedback on key issues being considered for the development of the NDIA plan for psychosocial disability.
- Feedback can be provided to the NDIA via written submissions, a short survey or via a number of online workshops.
- Further details about this consultation process and opportunities for input will be announced in early 2021.

Data presentation by Office of Scheme Actuary (OSA)

Fiona Walsh (OSA) provided further insight into the state and territory Scheme data for psychosocial disability. This session expanded on the data to 30 June 2020 that was presented at the September meeting of the Reference Group.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (Commission)

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission joined as a new member organisation of this Reference Group.

Tully Rosen presented an introduction to the Commission on behalf of the Complaints Commissioner Robert Griew. Key points:

- The Code of Conduct and Practice Standards of the Commission cover many health and mental health areas under the NDIS.
- Around 100 new staff are being employed across the country, in mostly front line roles, to provide increased capacity across the organisation, and especially to handle complaints and provide better conciliation.
- Work is being completed on the NDIS Workforce Capability Framework. This will contribute to defining behaviours that are reasonably expected to be demonstrated based on the NDIS Code of Conduct and Practice Standards. While it is aimed at the entire disability sector, this time there is a specific section on psychosocial disability and another section on trauma informed practice.
- The Commission have begun to engage with the NDIA to identify joint priorities for quality and safeguards for people with a psychosocial disability. A number of areas have been identified that need more clarity and better capacity within the provider system and better capacity within the Commission itself.
- The NDIS Commission, the Australian Commission on Quality and Safety in Health Care and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission have come together, for a one year project, to develop a joint statement and commitment by the Commissions to reduce inappropriate and overuse of psychotropic medications. This is in response to the substantial data and literature on use of psychotropics for behaviour management and will also focus on related areas in aged care.

Next meeting

18 March 2021 (to be confirmed)

Meeting close

Gerry Naughtin, thanked members for their attendance throughout this very difficult year and for their commitment to the work of this Reference Group to continue to prioritise the work of the NDIA.

Attendees

Chairperson

Dr Gerry Naughtin, Strategic Advisor (Mental Health)

Members

Ms Janet Meagher AM, Independent Advisory Council Liaison
Mr Michael Burge OAM, Consumer Representative
Mr Evan Bichara, Consumer Representative
Mr Patrick Hardwick, Carer Representative
Ms Amy Wyndham, Mental Health Principal Committee
Ms Julia Colcott, Mental Health Principal Committee (for Ms Megan Boland)
Mr Ivan Frkovic, State and Territory Mental Health Commissions
Ms Kate Murray, National Mental Health Commission
Mr Bill Gye OAM, Community Mental Health Australia
Ms Harry Lovelock, Mental Health Australia
Ms Anthea Raven, Commonwealth Department of Health
Ms Sarah Hawke, Department of Social Services
Mr Tully Rosen, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (for Mr Robert Griew)
Ms Irene Gallagher, National Mental Health Consumer Alliance
Mr Trent Tolra, Branch Manager, NDIA Agency Policy Branch

Project Managers

Mr Mark Rosser, Director, NDIA Mental Health and Hard to Reach
Mr Malitha Perera, NDIA Strategic Advice, Research and Inclusion Division
Ms Erandathie Jayakody, NDIA Strategic Advice, Research and Inclusion Division
Ms Sandra Natale, NDIA Mental Health and Hard to Reach
Ms Belinda Wilson, NDIA Mental Health and Hard to Reach
Ms Joanne Llewellyn, Department of Social Services
Mr Simon De Sousa, Department of Social Services

Invited Guests

Ms Teena Balgi, Mental Health Principal Committee
Ms Nicola Wright, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
Ms Siobhan Carrigan, Department of Social Services
Ms Kelly Stein, NDIA
Ms Fiona Walsh, NDIA Scheme Actuary
Ms Nicole Stransky, NDIA Scheme Actuary
Ms Felicia Auryn, NDIA Scheme Actuary

Apologies
Mr Sam Bennett, General Manager, NDIA Strategic Advice, Research and Inclusion Division
Ms Megan Boland, Mental Health Principal Committee
Mr Robert Griew, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
Ms Nikki Roach, Commonwealth Department of Health
Dr Elizabeth Moore, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

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