21 April 2023

National Mental Health Sector Reference Group (NMHSRG) members met on 22 March 2023 in Melbourne.

The meeting welcomed new Chairperson Corri McKenzie, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Strategy & Service Improvement, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Dr Gerry Naughtin OAM, Strategic Advisor, Psychosocial Disability and Mental Health, NDIA, has stepped down as Chairperson due to his part time secondment to work with the NDIS Review Panel. Dr Naughtin will continue to attend meetings of the NMHSRG.

The NMHSRG meeting included the following items:

- A briefing from the NDIA about current data, as at 31 December 2022, on NDIS participants with psychosocial disability.
    - Members noted the annualised growth in plans for participants with a primary psychosocial disability.
    - Members shared concern that the NDIA's significant expenditure in psychosocial disability is not delivering value for money and meaningful outcomes for people with psychosocial disability.
- Progress on the NDIA's Psychosocial Disability Recovery Oriented Framework Implementation (Framework Implementation).
    - The NDIA thanked the NMHSRG for their contribution to develop the Psychosocial Disability Recovery Oriented Framework.
    - Members agreed on the need to progress the Framework Implementation and the importance of embedding changes in the NDIS that improve the experience and outcomes for participants with psychosocial disability.
    - Members stressed the importance of continuing to build psychosocial capabilities of NDIA and Partner staff, the broader market and sector.
    - Members encouraged the NDIA to work with people with lived experience as they progress the Framework Implementation.
    - The NDIA will publicly release the Framework Implementation and committed to working with the NMHSRG, and other stakeholders, on its implementation.
- The NDIA's work to improve hospital discharge. This work has been in progress since July 2022.
    - Members discussed the non-NDIS factors within hospital systems that delay discharge such as complex support needs and lack of suitable housing.
    - Members highlighted the value of peer support workers.
    - Members noted the positive sentiment from state and territory government representatives about the NDIA's progress on hospital discharge and learnings from the work.

- A briefing on the progress of the NDIS Review from Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM, NDIS Review Co-chair. Professor Bonyhady encouraged individual and group submissions to the NDIS Review. He noted the Review Panel's interest in practical ways and solutions to respond to issues around psychosocial disability. Professor Bonyhady acknowledged the NMHSRG's important work.
- Members provided feedback reports to the NMHSRG, including:
    - The varying service quality provided to participants with psychosocial disability.
    - The need to define some quality standards expected for service providers for services for people with psychosocial disability.
    - Lack of connected mental health services outside the NDIS that all Australians can use.
    - The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's role in enforcing provider service quality.
    - The NDIA's work on Supported Decision Making and Participant Safety.
    - Welcoming the Australian Government's investment to support those with a lived experience of mental health to shape the policies and programs that affect them.
- A summary of issues and themes from members who attended the National NDIS and Mental Health Conference 2023 .
    - Guest speakers at the conference noted that Australia leads the way in government funding for psychosocial disability. They highlighted the importance of this level of investment working effectively.

Next Meeting

The NMHSRG will next meet on 21 June 2023.

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