New NDIS pathway released to improve participant and provider experience

17 October 2017

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has released details of a new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) ‘pathway’ designed to significantly improve the experience people and organisations have with the ground-breaking NDIS.

The pathway refers to the experience participants and providers have from their first interaction to their ongoing engagement with the NDIS.

Central to the new participant pathway is the delivery of face-to-face engagement for all NDIS plan development, based on the individual’s preference. This improvement has already resulted in a substantial increase in the number of plans being developed in person.

Having learned from the past, the new pathway will now be progressively piloted and tested over the coming months before being rolled out nationally. The NDIA will continue to engage with stakeholders on the testing and implementation of the new pathway.

The new pathway will include:

- A consistent point of contact, who plays a key role in empowering participants to achieve outcomes
- Planning being undertaken with a skilled Local Area Coordinator or NDIA planner who will spend time understanding the unique needs of each participant
- A stronger focus on the broader system of supports for people with disability, including other government services such as health, education and transport, to promote greater inclusion and a sense of community for people with disability
- Communication which emphasises the objectives of the NDIS, with a clear focus on outcomes and goals during planning discussions
- Information that is clear, consistent and available in accessible formats, such as plain English and braille
- An improved NDIS portal and tools, combined with more straightforward processes that will reduce the administrative cost for providers.

NDIA Chief Executive Officer, Robert De Luca, said the new pathway was the result of a collaborative review the NDIA undertook in response to feedback from participants and providers that their experience was not meeting expected standards.

“The purpose of the NDIA is to empower people with disability to choose and achieve their goals in inclusive communities and workplaces,” Mr De Luca said.

“We must ensure people with disability, their families, carers and providers are confident to engage with and navigate the NDIS.

“We also need a strong and vibrant provider market that contributes to improving outcomes for participants. As part of the new provider pathway, the NDIA will provide better information and insights to support business decisions and make it easier for providers to transact with the Scheme and connect with participants.

“Implementing all improvements will take time, but we are committed to responding as quickly as possible to the feedback. It is important to get the new pathway experience right before implementing all the improvements across Australia. To that end, we will be proceeding to pilot the new pathway before it is rolled out nationally.”

Work is also underway to develop tailored pathways to ensure the NDIA has the right response for all participants, including people with psychosocial disability, children, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with more complex needs.

The NDIA thanks the many people who participated in the review for their time and valuable contributions and looks forward to a continued relationship.

The NDIS is already making a difference in the lives of more than 100,000 Australians with disability, their families and carers.

“While the NDIS is a world first and there is no template to follow, the NDIA is committed to the continuous improvement of processes, systems and operations to ensure the NDIS delivers on its promise,” Mr De Luca concluded.

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