10 August 2021

A Queensland-based disability service provider has been imprisoned following an investigation by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

The Gold Coast woman was sentenced to 21 months imprisonment at Southport District Court for fraudulently obtaining more than $43,000 from the plan funding of an NDIS participant for whom she had been providing support.

She will be eligible for early release but must spend at least two months behind bars after pleading guilty to the charges.

The NDIA investigated following complaints the 40-year-old woman had submitted claims for services never provided.

“Fraud is a crime. The NDIA has zero tolerance for fraud, and NDIS participants should feel confident the Agency is doing everything it can to ensure funding intended for them is protected,” NDIA Chief Risk Officer Mel Woodburn said.

“The NDIA has a number of controls in place to protect the NDIS and participants from exploitation through fraud, and continues to monitor fraudulent behaviour, invest in intelligence, data analytics and other compliance measures to build capability to detect and respond to fraud.

“The Agency also has in place an effective range of fraud and non-compliance responses, including the investigation and prosecution of offenders.

“NDIS participants should feel confident that criminal activity will always be investigated, and that the Agency will do everything in its power to protect funding intended to go to our NDIS participants.”

The sentencing of the Queensland woman comes a week after Minister for the NDIS, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, announced the indefinite extension of the NDIS Fraud Taskforce.

As part of the announcement, the NDIA also announced it has established a new Compliance Response team, with the 30-member group working to proactively identity potential non-compliance by both providers and participants.

The Agency works with any NDIS participant impacted by fraud to ensure they continue to have access to their disability-related supports and, where appropriate, may reimburse lost funds to affected participants.

Anyone with information about suspected fraud involving the NDIS should contact the NDIS fraud reporting and scams helpline on 1800 650 717.

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