

Project scope

Design of individual supports for people with psychosocial disability

January 2015

Background

The NDIS Catalogue of Supports provides a structure to assist NDIA planners in building packages of supports that reflect participants' disability-related needs. NDIA currently sets an hourly price for supports funded through NDIS participant packages. Participants can then choose how they will use their supports within the parameters set by NDIA. As the market matures and develops, NDIA will seek to further increase flexibility for participants when choosing how their supports are delivered.

When the NDIA uses a funded support item in a participant plan it is labeled as "core", "capacity building" or "capital". The supports are used for:

- Core Support Items are a support that enables a participant to complete activities of daily living and enables them to work towards their goals and aspirations.
- Capacity Building Support Items are investment supports that enable a participant to build their independence and skills so as to progress towards their goals.
- Capital Support Item are investments, such as assistive technologies, equipment and home or vehicle modifications.

In the first half of 2014 a joint working group from NDIA and National Disability Services, the peak association for not-for profit disability providers, undertook a project to examine the NDIA's set pricing for two of the highest volume supports: assistance with self-care and with community participation. The joint working group agreed on a methodology for a 'reasonable cost model' that incorporates salary and on-costs, overheads and margin. Other costs of business in delivering a support, such as provider travel to deliver a support, cancellation and establishment of new support arrangements, are not loaded into the price and are the subject of separate pricing policy. Further information on the outcomes of the NDIA/NDS working group project are available on the NDIS website.

The reasonable cost model is used for two support items: self-care and community participation. These prices are now set as a transitional price that will step down to a more efficient price by 2016.

The NDIA will continue to develop pricing assumptions that can be demonstrated through the reasonable cost model.

Project purpose

Appropriate support design and pricing is consistent with the vision of having a responsive market for disability supports. The Sector Development Fund aims to increase the capacity of people with disability and their families to exercise choice and control, both in engaging with the NDIS and in purchasing supports in an open market to realise their aspirations. It will also assist a well-developed market, informed by the NDIS market strategy, capable of providing the necessary supports required for full scheme introduction. Mental Health Australia is supported through the Sector Development Fund to build the capacity of the mental health sector to engage with the NDIS.

The joint working group identified the need for further work to examine the pricing of mental health supports. NDIA has now agreed to undertake further work with input from the mental health sector, including Mental Health Australia, Community Mental Health Australia and consumer and carer representatives.

This project will investigate and document optimal packages of individual supports for people who have psychosocial disability associated with a mental illness (i.e. where a mental illness is the 'primary diagnosis' leading to the disability). It will seek to outline some typical support needs for this target population and detail how NDIS funding could be applied to meet these needs. These examples will then be mapped against the range of supports used by the National Disability Insurance Agency in the support cluster definition and pricing document used to cost participant packages of support. If any gaps are identified, appropriate support items can then be recommended. The NDIA can then consider the recommendations and develop associated pricing that can be demonstrated through a reasonable cost model.

This work will not re-examine the hourly rates for assistance with self-care or assistance with community participation.

The project will focus on opportunities to describe a range of optimal supports, rather than reverse engineering any existing block funded psychosocial disability programs or community mental health services into an hourly unit cost. However, where there is evidence that particular approaches to delivery of supports lead to good outcomes, these will be examined for possible inclusion in NDIS individually funded supports where appropriate.

At the recommendation of sector representatives, the project will:

- Explore the place for peer workers in delivering NDIS funded supports
- Gather evidence on the range of qualification/skills required to support for participants whose psychosocial disability support needs range in complexity
- Consider appropriate types of support with regard to the agreed boundaries between the clinical system and the NDIS, including where participants require step-up and step-down support.
- Consider what support items might assist with coordinating access to different services, including clinical care.
- In consultation with mental health consumers and carers, service providers and other experts, describe a 'optimal' supports that reflect different kinds of psychosocial support needs.

- Inform the ongoing development of the NDIS Support Cluster Definition and Pricing document.

This project is an important component in a broader body of work being undertaken by NDIA throughout 2015. The project will not seek to replicate other areas of work, including:

- Development of the purpose and scope of Information, Linkages and Capacity Building supports (previously called Tier 2)
- An Operational Access Review for Psychosocial Disability, which consider existing administration arrangements for access to the NDIS in relation to psychosocial disability;
- Clarification of the interaction between the NDIS and in-scope programs and services over the trial period; and
- There may be a range of operational process issues, support responses and policy issues that will be identified but are out of scope for this project. These will be documented in the project report for separate consideration.

This project will not be a mechanism to raise questions about eligibility for the Scheme and the expect population of people with psychosocial disability that will be participants.

Project aims

1. To describe in detail the range of disability supports for people who have a primary condition of psycho-social disability that may be sourced by individuals with NDIS funding.
2. To make evidence based recommendations, where new support items may be needed to adequately assist people with psychosocial disability who are participants in the NDIS.

Project outcomes

The joint project will seek to:

- Communicate the project's purpose and expected outcomes to people with a personal lived experience of psychosocial disability, their carers and families, and the broader mental health sector;
- Review currently available background information to identify and describe in detail typical and/or ideal individualised supports for people with psychosocial disability;
- Map the current NDIA support cluster definition and pricing list to existing definitions and descriptions of psychosocial disability supports;
- In consultation with mental health consumers, carers and service providers, seek to identify the optimal features of a range of typical individual support packages;
- Identify the skills required to provide psychosocial supports of various kinds, as identified through the project;

- Produce a report summarising the project outcomes to inform the development of the NDIS Catalogue of Supports and associated pricing. This report may be made publically available.

Resources and Reporting

The project will be overseen by a project group with representation from the NDIA and MHA, and in consultation with Community Mental Health Australia and expert consultants. This project group would in turn inform, and seek input from, the NDIA Mental Health Sector Reference Group. The Reference Group which involves a range of sector representatives, including representatives from the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum. The project will be reported to the relevant Executive at both Mental Health Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Project requirements

Within this agreed scope of work, the project group will:

- Produce a work plan agreed by NDIA and MHA;
- Produce a communication and engagement plan for the project's scope, progress and outcomes ;
- Work with consumer and representatives, as well as other experts within the mental health sector, to seek feedback on optimal models of individual support and how these might link with other services out of scope for the NDIS; and
- Produce a joint report on the project outcomes with the intention of making it publically available.

Timeframe

The project will commence by the end of January 2015, with a report produced by the end of May 2015.

The intention of providing a report in this timeframe is to describe a range of supports and make timely, evidence based recommendations to NDIA where support items may need to be defined using a reasonable cost methodology and priced.