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Reference Group meeting bulletin – 26 June 2023

Home and Living Reference Group

This Bulletin summarises the recent meeting of the [Home and Living Reference Group](#) (Reference Group). The Reference Group gives advice to the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Its advice focuses on home and living supports for people with disability.

The Reference Group met on 26 June 2023 video conference. [Dr Leighton Jay, IAC Member and Reference Group Co-chair](#) led the meeting. [Ms Leah van Poppel](#), IAC Principal Member and Reference Group Co-chair, was also present in the meeting.

From the Reference Group Co-chair

Dr Jay noted the work the IAC and Reference Group Members have done since their last meeting [on 8 May 2023 \(DOCX 87KB\)](#).

What Members have heard in their community

Reference Group Members reported on matters for the NDIA's attention, relating to:

NDIS access and planning

- The need for future care planning, particularly among people with disability who have ageing parents. There is a need to consider supported decision making, reliable supports and information about supports for these people.
- Reports that planning does not encourage independent living, especially for those with psychosocial disability.
- There is inconsistent information about how people can and cannot use their NDIS plan funding. There are calls from the disability community for clearer information, in accessible formats, for equal information access.

NDIS service and supports

- Calls for consistency of decisions NDIA make and around the quality of supports in supported independent living (SIL) and supported disability accommodation (SDA).
- Lack of flexibility around the use of core supports, particularly where a person is in a 1 to 3 SIL arrangement and funding for behaviour support plans.
- Reports the NDIA tells some people with assistance dogs that they need to live in SDA, despite wanting to rent appropriate properties through individualised living options (ILO) supports.
- Reports there is a lack of choice and control and supply in supported independent living (SIL) dwellings.
- Concerns around safety and quality of supports with reports that some people with disability are sleeping in their mobility chairs even though they have multiple service providers.
- Various examples of inappropriate provider practice to fill vacancies such as how they advertise and generate interest.
- In relation to hospital discharge, there is a need for the various support roles to work in a more coordinated way. For example, hospital liaison officers, aged care, planners, navigators etc., should work together to provide streamlined supports.
- Due to the short-term nature of rental leases, it is very difficult for some people with disability who qualify for SIL funding to get long-term rental accommodation. Also, every time a participant moves from a familiar environment it often significantly impacts their quality of life.
- There is also a lack of appropriate accommodation, particularly core and cluster, for people with psychosocial disabilities.
- Calls for the NDIA to acknowledge the risk of homelessness for people with disability and work closely with states and territories and mainstream services to address the issue.
- Concern around the power imbalance and sense of intimidation a person with disability feels when they go to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
- Calls for NDIS and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to do more to stop service providers who overcharge participants for services, above the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits. For example, misconduct in charging for crossover shifts, SIL supports, assistance with daily living.
- Call for the more clarity around the recently released [NDIS SDA Pricing Review 2022-23 Final Report \(2.3MB DOCX\)](#), especially around people with disability who have SDA and want to update existing housing or want to live in a one-bedroom house.
- There is a need for the various NDIA business areas engaged in home and living work in a coordinated fashion to improve supports.

NDIA update on inflation related to SIL

The NDIA updated the Reference Group on data and information about inflation related to SIL. Members gave the following feedback:



- The need for more information on what is causing most of the inflationary pressures around SIL. For example, degenerative conditions, change in informal supports, or other issues like provider practice.
- Regarding interplan inflation and reviews of reviewable decisions, the NDIA should be mindful of gaps that can occur in supports while waiting for a plan review.
- Suggested potential causes for when intraplan inflation happens, for example when participants are claiming their invoices, then providers charge an hourly rate, etc.
- Questioned the responsibilities of plan managers to manage the inflation issues for participants.
- Calls for the NDIA to address indexation in a better way, especially given reports that despite impacts of inflation the NDIA often provides additional funds in the next plan.
- Concerns around service providers who charge participants for services that are a part of their provider role (for example, team meetings), and well as a large range of non-face to face activities.
- Would like to understand if there is an overlay of greater inflation where there are statutory and legal guardians.
- Easy Read communications are needed across the NDIA and whole sector, so that people with disability can have discussions about their plans with others to ensure there is 'common ground'.

NDIA Home and Living Framework and Implementation Plan update

The NDIA updated the Reference Group Home and Living Framework and Implementation Plan. This work is in the process of being progressed to the NDIA Board. Members gave the following feedback:

- Praised the co-design approach of the NDIA to finalise the Home and Living Framework and Implementation Plan.
- Concerns if the agency waits on outcomes from the NDIS Review and Disability Royal Commission this work may be lost. The agency assured that it is more a question of getting the sequencing right.
- Hope that as the Home and Living Framework is implemented new and innovative models of housing will increase and legacy approaches will be phased out.

More information on the Reference Group

The Home and Living Reference Group will next meet on 14 September 2023. Find out more about Reference Group meetings and bulletins at [Council's website](#). You can also access [Council's advice here](#).

The IAC publishes an Easy Read version Bulletin. This is part of its commitment to accessibility.