



STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION

MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA (CHAIR), JONATHAN DAVIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), PETER CAIN MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert:

In relation to: NDIS-registered behaviour support practitioners
CSD Annual Reports 2019–20 page 251.

1. Minister, the Annual Reports noted that there were concerns about the limited number and availability of NDIS-registered behaviour support practitioners who are deemed suitable to write positive behaviour support plans, which has meant that many participants with behaviour support funding from their NDIS plan had difficulty accessing that support. How many behaviour support practitioners are available in the ACT, and what has been the ratio of availability versus demand?
 - a. Given the limited availability of NDIS-registered behaviour support practitioners in the ACT, are participants with particularly complex needs who are subject to restrictive practices prioritised in any way so that there is timely implementation of their support plan?
2. The Annual Report cited concerns about the quality of behaviour support plans drafted by the few practitioners we do have. – that they were ‘not of a high standard’ and ‘inadequate.’ What is the current progress of ongoing discussions engaged by the Office for Disability and the Senior Practitioner to address this issue?
 - a. How many and what percentage of behaviour support plans were deemed not of a high standard or inadequate, and consequently does the Senior Practitioner accept the plan given the limited number and availability of practitioners or does the Senior Practitioner reject the plan, recommending edits for an acceptable resubmission of a higher standard?

Emma Davidson MLA: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–

1. There are now 113 practitioners registered in the ACT. Not all registered Positive Behaviour Support Practitioners write Positive Behaviour Support Plans that include the use of a restrictive practice. Only Practitioners including the use of a restrictive practice in their plans need to submit those plans to the Senior Practitioner.



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The ratio of availability of Practitioners versus demand is difficult to quantify without NDIA data.

- a. A Thin Market Steering Group has been established to address the issues of: access to positive behaviour support practitioners by participants with complex needs; and increasing the capacity and capability of positive behaviour support practitioners. Membership includes the Office for Disability, Office of the Senior Practitioner, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, National Disability Insurance Agency and the Department of Social Services (Commonwealth). There are two active projects being overseen by the group:
 - Direct Commissioning Project – for NDIS participants who have complex needs. Priority is given to those who have had restrictive practices applied in the absence of a registered behaviour support plan. This project is led by the Department of Social Services and aims to link 30 high priority participants with suitably qualified Positive Behaviour Support Practitioners.
 - The ACT Capacity Building Project – is providing training and mentoring for practitioners in thirteen organisations that employ positive behaviour support practitioners. This will increase capacity and skill in the ACT. This project is led by the Community Services Directorate.

The Office of the Senior Practitioner also meets fortnightly with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to address systemic issues. The thin market is regularly discussed.

2. The Senior Practitioner will accept plans for registration that meet legislative requirements, however notes that there is room for practice improvement in the ACT.

The Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation Tool Mark II (BSP QEII) is a valuable tool used by the NDIS to assess the quality of behaviour support plans and the Senior Practitioner has ensured that all members of the Central Panel have had the opportunity to engage in training for use of this tool.

Recommendations for practice improvement, implementation and quality of plans are made during the panel process and can be made during registration. During registration of the plan, the Senior Practitioner may write to the author about the quality of the plan and can request adjustments and further detail. Registration periods can be limited to allow for development of an improved plan while positive behaviour support is implemented for those subject to restrictive practice.

- a. With implementation of a new data system in 2021 the Office of the Senior Practitioner will begin to collate data on the quality of plans received so that work can progress on identifying themes and addressing training needs within the market.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature: *Emma Davidson*

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By the Minister for Disability, Emma Davidson MLA