

ADVANCE NOTICE TO THE LEADER OF QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Question to be asked by Hon. Ruth Forrest MLC

With regards to people who receive services under the NDIS:

- 1) How many of these people have self-isolated and are not receiving services at the moment; and
- 2) How many of these people have had their service provider cease funded services; and
- 3) How many NDIS service providers have ceased funded services normally received by NDIS clients?

Answer

Thank you for your questions and your interest in people with disability in Tasmania.

As you would be aware the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is the responsible Agency for supporting NDIS Participants, as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is responsible for the registration of providers.

The Department of Communities and the NDIA does not have specific data on the number of NDIS participants self-isolating, or the number of NDIS participants not receiving services as a direct result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

1) How many of these people have self-isolated and are not receiving services at the moment;

People with disability are subject to the same rules and restrictions as all Tasmanians. Some people may have isolated in response to the Directions under the Public Health Act.

Where a person has been required to isolate, they have been able to access supports as has all Tasmanians through the Public Health Hotline and the NDIS.

The NDIA is monitoring and supporting participants in or who present to a hospital regarding their ongoing support requirements and are actively supporting their discharge support needs.

The NDIA is proactively calling participants who have health, disability or circumstances which could make them more vulnerable during the Coronavirus pandemic. The purpose of these calls is to make sure participants have access to relevant information, understand how to use their plans flexibly and can still access the supports they need during this time. In Tasmania, the North West region has been prioritised first for vulnerable participant outreach due to the recent outbreak in that region.

The Tasmanian Government's regular meeting with providers tells us that some participants are choosing not to access services as they have been receiving them, but many people are looking to receive services in a different way. Providers are working with their participants to find new and creative ways to support their participants – such as meeting one on one, via phone or online.

The NDIA has enabled participants to flexibly use their plan funding to purchase low-cost Assistive Technology, including smart devices, to enable continued access to disability supports through telehealth and tele-practice while physical distancing regulations are in place for coronavirus pandemic.¹

2) How many of these people have had their service provider cease funded services;

Reassuringly there is no evidence at this time that this has occurred – if you are aware of any such circumstances, I would like to hear about them.

All service providers have a responsibility to respond to requirements for quarantine or COVID-19 illness among service recipients or staff in accordance with the [Tasmanian](#) and [Australian Government](#) guidelines and instructions, via the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Businesses are required to develop and implement business continuity plans to ensure critical supports and services continue to be provided for people with disability, while reducing risk of exposure to COVID-19 of both people with disability and staff.

To date, the NDIA has only seen a small amount of plan adjustments required as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic².

¹ [NDIA media release - Minister - 27 April 2020](#)

² [NDIA - News - 1 May 2020](#)

3) How many NDIS service providers have ceased funded services normally received by NDIS clients?

Noting this information is held by the NDIS, we are aware that many providers have changed the way they provide services to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and to comply with all restrictions.

Providers are required to ensure people with disability their families and carers are notified of any changed practices or service delivery.

Disability services are required to practice social distancing and to comply with orders regarding gathering sizes and the stay at home direction where possible, like all other organisations.

This has seen changes to the way some services are delivered, with many of the community group activities people normally take part in are not possible at the moment, so these are being delivered in different ways- online, on the phone, or in much smaller groups.

This does not mean that people are unable to access supports. Indeed, our disability sector in Tasmania has responded quickly by working hard to find new ways to deliver services and work with people individually in a way they feel safe.



APPROVED



The Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Disability Services and Community Development

Date: 7 May 2020