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Senator Karen Grogan

Via email: [senator.Grogan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.Grogan@aph.gov.au)

Dear Senator Grogan

During the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee hearing on 7 April 2022, I committed to provide further information in relation to the Partners in the Community (PITC) time in motion study and PITC Program request for tender (RFT).

The time in motion study was designed to review and validate assumptions for a selection of activities completed by PITC under the current program.

The study took place between December 2020 and February 2021. All current PITC were invited to participate in the study, with 8 of 25 organisations electing to take part. The study involved partner staff members self-reporting via an online form. Of the 8 partner organisations, 106 staff members participated in the study and 1,096 data points were collected across 640 unique participants/customers.

After consultation with partners and internal stakeholders, the below functions were selected as the priorities for testing via the study:

Early Childhood (EC)

1. Check-in resulting in a light touch review (minor plan change only required)
2. Check-in resulting in a full review

Local Area Coordination (LAC)

1. Check-in resulting in a plan renewal (plan is suitable to continue in its current form)
2. Check-in resulting in a light touch review (minor plan change only required)
3. Check-in resulting in a full review

The time in motion study aggregated total activity time for each function only and did not break down time capture to a task level. The starting point for recording time in the study was the first contact attempt with the NDIS participant regarding a plan review. The final point for recording time in the study was the submission of the plan to the delegate for their approval (the conclusion of the partner effort towards the plan review being developed).

The time in motion study findings for the above functions are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 - Time in motion study findings

Time in motion function tested	EC finding (per episode)	LAC finding (per episode)
Plan Renewal (suitable to continue as is)	Not tested	2.0 hours
Light Touch Plan Review (minor changes)	2.7 hours	2.8 hours
Full Plan Review	4.7 hours	4.4 hours

***Comparison of time in motion study with PITC request for tender***

In the future state PITC program, the Partner role in ‘Plan Renewals’ and ‘Light Touch Plan Reviews’ is covered in part via the ‘Check-Ins’ Fee Category, with the completion of remaining tasks to update the plan moving to the NDIA planner. There is no overall change in the effort allocated for these activities.

A clear comparison is available between the ‘Full Plan Review’ function from the time in motion study, and the equivalent ‘Plan Budget Development’ and ‘Plan Changes / Reviews’ function in the request for tender.

The comparison between the time in motion study findings for the ‘Full Plan Review’, and the RFT assumptions is summarised in Tables 2 and 3 below for EC and LAC services.

Table 2 - Comparison relating to Early Childhood services

Time in motion function tested	Time in motion finding (per episode)	Equivalent functions in RFT	Mean work effort in RFT (per episode)
Full Plan Review	4.7 hours	2.1 Plan Budget Development	2.4 hours
		2.4 Plan Changes / Reviews	4.5 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.7 hours</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.9 hours</b>

Table 3 - Comparison relating to Local Area Coordination services

Time in motion function tested	Time in motion finding (per episode)	Equivalent functions in RFT	Mean work effort in RFT (per episode)
Full Plan Review	4.4 hours	5.1 Plan Budget Development	2.4 hours
		5.4 Plan Changes / Reviews	3.9 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.4 hours</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.3 hours</b>

As demonstrated above, the mean work effort hours in the RFT are greater than the hours reported through the time in motion study. The RFT mean work effort is reflective of time to support overall enhanced service quality.

The key work assumptions outlined in the Fee Schedule in the RFT, include:

- the Tenderer should consider the specific demographics and geography of the Service Area when considering these hours, which may necessitate additional time required to complete the activities for each Fee Category, and
- some customers/participants will require significantly more time due to individual circumstances and this is factored into the mean work effort.

### ***Participants in complex circumstances***

The PITC Program typically supports participants with less complex needs, with more complex situations referred wholly to NDIA planners for support (approximately 30% of all NDIS Participants).

### ***Future PITC Program***

As part of the future PITC Program, the NDIA is seeking to ensure that partners play an even greater role in linking people to community and mainstream services, helping expand the community's capacity to create a more inclusive society and deliver improved outcomes for all people with disability.

The items within the RFT reflect this shift in focus, with additional effort allocated for partners to connect people to community and mainstream services ('Early Connections' for EC partners, and 'Community Connections and Supports' for LAC partners), and additional effort for check-ins to support NDIS participants with a plan ('Check-Ins').

The Statement of Requirements in the RFT shows how an individual may receive support from the partner across several functions or Fee Categories. An explanation of the interactions or 'pathway' that a person may take when receiving support from a partner is provided in Annexure A for EC (refer pp. 16-19) and Annexure B for LAC (refer pp. 36-39). This includes mapping to the Fee Categories included within the RFT.

Provided below are 2 examples of the path that an individual may follow when becoming an NDIS participant for the first time (first plan), with an explanation of how each step maps to the Fee Categories in the RFT.

### ***First plan (Early Childhood)***

For example, a child who will become a NDIS participant may receive support from the EC partner to develop their first plan, under the following Fee Categories:

- Early Connections (10.1 hours per annum): where the partner completes an initial assessment of the needs of the child, providing support to access further services within the NDIS or mainstream services, gathering information from the child and family, developing goals and aspirations, and assisting the child and family to understand their options and next steps
- Scheme Access Support (7.1 hours per episode): to provide information about the access process, and support an application for the NDIS where this is the appropriate pathway for the child
- Plan Budget Development (2.4 hours per episode): to work with the family to develop the reasonable and necessary supports to be included in the child's first plan and enter this information into the business system.

### ***First plan (Local Area Coordination)***

Similarly, an individual who will become an NDIS participant may receive support from the LAC partner to develop their first plan, under the following Fee Categories:

- Community Connections and Supports (5.8 hours per episode) where the partner provides information, connects the person to community and mainstream services, gathers information from the individual, supports the development of goals and aspirations, and assists the individual understand their options and next steps
- Scheme Access Support (7.6 hours per episode): to provide information about the access process, and support an application for the NDIS where this is the appropriate pathway for the individual
- Plan Budget Development (2.4 hours per episode): to work with the individual to understand and develop the reasonable and necessary supports to be included in the first plan and enter this information into the business system.

A copy of this letter has been provided to the Chair of the Community Affairs Legislation Committee.

Yours sincerely



**Martin Hoffman**  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Disability Insurance Agency

13 April 2022