

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities**

**Question No: SQ17-000403**

**Topic: 1800RESPECT**

**Hansard page: 58**

**Senator Larissa Waters** asked:

Is it possible that the subcontract for the specialist counselling service, go to a private subcontractor?

Does the Department have any options for intervening in the MHS process? What would be the triggers for when the Department might ask MHS to review the process.

**Answer:**

Any qualified and experienced organisation in the market was able to apply to deliver the trauma specialist counselling service.

The Department has always been clear with Medibank Health Solutions (MHS) about its expectations that MHS maintain and strengthen pathways with experienced and qualified not-for-profit trauma specialist counselling services.

MHS purposely and proactively reached out to the not-for-profit sector to alert them to the expression of interest (EOI) process and stimulate their interest in taking part in the EOI. Upon release of the EOI, MHS directly contacted 27 not-for-profit organisations in the family, domestic violence and sexual assault support sector to alert them to the process.

While the tender process is being run by MHS and is independent to Government, if the Department had concerns that the process was not professionally run, open and merit based, the Department would seek an explanation and appropriate remediation. The Department does not currently have any concerns about the tender process based on current information.