

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000958

Senator Lines, Sue provided in writing

Nanny pilot program

Question

In relation to the Nanny pilot program:

- a. Given that the subsidy paid under the pilot will range between \$3.50 an hour and \$5.95 an hour, and a nanny typically costs close to \$30 an hour, How much will an average 1 child, 2 child and 3 child family be out of pocket?
- b. Has any modelling been done on the affordability of nannies? What will the out of pocket cost be for an average enrolled nurse with one child working four 10 hour night shifts per week?
- c. Given that service providers will be paid the subsidies directly, what measures are in place to stop service providers from simply charging higher fees to negate the subsidy?
- d. The Q&A says that the fee schedule provided by applicants will be “assessed to determine whether the organisation is charging market rate fees.” How has the department determined what market rate fees are? Please provide a copy of the Department’s determined market rates?
- e. The Q&A also says that “any increases to the fee schedule during the pilot period will need to be considered by the Department.” Will providers be allowed to increase their fees during the trial? What restrictions to fee increases will be in place? What are the limits to fee increases?
- f. In terms of requirements for nannies to have Working with Children Checks, or the equivalent for each jurisdiction, will the Department be checking that nannies in fact do comply with this requirement, or will it be left up to service providers to self-regulate this requirement?
- g. Can the Department guarantee that all nannies will hold Working with Children Checks? Will there be any audits during the trial to ensure compliance with this requirement?
- h. How has the Department advertised the program? How much money has been spent on advertising and communications? Is this money additional to the \$16.5 million for the child care subsidy communications campaign?
- i. The fact sheet outlines that the target of the program is “nurses, police officers, ambulance officers and fire fighters, as well as other shift workers, who are too often unable to access child care and experience difficulties accessing mainstream child care.” What specific communications activities have been undertaken to target these groups?
- j. How will applications be assessed for priority – ie. If the number of families exceeds the target, will certain groups be given priority?
- k. When will families be notified of their selection?
- l. What will happen if the majority of applications are outside these target groups – ie. Families already using nannies during the day, in metropolitan areas?
- m. What feedback was provided on the nannies trial by those who participated in the RIS consultation process? What concerns were raised in this process?

Answer

- a. This information is available in the Subsidies for Families fact sheet at <https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programmes-services-early-childhood-child-care-nanny-pilot-programme/fact-sheet-subsidies-for-families>.
- b. Individual family circumstances have not been modelled. The pilot programme will trial a range of circumstances to determine the best settings for delivering care in the child's home.
- c. Service providers were required to submit a schedule of fees to the department as part of the application process to ensure they are charging market rates. If a service provider wishes to increase these fees, their grant agreement will specify that they need to seek written approval from the Department of Education and Training to do so.
- d. Market rates have been determined from information provided by a number of sources including the Fair Work Ombudsman.
- e. The department will consider requests to increase fees on a case by case basis. Any request to increase fees will need to be accompanied by appropriate justifications.
- f. Service providers will be required to undertake this check and this will be specified in their grant agreement. The department will be undertaking compliance checks to ensure service providers are complying with the terms and conditions in their grant agreements.
- g. See answer to question f.
- h. The pilot programme has been publicised through stakeholder organisations, social media and ministerial media events.
No administrative funding has been spent on this promotion.
- i. The department made direct contact with relevant peak bodies that represent shift workers as part of communication activities to publicise the programme, as well as sending a news item to their member publications for distribution. There have also been media events specifically promoting the Nanny Pilot Programme to these groups.
- j. Section 3.3.1 of the Nanny Pilot Programme guidelines outline how families will be prioritised.
- k. Families will be notified in December 2015 about whether they have been selected to participate in the programme.
- l. As outlined in Section 3.3.1 of the Nanny Pilot Programme guidelines, all families who meet the eligibility criteria are able to apply and may be considered.
- m. Submissions are publicly available on the Early Childhood Australia website. The Decision RIS will include the consultation findings.