

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SENATE INQUIRY INTO RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY AGED CARE

21 April 2009

Question: 05

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: ACFI Paperwork

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Senator Polley asked:

The Department stated that ACFI is reducing paperwork, but Senator Polley said industry is reporting the opposite. Can the Department provide any further information or evidence about the reduction or otherwise in paperwork burden for providers under ACFI?

Answer:

The Government had several objectives in introducing the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), one of which was a radical reduction in paperwork and nurse time needed to complete appraisals.

The workload impact of the ACFI was thoroughly tested in a national trial in which nearly a quarter of all aged care homes participated. The results of the trial showed that the average time taken to complete the ACFI was less than an hour. In contrast, a study commissioned by two major industry peak bodies found that registered nurses spent 30 to 90 minutes per day over five days to complete an Residential Classification Scheme (RSC) appraisal for a new resident.

Overall feedback from aged care staff participating in the trial confirmed that ACFI was a simpler and clearer process compared with its RCS predecessor. The trial found that there were very high levels of agreement (over 95 per cent for each question) between aged care home staff and external review officers on the assessed care needs of residents, thereby further reducing the need for reassessment.

The requirement for routine annual reassessment of residents under RCS was also removed with the introduction of ACFI, further freeing up resources to provide direct care.

The Department finalised the development of ACFI in consultation with an industry Reference Group. The group provides an ongoing forum for the Department to work collaboratively with industry to identify and address ACFI implementation issues as they arise.