

Public Service Association of New South Wales

General Secretary: Anne Gardiner ♦ President: Sue Walsh
160 Clarence Street, Sydney
GPO Box 3365, Sydney NSW 2001

Telephone: 1300 772 679
Facsimile: 02 9262 1623
Internet: www.psa.asn.au
ABN: 83 717 214 309



In reply please quote: *ST:VV-A14/1108*

Jim Longley
Deputy Secretary for Ageing, Disability and Home Care
Department of Family & Community Services
Level 7, 4-6 Bligh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Longley,

Re: Letter to Families

I am writing in regards to correspondence that was sent by you to families on 28 August 2015 in relation to the changes that they may experience with the privatisation of disability services during the upcoming NDIS rollout.

Our members have raised a number of concerns with respect to the contents of the letter, and with the potential safety risks that it has created.

Firstly, we would question the timing of the letter. Families have been advised that, 'our staff will continue to keep you up to date'. However, the letter has been sent before staff have actually been briefed, and so they are not equipped to answer questions as promised. Setting up an expectation that cannot be met has been a source of frustration for clients, their families, and our members alike.

It is disingenuous to reassure clients that you expect the staff to transfer to a private provider. PSA members have repeatedly advised, both FACS and the Minister, that a majority of them may well leave the disability sector if appropriate conditions are not set up for the transfer, or indeed if they are forced to leave the public service.

Given that our members have not been provided the answers that clients and families may be seeking, we would have hoped that an alternate source of information would have been provided. Unfortunately, we note with concern that the letter gives no phone number for further enquiries.

Perhaps the most concerning issue surrounds the target audience and the method of delivery. This letter has been sent directly to clients, but has not been presented in accessible language or formats which are appropriate to the needs of the recipients, many of whom have intellectual disabilities, and/or come from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Our members have reported that the letter has caused widespread confusion among clients, leading them to become upset, anxious, or even aggressive. In addition to creating an issue for the clients' wellbeing, this behaviour presents a safety risk to staff. In response to this letter, our members report being increasingly exposed to unacceptably difficult and dangerous situations, which they are not equipped to diffuse with the limited information that has been provided to them by your Department to date.

We would therefore request an urgent meeting with you to discuss the issues raised here, and how they may best be addressed. I can be contacted on 9220 0970 or email mgreen@psa.asn.au to organise this meeting.

Yours faithfully,



Steve Turner
A/General Secretary

1st October 2015