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## NDIS under threat as NSW disability staff tipped to quit

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- [High demand for skilled staff as NDIS roll out gets under way](#)

Thousands of NSW disability specialists fear they will be forced out of the sector as the National Disability Insurance Scheme is rolled out across the state from July.

About 10,000 state government-employed staff including speech pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and case managers are being transferred to non-government organisations under the [NDIS roll out](#).

The Public Service Association predicts many Ageing Disability and Home Care staff will leave the sector due to lower wages and less stable working conditions in the non-government sector.

Cecilia Rossi, a Hornsby-based speech pathologist who has worked for ADHC for 18 years, said people with disabilities and their support workers had been left in the dark with only three months until the NDIS begins in the northern Sydney region.

"There is huge uncertainty for us and our clients," she said.

"A lot of my colleagues are thinking the same thing: do they stay in disability or go somewhere else? I've loved working in disability and I've loved working for the department. I can see people leaving disability entirely and it saddens me."

Rachael Shaw, an ADHC employee who advises the non-government sector on care for people with severe disabilities, is on maternity leave and unsure of her future.

"It feels as if we are being forced out," she said. "The only support I've been getting is advice on how to apply for a job. It just sends the message that they want you out the door. It's demoralising for us and the impact on clients and their families has been awful."

ADHC provides about 40 per cent of disability services in NSW, which will be progressively transferred to the non-government sector as the NDIS rolls out.

Public Service Association assistant general secretary Steve Turner said ADHC staff only have their wages and conditions protected for two years under the transfer, after which they face pay cuts of between \$10,000 and \$30,000 a year as they move onto a different award.

"It's a looming disaster because skilled people will leave the sector at the time they are needed most," he said.

An estimated 140,000 people in NSW will receive support as the NDIS rolls out over the next three years, with 35,000 people to join the scheme in 2016/17.

Tony Pooley, NSW operations manager of National Disability Services which represents non-government providers, said the sector urgently needed more detail on the transfer, which was legislated at the end of 2013.

"The most polite way to describe the transfer of ADHC services is a shambles," he said.

"It is exceptionally urgent that details around this transfer be explained to service providers as well as staff. I acknowledge it's a complex task but two and a half years on, there is no excuse."

Disability Services Minister John Ajaka said delivering the NDIS was his "highest priority" and promised to continue talks with scheme participants, their families, service providers and staff.

"My door is always open to all stakeholders and, frankly, this reform should be above politics," he said.

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/ndis-under-threat-as-nsw-disability-staff-tipped-to-quit-20160401-gntqwr.html>*