My son lives independently in shared accommodation with 2 other fellows. Their support needs are similar and complex due to profound physical and intellectual disabilities. They receive 24/7 support. They share a SIL package. In addition they each have individual funding for a number of funded items including community access.

When their first packages were approved in 2018, they came with funding for a total of 10 hours per week for community access on Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday. The funding was costed at the “composite rate” which was slightly higher than the weekday rate and significantly lower than the Saturday and Sunday hourly rates. As a result, the funding was insufficient.

The use of the “composite” rate is now acknowledged by the NDIA planner as being “a mistake”.

We lodged review requests promptly after the commencement of the plans. The review requests were acknowledged as received by the local NDIA office with advice that another NDIA person would contact us. After numerous requests of the NDIA office, the review requests were not responded to.

For one of the fellows, the planner also made the “mistake” of treating his whole package as Agency Managed when his nominee specifically asked for most of the individual funding to be Self Managed. His nominee also asked for a light touch review of this decision as part of her request for a review of his plan. Like the rest of the review request, the NDIA acknowledged receipt but did not further process the review request. As a result, services provided by unregistered providers could not be claimed for reimbursement for the whole year.

These issues could easily have been avoided, if the plans had been provided to the participants prior to their finalisation. If the NDIA wishes to be “timely”, “Engaged”, to have “Decisions made on merit” and to be “transparent, informative and collaborative”, they could offer proposed plans to participants for review and comment before finalisation.