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‘Learn from our mistakes’: UK expert warns over Australian NDIS transition

Drawing on several years’ experience of the UK delivering a social care approach similar to Australia’s NDIS and aged care reforms, one high-profile UK analyst is urging Australia to learn from the UK’s experiences.

Visiting Australia this month for a series of public events, [Dr Shereen Hussein](#) from King’s College London says the UK experience provides many lessons to Australia of what might work well, and pitfalls to avoid.

At the top of the list is establishing adequate mechanisms to monitor, regulate and support the social service market and its workforce, to safeguard people using care services, their families and workers.

“The UK experience can provide many lessons to Australia of what can work well, and what to watch out for,” Dr Hussein says.

“This is particularly in relation to potential implications on care service quality and integration with health and other social services.”

Hailed as the most significant social reform in Australia since Medicare, the NDIS promises to give people with a disability greater control over their care.

But to deliver this and move to a market-based model of personalised care, 60,000-70,000 new disability support workers must be hired and trained to meet the expected increase in demand over the next three years alone.

Already there are [early warning signs in a new report](#) of disability support workers in Australia facing less work overall, less ongoing full-time jobs and more casualisation. How best can Australia meet this challenge?

Coming to Australia as a guest of the Future Social Service Institute and RMIT University as an International Visiting Fellow, Dr Hussein will give a [series of lectures](#) and presentations.

Drawing on studies from across the UK and Europe, Dr Hussein will highlight the increased risks of worker stress and burnout in a market-based model, the importance of developing strong worker training and qualification models, and strategies for recruiting and supporting a wider pool of people to meet the growing workforce need.

Further quotes attributable to Dr Hussein:

“Safeguarding individuals using care services, their families and workers should be at the heart of these policy developments. Collecting adequate and comprehensive data would allow timely and evidence-based interventions and policy developments.”

“The geography and diversity of the Australian population call for careful considerations of potential challenges associated with the NDIS, such as thin markets, viability of services for people with multiple or complex needs, and availability of quality workers.”

“The NDIS provides an exciting opportunity for Australians to exercise more control over the types and nature of services they receive. To ensure the availability and accessibility of quality services to everyone, it is essential to establish adequate mechanisms to monitor, regulate and support the market and its workforce.”

Dr Shereen Hussein is available for interview.

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