

Scams Taskforce  
Market Conduct and Digital Division  
Treasury  
Langton Cres  
Parkes ACT 2600

25 January 2024

By email: [scampolicy@treasury.gov.au](mailto:scampolicy@treasury.gov.au)

Hireup appreciates the opportunity to provide input on Treasury's consultation on scams - mandatory industry codes. By way of introduction Hireup is Australia's largest NDIS-registered digital platform provider, with around 12,000 support workers providing disability services to a similar number of clients nationwide. We are proud to be a registered NDIS provider and, unlike almost all other online platforms, we directly employ every one of our workers on the platform.

We recognise over the last decade there have been significant changes in the way work is organised, this is particularly notable with the rapid growth in the use of digital platforms to find and organise work. The prominence of digital platforms as a means for organising services is a trend we have seen explode in the care sector. With the digitisation of services comes increased opportunities for scammers, this is particularly true in the care sector where clients can be more vulnerable.

Hireup is pleased to see Treasury considering mandatory industry codes that would offer a tailored approach to the nuances and challenges of scam prevention in each sector. We urge Treasury to consider creating a mandatory industry code for the care sector as part of the next phase.

In the last 10 years we have seen the number of digital platforms in the care sector explode, there are now more than 15 platforms offering services in the disability sector alone. The operation of a number of these platforms is enabled through significant investments from overseas private equity funds. Due to the care services provided, these platforms hold a high volume of clients and workers personal information, more than many social media platforms do. For example most would hold people's full name, date of birth, address, identifying documents, tax file number and potentially individuals ABN's. The potential for these platforms to be exposed to a scam and the capture of individuals personal and identifying information is huge and has significant ramifications.

Additionally, these digital platforms generally include a direct messaging function between workers and clients, which the platform will have oversight of. Through Hireup's proactive detection systems scams, where workers directly message clients and try to sell them a multi-level marketing scheme have been intercepted.

A further example of the type of scam we have seen perpetrated on digital platforms in the care sector is, a client making a fake account and engaging a worker through the platform to provide services. Once the worker has provided services the fake profile is deleted and the invoice is left unpaid by the client. On digital platforms that use a contracting model the worker will likely never be paid for their labour.

We also see a number of non-employing digital platforms in the care sector purport to offer a high level of insurance for workers and/or clients. Workers sign up to these platforms and operate under their own ABN, believing they have adequate insurance protection available through the platform if needed. Only to find, in a moment of crisis, that the insurance offered doesn't come close to what the platform said was available. The misalignment between publicly stated level of insurance coverage and the actual coverage has significant ramifications for workers in the care sector, who are forced to turn to the public health system or pursue their client with disability to cover costs.

With the number of digital platforms in the care sector growing, as well as their popularity, there is a clear need for a scams prevention code to prevent harm to both consumers and workers.

Hireup's Policy Team welcomes the opportunity to provide additional information and a briefing about the way platforms in the care sector operate and the nuances of the sector. To organise a time please contact Grace Nankivell, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, on [grace.nankivell@hireup.com.au](mailto:grace.nankivell@hireup.com.au) or 0421 831 588.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Pharaoh  
Director of Corporate Affairs  
Hireup