



# You said, we heard: Getting an independent assessment and applying for the NDIS

What you told us

Easy Read report



**ndis**

[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

## How to use this report



The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wrote this report. When you see the word 'we', it means the NDIA.



This report is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**

We have written some words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 47.



This Easy Read report is a summary of another report.



You can find the other report on our website at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au).



You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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## What is this report about?



We want to make the NDIS easier to use.

We also want to make sure it is:



- fairer



- **consistent.**



When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.



As part of this, we are going to change the way some parts of the NDIS work.



But before we do this, we wanted to find out what the community thought.

This included:



- people with disability



- families and carers



- service providers



- disability organisations.



The community shared their ideas in different ways.



Some people wrote answers to our questions.



Some people visited our website to answer our questions.



Some people recorded their answers, such as in a video.



Some people talked to us at our events.



Some people talked to disability organisations.

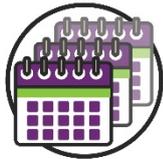
In this report, we tell you what:



- we asked the community about



- people told us



- we will do in the future.

## What did we ask the community about?



To find out what the community thought, we wrote 3 papers.



One paper was about flexible NDIS plans and funding.

Another paper was about:



- getting an independent assessment



- applying for the NDIS.



The other paper was about supporting young children early.



We published these papers in November 2020.



These papers included questions for the community to answer.



You can find these papers on **our website**.

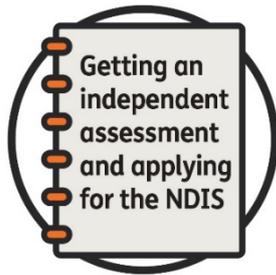


The Department of Social Services (DSS) also wrote an information paper about making the NDIS better.



You can find the information paper on the **DSS website**.

## Getting an independent assessment and applying for the NDIS



This report is about the paper called *Getting an independent assessment and applying for the NDIS*.



**Assessments** are how we work out:



- how your disability affects your life



- what funding you need from the NDIS.

An assessment is **independent** when it is done by someone who:



- doesn't already know you
- isn't the healthcare worker you usually go to for treatment.



We want to start using independent assessments in the middle of 2021.

We want to start using independent assessments when we:



- work out who can take part in the NDIS



- look at NDIS plans.



We will choose a group of people who can do independent assessments.

We call them **independent assessors**.

Independent assessors:



- don't work for the NDIA



- have lots of experience working with people with disability.

## What did we ask the community?



We asked the community what information people will need about independent assessments.



We asked the community about the best way to give people this information.



We asked how we can make sure independent assessments work well.



We asked how to make sure they are:

- safe
- **inclusive.**



If something is inclusive, everyone can take part.



We asked how to make sure everyone who needs an independent assessment can get one.



We asked what sort of skills independent assessors need.



We asked if there could be reasons why a person with disability should not have an independent assessment.



We asked how we should collect information from healthcare workers about a person's disability.



We also asked how we should give the person applying for the NDIS their independent assessment results.



You can find all the questions in the Easy Read paper on [our website](#).

## What did people tell us?



Many people said it was important for independent assessments to be inclusive.



People said applying for the NDIS should be inclusive too.



Other people told us this new way to do things made them feel:

- unsure
- worried.

They said:



- they weren't expecting things to change so soon



- the way we asked for the community's ideas felt rushed.



They said this made it harder to trust that we are changing things in the right way.

Many people said they were worried that independent assessments would be stressful for:



- people with disability applying for the NDIS



- **participants**



- families and carers.



Participants are people with disability who take part in the NDIS.

A lot of people believe the NDIS has reached a point where participants:



- get the support they need



- feel sure about the funding they get.



But they thought independent assessments could put all of that at risk.



We explain what people told us on the following pages.

## Information about how we are changing the NDIS



People told us they want more time to understand how things will change.

They said we should share clear information about:



- what will change



- how it will affect them.



They also said we should share clear information about what they will need to do.

People said we need to share this information in inclusive ways, such as:



- languages other than English



- videos



- stories to explain what is changing.



Some people also said we should work with other organisations to explain how the NDIS works.

This includes:



- community organisations



- **advocacy organisations.**

Advocacy organisations are groups that speak up for people with disability. They can:



- help you have your say



- give you information and advice.

They told us this would be very helpful for:



- **First Nations peoples**
- people from different cultures and backgrounds.



First Nations peoples are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Providing assessment results

People said we should also make information about independent assessment results:



- **accessible**



- **clear**



- **easy to understand.**



When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



They said we should ask people with disability how they want to get the information.

This might include:

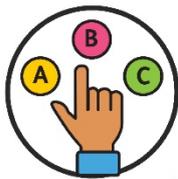


- information in a language other than English



- having someone explain the information to you.

People said it is important for all people who have independent assessments to be able to:



- understand decisions



- ask questions.



This includes people who can't take part in the NDIS.

They said people with disability should get a:



- summary of the assessment report



- copy of the full assessment report.

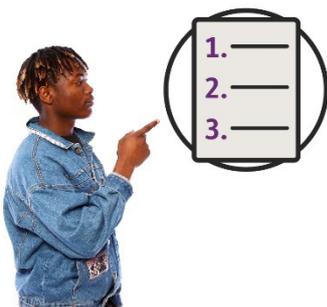
People also said someone should explain:



- what the independent assessor said



- how we decided how much funding to give them



- what will happen next.

They said people with disability should get plenty of time to:



- understand the information



- prepare for the next steps.

## Collecting information for the NDIS



People said we need to be clear about what information we need from healthcare workers.



People said we need to make sure it is easy for healthcare workers to collect this information.

They also said we should train healthcare workers about:



- how the NDIS works



- what information we need.



They said people who've already had an assessment with their healthcare worker shouldn't have to do an independent assessment.

## Access lists



At the moment we use access lists to help us work out:

- if someone could take part in the NDIS
- if a child could take part in early intervention.

Some people told us we should keep using access lists.

But other people told us access lists are:



- hard to understand



- not accessible.



People told us participants should only need 1 assessment.



Access lists mean that people only need 1 assessment.

They also said access lists help people:



- understand what types of disability the NDIS supports



- decide if they want to apply to take part in the NDIS.

People said if we stop using access lists, we should make a list of which disabilities the NDIS:



- supports



- doesn't support.

## Independent assessors' skills



Many people said they were worried about what skills and experience independent assessors have.

They said it is important to make sure independent assessors:



- are well trained



- have the right:
  - knowledge
  - experience



- understand different disabilities.

People also said it is important that independent assessors can:



- make people with disability feel comfortable during the independent assessment



- ask the right questions to get the information they need.



People said they are worried that independent assessors don't know the people they assess.



Many people said they want their usual healthcare worker to do the assessment instead of someone who doesn't know them.



They said they have worked hard to find healthcare workers with the right skills and experience to work with people with disability.

They also said they were worried about how independent assessors will make sure independent assessments are:



- inclusive
- accessible.

## Independent assessment tools



Independent assessors will use some documents to do independent assessments.



We call them **independent assessment tools**.  
In this document, we just call them tools.



Many people want to know if the tools we chose are the right ones.



They want to know how the tools will help independent assessors understand every participant's individual:

- needs
- skills
- experiences.



They want to know if the tools will work well for everyone.

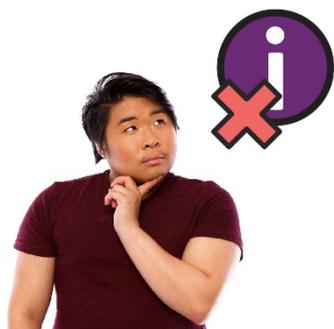
This includes people:



- who need a lot of support, such as people with mental health problems



- come from different cultures and backgrounds.



Some people are worried that the tools won't give:

- enough information
- the right information.

## Accessible and inclusive independent assessments

People were worried about:



- how independent assessors would work with people from different **cultures** and backgrounds
- how independent assessments would work for people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act because of how you grew up.

This includes people with disability who are:



- First Nations peoples



- from the **LGBTIQ+** community.



The letters LGBTIQ+ stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning and asexual.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.



People asked how independent assessments would work in **rural and remote areas**.



Rural and remote areas are places far away from cities or towns.

They said that in these places:



- there are less people who could do independent assessments



- phones and computers don't work well all the time.

People said they want choices about how they do their independent assessments, including:



- at home



- on the phone



- on a video call



- at the independent assessor's office.

They also said they wanted to include other people, such as:



- family and friends



- service providers



- workers who know the family.



Many people were worried that independent assessments will be too short.



They said they won't provide a true understanding of:

- a person's disability
- what they really need.



Many people were also worried about **consent**.



When you give consent, you say it is ok for someone to do something.



They said it is important to make sure people with disability understand:

- what happens during an independent assessment
- what their information will be used for
- who can see their information.



It's important for them to understand what they are agreeing to before they give consent.

## When someone can't have an independent assessment



People asked how we will decide if someone can't have an independent assessment.



This might be because it is unsafe for them to have an independent assessment.



People were also worried about children having independent assessments.

## Making sure independent assessments work well

People said there should be a clear way to tell the NDIA if independent assessments:



- work well



- need to be better.



People also said we should regularly check if independent assessments are working well.

Many people wanted to know what happens when someone doesn't agree with:



- an independent assessment
- what we decide when we use that information.



Some people said they want to be able to ask us to **review** an independent assessment if they don't agree with it.



When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.

People said we need to provide clear information about how to:



- ask us to review an independent assessment



- make a **complaint**.



When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



People also told us we must make sure we keep people safe during independent assessments.

## Losing support and funding



Many people agreed applying for the NDIS needs to be easier.



But they are worried about independent assessments being used to decide if people can take part in the NDIS.

People were worried that:



- less people will get support from the NDIS



- people will get less funding for the supports and services they need.



Some people said they weren't sure why we want to use independent assessments.

## What will we do next?

We want to make sure the NDIS is:



- easier to use



- fairer



- consistent.

People have told us that it can be hard to use the NDIS, particularly as a:



- person with disability



- carer.



We want to use what people told us to make the NDIS better.



Over the next 6 months we will keep talking to the community about how we are changing the NDIS.



We will talk to healthcare workers about what information we need when someone applies for the NDIS.



We will share information about the second independent assessment **pilot**.



A pilot is a test run to work out what:

- works well
- needs to be better.

This pilot will help us understand:



- how we can make independent assessments better



- the experiences of participants who took part in both pilots.

We will work out how we can review if:



- participants are having a good experience



- independent assessments are working well.



We will use the ideas that people gave us to make the NDIS more:

- inclusive
- accessible.

## More information

For more information about this report,  
please contact us.



[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)



1800 800 110



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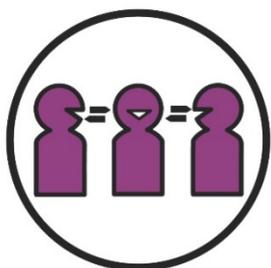
## Support to talk to us



You can use our webchat feature to talk to us online.

[www.ndis.gov.au/webchat/start](http://www.ndis.gov.au/webchat/start)

If you speak a language other than English, you can call:



Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

**131 450**

If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can call:



TTY

**1800 555 677**



Speak and Listen

**1800 555 727**



National Relay Service

**133 677**

[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

## Word list



### Accessible

When something is accessible, everyone can use it.

### Advocacy organisations



Advocacy organisations are groups that speak up for people with disability. They can:

- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.



### Assessments

Assessments are how we work out:

- how your disability affects your life
- what supports you need from the NDIS.



### Complaint

When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



### Consent

When you give consent, you say it is ok for someone to do something.



## Consistent

When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.

## Culture



Your culture is:

- your way of life
- the way you think or act because of the way you grew up.



## Inclusive

If something is inclusive, everyone can take part.



## Independent

An assessment is independent when it is done by someone who:

- doesn't already know you
- isn't the healthcare worker you usually see.



## Independent assessors

Independent assessors:

- don't work for the NDIA
- have lots of experience working with people with disability.



## Independent assessment tools

Independent assessors will use some documents to do independent assessments.

We call them independent assessment tools.

## LGBTIQA+



The letters LGBTIQA stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning and asexual.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQA+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.



## First Nations peoples

First Nations peoples are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



## Pilot

A pilot is a test run to work out what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



## Review

When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



## Rural and remote areas

Rural and remote areas are places far away from cities or towns.



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