



Operational Guideline – Gateway – Local Area Coordinators

Legislation

1. Read s.4 of the [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#) (NDIS Act).
2. The term ‘gateway’ refers to the many ways in which Australians can access the diverse range of support available through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Support ranges from provision of information, referral to other systems, linking in the community and specific disability supports for those eligible.
3. National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Local Area Coordinators (LACs) are a critical part of the NDIS gateway because they work to ensure the local community is more inclusive and to ensure people with a disability are linked to community life.
4. A central role of LACs is to help people with disability, including those who do not become participants, to be linked up in their community and to assist to coordinate the supports they receive through the NDIS and the supports they receive outside the NDIS.

See s.4(14) of the [NDIS Act](#).

General Principles

5. There are a number of principles and obligations in the [NDIS Act](#) that guide the work of NDIA LACs.

See *Operational Guideline – Gateway – Overview*.

6. This Operational Guideline provides some examples and details on how LACs are to put those principles and obligations into operation.
7. In all their dealings LACs are to remember that:
 - a. People with disability should be supported to participate in and contribute to social and economic life to the extent of their ability.
 - b. People with disability should be supported to exercise choice, including in relation to taking reasonable risks, in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports.
 - c. People with disability have the same right as other members of Australian society to be able to determine their own best interests, including the right to exercise choice and control, and to engage as equal partners in decisions that will affect their lives, to the full extent of their capacity.
 - d. People with disability should be supported in all their dealings and communications with the NDIA so that their capacity to exercise choice and control is maximised in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances and cultural needs.
 - e. People with disability should be supported to receive supports outside the NDIS, and be assisted to coordinate these supports with the supports provided under the NDIS.

- f. People with disability should have their privacy and dignity respected.
- g. Innovation, quality, continuous improvement, contemporary best practice and effectiveness in the provision of supports to people with disability are to be promoted.

See ss.4(2), 4(4), 4(8), 4(9)4(10), 4(14) and 4(15) of the [NDIS Act](#).

Local Area Coordinators (LACs) at the Gateway

- 8. LACs will have an active role in the community to positively influence community attitudes to inclusion and work to address some of the systemic barriers to participation. They will also work to address barriers on behalf of individuals and support people with disability to build capacity to access other support systems and increase independence. LACs are expected to assist people with disability in the community by, for example:
 - a. Providing general information about the NDIS, the types of supports available through the NDIS, and other supports available in the broader community at relevant community based activities, and to other stakeholders who are likely to play a key role in the lives of people with disability
 - b. Linking people with disability to providers of supports so that less complex needs are met effectively
 - c. Helping to build the independence of people with disability through building their capacity and their informal networks of support
 - d. Identifying, and working with community organisations to build their capacity to understand and respond to needs and to become more inclusive and meet the needs of people with disability
 - e. Provision of information about: making an access request, information on what information to provide and information on what to expect in working with the NDIA, and
 - f. Assisting people to access the NDIA, for example, helping a prospective participant complete the My Access Checker and making appointments with the NDIA on their behalf where requested.
- 9. In their dealings with people with disability, their families and carers, LACs are to work with people with disability and their families, within their cultural context, to use their natural community and family resources to maintain and build new networks, improve community connections, support improved participation and support sustainable natural supports.

See s.4(9) of the [NDIS Act](#).

- 10. In their dealings with local communities and organisations, LACs should:
 - a. Work in the community to develop a positive profile of the NDIA and disability in general, providing a visible, active presence for the NDIA in the local community
 - b. Develop strong and effective relationships with diverse communities and a wide range of mainstream, Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse organisations to ensure that people with disability access the most appropriate community based services and organisations
 - c. Help and support services and organisations to become more welcoming and inclusive of people of disability and may identify and recommend assistance in the form of funding to enable an organisation to assist people with disability to realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and participate in social and economic life, and

- d. Provide insightful and intelligent feedback to the NDIA about barriers and persistent issues facing people with disability when accessing supports and in the community generally.

See s.4(9) of the [NDIS Act](#).