### What is the objective of the Independent Assessment Pilot?

The objective of the pilot is to better understand and assess the impact of disability for people accessing the NDIS, to enable more consistent decision-making. The pilot aims to achieve this by using functional capacity assessments undertaken by independent health professionals.

### Why should I volunteer?

Assessments are offered free of charge and will help the NDIA to better support your child or the person in your care to design a plan that is best suited to them and their goals. Feedback from the pilot will help shape how the NDIS supports people with disability.

### What is a functional capacity assessment?

A functional capacity assessment is an evaluation of a person's ability to manage tasks and activities of everyday daily life. It entails a set of questions that are used to determine capacity in a variety of circumstances.

### If the initial Pilot was successful, why are you piloting it again?

The first pilot was for people aged 7 to 64 years with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability and psychosocial disability only.

The NDIA plans to continue testing functional capacity assessments to ensure that the assessment process and tools are right for participants of all disabilities, ages, cultural backgrounds and circumstances.

**What assessment methods will be used in the assessment?**

The NDIA has determined that one assessment tool alone cannot provide a complete picture of a person’s functional abilities across all areas of their life and meet the requirements of the NDIS Act 2013.

The NDIA is looking to trial multiple assessments to see which tools successfully measure how a person’s disability impacts their functional capacity. These tools will measure functional capacity across all the activities listed in the NDIS Act 2013:

* communication
* social interaction
* learning
* mobility
* self-care, and
* self-management

We will be trialling existing tools, like the PEDI-CAT, Vineland-3 and LSP-16 used in the initial pilot, and adding other tools during the pilot that allow us to gather a complete picture of a person’s functional abilities across all areas of their life.

**How has the NDIA chosen the assessment tools?**

When deciding which assessment tools to use the NDIA considers a number of factors, including their reliability, validity, ease of use and administration, and how fit for purpose they are for NDIS use.

The assessment tools chosen will consider:

* what the person’s strengths are
* what the person can do with or without support
* what environmental factors may exist that make it easier or harder for the person to achieve their outcomes.

### How will the NDIA choose which assessments my child will need to complete?

Depending on your child’s age, a combination of assessment tools will be required to be completed to ensure we capture the entire picture of a person’s functional abilities across all areas of their life.

**What is involved in an assessment appointment?**

An independent assessor will call you and set up an assessment appointment. This will be before your child’s scheduled plan review meeting with your NDIS Planner or Local Area Coordinator.

The independent assessor will help you complete a set of functional capacity assessments on behalf of your child, and will ask to see your child carry out an everyday activity in their own environment.

### Who can be at the assessment appointment?

A parent or legal guardian will need to be available for the entire appointment to complete the assessments on the child’s behalf.

Your child will need to be at the assessment appointment for 15-20 minutes as the independent assessor will ask to see your child carry out an everyday activity in their own environment. Your child does not have to sit through the entire assessment appointment if you choose.

The independent assessor will discuss this with you when booking your assessment appointment.

### How long will it take to complete the assessment appointment?

The assessment appointment will take approximately 2 – 3 hours depending on which assessments you will be asked to complete on behalf of your child.

**Where can I have my assessment appointment?**

The independent assessor will try to set up an appointment at a convenient time and suitable location for you and your child. This may be at your home or at one of the assessor’s local offices.

**Does my Local Area Coordinator or NDIS planner conduct the assessments?**

No, the assessors are qualified health professionals experienced in disability, independent to the NDIA.

### Will my child’s scheduled plan review take longer as part of this pilot?

There will be no delays to your child’s plan review due to the assessment process. The timeframes remain the same, whether you choose to participate in the pilot or not.

### What happens after I complete the assessment?

The NDIS will use the information in the assessment report to help contribute to the development of your child’s new plan after a scheduled plan review. Functional capacity assessments are just one piece in a collection of supporting evidence that the NDIA considers when making its decisions.

There will be an opportunity to provide feedback to the NDIA after you have completed your assessment appointment. Providing feedback to the NDIA is not compulsory, but it very valuable in helping shape the future of the Scheme for people with disability. Any feedback you choose to give will remain anonymous, and not impact any planning decisions.

### Can I get a copy of my assessment results?

If you wish to obtain a copy of the assessment results, please contact the NDIA at: assessments@ndis.gov.au.

The NDIA recommends that you speak with your treating health professional when reading the assessment results.

### Can I opt-out if I don't like the assessment process?

This pilot is voluntary and you have the option to opt-out at any time.

If you are not happy with your experience during the pilot process, please contact the NDIA at assessments@ndis.gov.au and we will look to resolve the issue.

**What do I do if I do not agree with the assessment results?**

### If you are not happy with your assessment during the pilot, please contact the NDIA at assessments@ndis.gov.au. We will review your assessment results to determine if your assessment has been administered correctly.

### What will be the impact of not completing this assessment?

The pilot is voluntary and there will be no impact if you decide not to participate.

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### Who is the independent assessor and how were they chosen?

The NDIA has engaged APM through a limited tender process to conduct the assessments for the Independent Assessment Pilot.

A human services organisation with more than 25 years of experience supporting people with disability, injury or illness, APM is committed to helping people access the services they need to live better lives.

APM employs qualified health professionals experienced in disability to undertake the assessments using standardised assessment tools.

### Why can't I use my child’s own treating health professional to conduct the assessment?

By having one organisation administer these assessments, instead of each participants’ treating health professional, the NDIA hopes to gather more consistent and robust data to better understand how it can support participants.

### Will my child’s access be withdrawn as part of the pilot?

If you choose to volunteer, your child will not have their access withdrawn for any reason as a result of the assessments completed in this pilot. The assessment results will only be used to better understand your child’s needs and to ensure they have the most appropriate supports in their plan.

### Will my child’s plan be reduced as part of the pilot?

The independent assessment pilot is not designed to take away funding or support from people who need it. The assessments will help us to better understand your child’s needs.

Over time a participant’s needs may fluctuate and the reasonable and necessary supports in their plan may change. Any changes made to the supports in their plan may reflect their individual progress, or may be directed to other areas to help individuals achieve new or revised goals.

People who have an episodic disability (a disability where the impact on your day-to-day life fluctuates) may also see their funding change over time, as their disability changes over time.

**What support is available to my child if the funding in their plan is reduced after review?**

If a service, support or assistive technology has increased the independence of your child and decreased their need for additional support, they may no longer need as much funding in their NDIS plan. You can contact the NDIA again in the future if their circumstances or support needs change.

Your child’s Local Area Coordinator or NDIS Planner will discuss any plan changes with you and is your first point of contact for any questions you might have. Where possible, they may connect you and your child with mainstream community supports if they are available.

**I thought my child didn’t have to do any assessments for the NDIS because they are from a State / Territory or Commonwealth program?**

For participants who have transitioned from State/Territory and Commonwealth programs who are approaching their scheduled plan review, the pilot provides the opportunity to undergo a free assessment.

The assessment provides the NDIA with the best possible information about how a participant’s disability impacts their daily life. By gaining a more accurate picture of an individual’s situation, the NDIA can deliver more consistent and equitable plan outcomes that are better matched to participant goals.