# Transcript – Eligibility and supporting evidence tips from an NDIS assessor

SANDHYA: My name is Sandy and I’m an Access Assessor within the National Disability Insurance Agency. I review evidence of disability against the NDIS legislation to determine if a person meets the NDIA’s access criteria. My role is to support the access of your patient to the NDIS.

VOICE OVER: What is the broader purpose of the NDIS?

SANDHYA: The National Disability Insurance Scheme, otherwise known as the NDIS, is designed to help Australians get the support they need, so their skills and independence improve over time. To help me in my role, I need health professionals like you to understand and correctly identify your patient’s disability needs and their eligibility to access the Scheme.

VOICE OVER: What are your skills and training as an Access Assessor?

SANDHYA: We have been trained in the NDIS legislation. We use the information provided by GPs and other health professionals to determine if your patient meets our access requirements. We rely on the level of detail provided by GPs to make evidence-based decisions.

VOICE OVER: How can a GP support a person to access the NDIS?

SANDHYA: GPs assist patients to gather medical information around their disability and provide the NDIS with details around a patient’s impairment and the impacts on day-to-day life.

VOICE OVER: What do assessors look for when addressing a person’s eligibility for the NDIS?

SANDHYA: The 5 key things I look for when addressing a person’s eligibility for the Scheme are:

1. For age, a person needs to be under 65 at the time of submitting their access request, not at the time of the access decision.
2. When looking at proof of age and residency, a few documents that can be used to verify proof of identity are a birth certificate; Proof of Age card; Driver’s license; Current Australian Passport; Citizenship certificate; a foreign passport or a travel document which includes current visa details. Alternatively, if you have a Centrelink Reference Number, this is the easiest way for us to validate your proof of identity.
3. When you come to details around permanency, we need to know if your patient’s impairments are lifelong. Any information you have on your patient’s treatment history would be really helpful to include.
4. For functional capacity, we want to understand what type of support they need in their day-to-day activities, such as communication; mobility; social interaction; self-care; learning and self-management. These are what we call ‘domains’.
5. When we talk about lifetime approach, we want to know whether your patient would need support from the NDIS throughout their life. If your patient doesn’t meet this criteria, early intervention could be an option. It’s important to note that the NDIS is not designed to fill gaps, so consider whether your patient’s needs might be better met through mainstream services such as health or education. If you think your patient needs early intervention, outline these supports, the goals your patient has and how long intervention is required for.

VOICE OVER: What are 4 useful tips for completing the ‘Treating Professional’ section of an Access Request Form?

SANDHYA: Tip 1. We assess an application based on the impairment resulting from a disability, not just a diagnosis. Make sure you provide sufficient evidence to validate the impairment, with examples of suitable evidence types, such as a letter confirming the disability or impairment. Avoid using complex medical jargon and acronyms. Remember that diagnostic reports can also be provided along with the Access Request Form or supporting evidence form.

Tip 2. Provide detailed evidence around permanency, such as why the impairment is permanent. Make sure you provide information that all evidence-based treatments have been exhausted. If a patient has access to specialist reports, be sure to include them.

Tip 3. Make sure you describe the functional impact of the impairment against the six domains. We only need a patient to be substantially reduced in at least one of those domains. Include information on what a person is unable to do without significant support. Detail any assistive technology your patient has been prescribed such as prosthetics or a wheelchair. Include supports they need to participate in daily life. This could be assistive technology or a person in the community. Also state how often those supports are needed and for how long. And finally,

Tip 4. Are you the best person to provide this information? If not, consider referring your patient to relevant health professional to best support your patient’s access request. The NDIS website contains a suite of practical resources for GPs and other health professionals. Our aim is to streamline the process and make it easier for you and your patient.

For more information, please visit NDIS.gov.au and search ‘GPs and health professionals’.