

Getting an independent assessment and applying for the NDIS

We want to know what you think

Easy Read version



ndis

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

How to use this paper



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



We have written this paper in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold
Not bold

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

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 40.



This Easy Read paper is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on **our website**.



You can ask for help to read this paper.
A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this paper?

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What is this paper about?



We want to make the NDIS easier to use.

We also want to make sure it is:



- fair



- **consistent.**

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



As part of this, we are going to start using independent assessments.

We explain independent assessments on page 7.



We are also going to make some changes to the way you apply to take part in the NDIS.



But before we make these changes, we want to find out what the community thinks.

This includes:



- people with disability



- families and carers



- disability organisations.

In this paper, we:



- tell you about the changes we want to make



- ask you questions



- explain how you can tell us what you think.

What are independent assessments?

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 professional you usually go to for treatment.

We explain healthcare professionals on page 15.



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

We want to start using independent assessments when we:

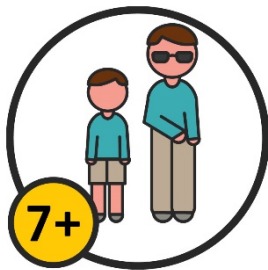


- work out who can take part in the NDIS



- review NDIS plans.

Independent assessments will be:



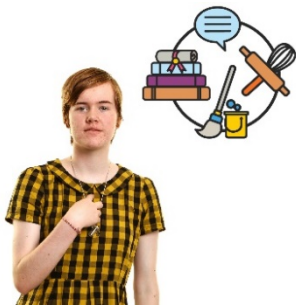
- for people over 7 years old



- free.



When we start using independent assessments, participants won't need to get reports from their healthcare professionals about their functional capacity.



Independent assessments will focus on your **functional capacity**.



Your functional capacity is:

- your ability to do something
- the skills you have and how you use them
- how you manage everyday life.



We sometimes call it your capacity.



Functional capacity is a key part of working out if someone can take part in the NDIS.



You can find out more about functional capacity and independent assessments on the Independent Assessment Framework page on **our website**.

Why do we want to use independent assessments?



At the moment, participants need to organise their own information about their functional capacity.



This can:

- take a lot of time
- cost a lot of money.



And they often don't give us the same information every time.

Independent assessments will:



- give us the information we need about your functional capacity



- help us work out what supports you need.



This means you need to gather less information on your own before you apply to take part in the NDIS.



We think that independent assessments will make applying for the NDIS easier.



Independent assessments will look at the whole person, not just their disability.



They will look at each person's:

- functional capacity
- life at home
- life at other places, like school or work.

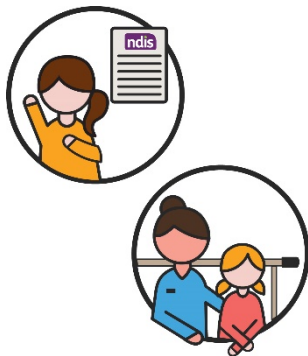


You can find out more about independent assessments on [our website](#).

Access lists



Because we will start using independent assessments, we will no longer need access lists.



We used access lists to help us work out:

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



We will stop using these lists in 2021.

How will independent assessments work?



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



- will do your independent assessment with you and, if you want, a family member or trusted person.

Independent assessors will all be qualified healthcare professionals such as:



- occupational therapists – people who help you move and use your body to get tasks done



- physiotherapists – people who help you with ways to move your body



- speech pathologists – people who help you with talking and communicating



- psychologists – people who help you with the way you think and feel.

Independent assessors will start the assessment by talking with:



- you
- your family member or trusted person.

Then they will:



- ask you questions
- write down what you say.

They might ask you to show them how you do everyday tasks, such as:



- hanging out the washing



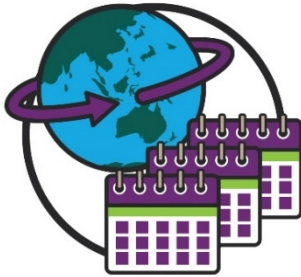
- talking to a family member



- having a cup of tea.



All independent assessors will ask questions from the same assessment tools.



The tools have been used with people with disability around the world for many years.

The tools will make sure independent assessments are:



- fair

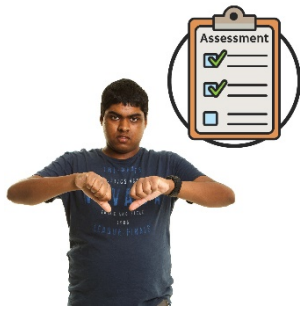


- done the same way every time.



You can find out more about these tools on **our website.**

If you can't have an independent assessment



There are some people who might not be able to have an independent assessment.

This is because it might be:



- unsafe for them to do an independent assessment



- hard for them to complete certain parts of the independent assessment.

If you can't have an independent assessment, you will need to give us information:



- about your functional capacity
- that shows you need to take part in the NDIS.

If you can no longer take part in the NDIS



There are some participants who might not need to take part in the NDIS anymore.



This might happen if an independent assessment shows your functional capacity has improved a lot.

If we decide you can't take part in the NDIS anymore, we will still:



- support you when you move on from the NDIS



- help you connect with other services.

Making independent assessments work for you



Independent assessments will be flexible.



This means you can tell us when and where you want to do your independent assessment.

You can also tell us if you want to do your independent assessment:



- in a different language



- over the phone or in person



- over a few days



- with a support person



- with a woman or a man as your independent assessor.



You will also get your independent assessment results in a way that works for you.



Sometimes we might have to:

- get more information
- ask more questions.



We will let you know if we do need to do this.

Applying to take part in the NDIS



We also want to make some changes to the way people can apply to take part in the NDIS.



We will make applying for the NDIS easier with an online **Access Request Form**.



An Access Request Form is a form you fill out to apply for the NDIS.



We will help people with disability connect with community supports and services, even if they can't use the NDIS.



We will make it easier to give us information about how your disability affects your functional capacity.



In the past, we asked for a lot of information when a person applied to the NDIS.



In the future, we will ask for less information when you fill out an Access Request Form.



This is because the independent assessments will help us understand what you need from the NDIS.

We will give you easy to understand information about what:



- to expect
- you need to do
- decisions you can make.

What if you don't agree with your independent assessment?



If you don't agree with our decisions, you can ask the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to review them.



The AAT reviews government decisions.



For example, you can ask the AAT to review our decision if we say you can't take part in the NDIS.



But you can't ask the AAT to review your independent assessment.



This is because the results of your independent assessment are part of the bigger decision about whether you can take part in the NDIS.



The only time you can get a new independent assessment is when your functional capacity has changed.

Complaints



Independent assessors must follow strict rules.

You can make a **complaint** if you are not happy with your:



- independent assessment



- independent assessor.



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

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.

How to tell us what you think



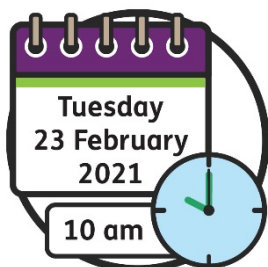
We want to know what you think about these changes.



You can tell us what you think by answering the questions on the following pages.



Or you can tell us what you think on **our website**.



Please tell us what you think by 10 am ADST on Tuesday 23 February 2021.

Questions for you to think about

We want to know what you think about:



- applying to take part in the NDIS



- independent assessments.

You can answer:



- all of the questions



- some of the questions.

About the NDIS



We want to make sure that, when someone applies for the NDIS, they have the information they need.



We want to make sure that they understand independent assessments.



What information do you think people will need?

You can write your answer here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for writing an answer. In the top right corner of the box is a circular icon containing a white document with horizontal lines and a yellow pencil with a pink eraser.



What is the best way to give people this information?

You can write your answer here:

Applying to take part in the NDIS



What is important for us to think about when we start making these changes?

You can write your answer here:

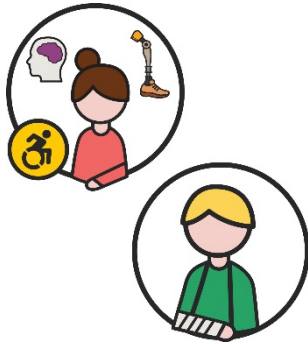


What is the best way for us to collect information from healthcare professionals about a person's disability?

You can write your answer here:

A circular icon in the top right corner of the answer box, showing a document with horizontal lines and a yellow pencil with a red eraser, indicating a writing area.

It can be hard to understand the difference between:



- a disability
- an ongoing health condition.



How can we make it clear what types of disability you need to have to take part in the NDIS?

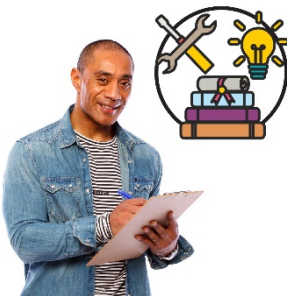
You can write your answer here:



Having an independent assessment



We want to make sure that independent assessors are the right people for the job.



What sort of skills do you think they should have?

You can write your answer here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a purple border, intended for writing an answer. In the top right corner of the box is a circular icon containing a sheet of paper with lines and a pencil.



How can we make independent assessments work well for everyone?

For example, would it be easier to have the assessment at home?

You can write your answer here:

A large rectangular box with a purple border, intended for writing an answer. In the top right corner, there is a circular icon containing a document with lines of text and a pencil pointing to it.

How can we make sure independent assessments are done in a way that is:

- safe?
- inclusive – so everyone to take part?

You can write your answer here:

A large rectangular box with a purple border, intended for writing an answer. In the top right corner, there is a circular icon containing a document with lines of text and a pencil pointing to it.

Not taking part in an independent assessment



Do you think there could be any reasons for someone to not do an independent assessment?

You can write your answer here:

A circular icon in the top right corner of the writing box. It contains a document with horizontal lines and a pencil pointing towards the bottom right corner of the document.

How well we are doing



How can we make sure we're doing a good job when we use independent assessments?

This includes making sure the independent assessors are doing a good job too.

You can write your answer here:

A circular icon in the top right corner of the writing box. It contains a document with horizontal lines and a pencil pointing towards the bottom right corner of the document.

Communication and accessibility of information



How should we give independent assessment results to the person applying for the NDIS?

You can write your answer here:



Other changes to the NDIS



We want to change the way other parts of the NDIS work as well.



We wrote Easy Read papers about the other changes we want to make.



You can find information about changes to early intervention for young children on **our website**.



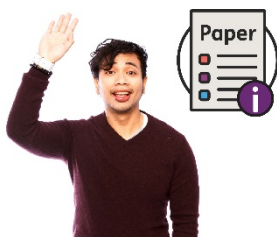
You can find information about changes to NDIS plans and funding on **our website**.

More information



You can find out more about independent assessments on our website.

www.ndis.gov.au



If you would like more information about what is in this paper, you can contact us.



www.ndis.gov.au



1800 800 110



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[@NDIS](https://twitter.com/NDIS)

Support to talk to us



You can talk to us online using our webchat feature.

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

Word list



Access Request Form

An Access Request Form is a form you fill out to apply for the NDIS.



Assessments

Assessments are how we work out:

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



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

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





Functional capacity

Your functional capacity is:

- your ability to do something
- the skills you have
- how you manage everyday life.

Independent

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



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

Independent assessors

Independent assessors:



- don't work for the NDIA
- have lots of experience working with people with disability
- will do your independent assessment with you.



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