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Living My Way Consultation paper: Access and eligibility Policy with independent Assessments.

Living My Way is a Not for profit organisation delivering supports to people with disabilities for over 30 years. Currently, we do not assist participants to access the scheme and therefore, our experience relates to participants with existing NDIS plans. Our feedback relates to the impact of Independent Assessments on existing NDIS participants.

Learning about the NDIS

1. What will people who apply for the NDIS need to know about the independent assessments process? How this information is best provided?

- Information available in easy read, video and consistent message of the NDIS Call centre (or alike)
- Information relating to what is expected of them, the assessment and how to ask questions throughout the process.

Undertaking an independent assessment

2. What are the traits and skills that you most want in an assessor?
 - Proven ability to understand the impact of disability on a person's function.
 - Proven ability to develop rapport in a short time frame
 - Ability to listen and interpret participants everyday language into assessment requirements.
 - Ability to ask further questions, identify inconsistencies and probe further when information presented is not clear or inconsistent.
 - When the disability is physical, an observation of the participant in their preferred environment, home , school or work place performing tasks that are relevant to their daily life (such as a mobility assessment, kitchen assessment, a showering assessment etc)
3. What makes this process the most accessible that it can be? For example, is it by holding the assessment in your home?
 - This is an individual response. For most, home will be where they are most comfortable and also where their disability has the greatest impact on function in everyday life. However, there are many participants who do not allow for providers into their homes.

4. How can we ensure independent assessments are delivered in a way that considers and promotes cultural safety and inclusion?
 - Independent assessors to ask the participants preference. Initial phone calls to assist in identifying participants preference prior to assessments taking place.
 - Have the opportunity for the assessment to take place after initial rapport building can be established. Ie if an independent assessment usually takes 3 hours, add another 20 minutes for rapport building.
 - Allow for the assessment to take place over multiple sessions, fatigue and concentration is often a factor to be considered, and participants should be made to feel comfortable to request a break or to end the session.
 - Assure participants of the qualifications, experience and standardised assessments being used.
 - Provide participants with choice of who provides the Independent assessment. If the participant is able to choose the provider or the allied health background of the independent assessor there will be more confidence in the experience

Exemptions

5. What are the limited circumstances which may lead to a person not needing to complete an independent assessment?
 - Existing participants who are considered palliative.
 - Existing participants who have previously supplied comprehensive functional assessment, disability is stable and current NDIS meets needs should be able to opt out of Independent Assessment until such time as their circumstances change.

Quality assurance

6. How can we best monitor the quality of independent assessments being delivered and ensure the process is meeting participant expectations?

This is the key to the delivery of the Independent Assessment to be successful. Consistency of outcomes as well as positive experiences of participants. Consideration should be made for the following ;

- An open tender process for organisations to apply to become Independent Assessors to include robust Quality assurance framework.
- Minimum years experience of assessors working in disability , suggest at least 3 years.
- Allied Health and Nursing backgrounds are essential, and this should not be compromised.
- An independently run competency training for all Independent Assessors to attend prior to delivering the assessment. This training should ensure competency in

delivering the standardised assessments as well as capturing ability to gather information and report writing.

- Clinical Governance framework is essential to ensure quality of the assessments.
- Suggest Senior independent assessors support junior independent assessors with a % of quality assurance activities as part of the outcome measures for organisations.

Communications and accessibility of information

7. How should we provide the assessment results to the person applying for the NDIS?

In their preferred method of contact; phone, face to face, email etc. in easy read/every day language.

Thank you for the opportunity for feedback. Living My Way welcomes further opportunity for feedback and consultation.



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