FOI 26/27-0866

ndis

Complaints Management and Freedom of Information (CMFOI) Branch

Service Delivery New Starter Training Package

ndis.gov.au | November 2024

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past present and emerging.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Information Access
Personal Information Access (PIA)
& Freedom of Information (FOI)

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Information Access

Everyone has a right to access their own **personal information**.

Participants (or their nominee) can also give consent for a third party to access their information.

Personal information may be a name, address, telephone number, date of birth, medical records, bank account details, employment details or commentary or opinion about a person.

We use and disclose personal information where it is reasonably necessary to perform our functions and activities. It's important you understand:

- **Consent** – does the person have the authority to access the information?
- **Identity checks** – is the person who they say they are?



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What if you receive a request for information?

If a participant or their authorised representative requests information from the NDIA, you should consider:

Providing education and support for them to **self-service**

Determine if you can provide them with the requested information

Support them to make a formal request via the Information Access team

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Self-Service

Participants and providers can self-service and access information through the participant and provider portals.

Participants can see their personal details, plan information, and notifications and formal letters from the NDIA.

Participants can also give consent through the portal for providers to view basic personal information and details of their NDIS plan that are relevant to them.

You can support participants and their reps to access the NDIS participant portal through a myGov account.



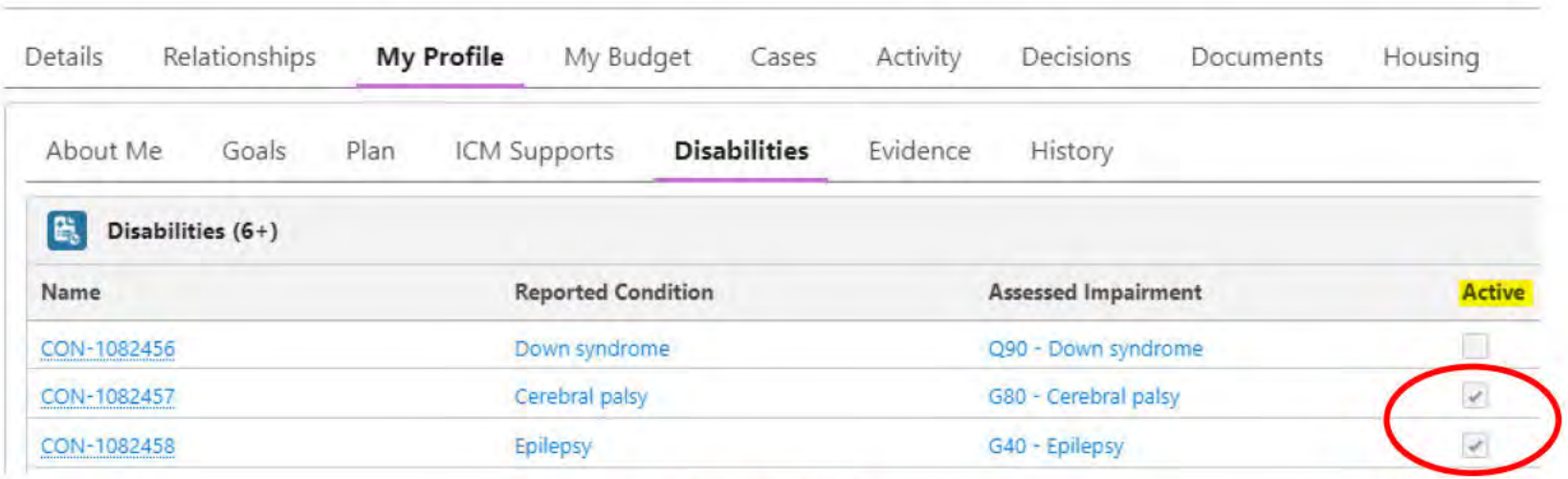
This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What information can you provide?

You should always support a participant to self-serve where possible, however if the person is unable or unwilling, you can provide the following with the appropriate consent:

- Copy of plan
- Formal letters the agency has sent

You can also communicate a participant's listed disabilities/impairments - accessed in PACE via the My Profile tab and Disabilities tab. If the 'Active' box is ticked, this indicates the listed disability/impairment is current.



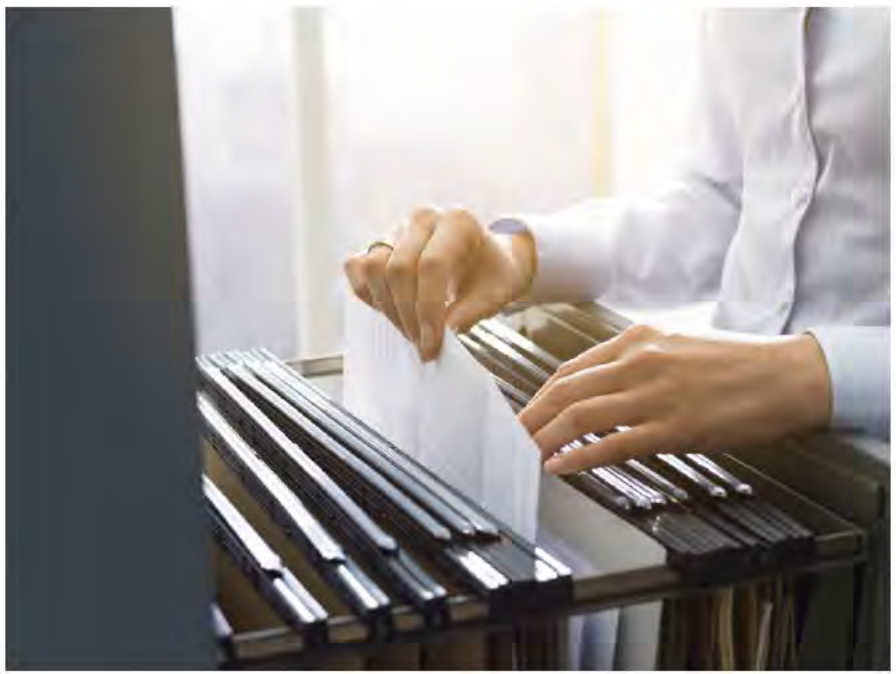
This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

How else do we provide information?

If a person is requesting a document that is unavailable via self-service, or is not something you can provide, it can be managed by either a

- Participant Information Access (PIA) request, OR
- Freedom of Information (FOI) request

These formal requests are managed by the **Information Access Team**.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)

PIA is an easy and fast way for participants and their representatives to access types of personal information that are commonly requested.

Requests can be submitted online, via email or phone by a participant, authorised representative or third party with consent. The request should include what information they are seeking and why.

Information Access teams aim to respond to PIA requests no later than 28 days from receipt of the request, in line with the Participant Service Guarantee.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Can Be Requested under PIA?

- Information relating to access to the NDIS, including information provided to support access request(s) and the reasons for the access decision.
- Current and past NDIS plans and plan reassessments, including the information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision.
- Medical and other documents that have been provided to the NDIA.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) applies to all documents held by Commonwealth government agencies and ministers.

The FOI Act is designed to be 'pro-disclosure' meaning that it assumes that any document should be released when someone asks for it.

In general, we can only refuse access to information if we reasonably believe that releasing it would cause harm.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Freedom of Information (FOI) cont.

The purpose of FOI is to increase public participation in government processes, increase scrutiny and review of government activities and promote information as a public resource that is owned by the people.

To make a FOI request, the following criteria must be met. The request must:

- Be in writing.
- State that it is a request made under the FOI Act
- Give sufficient detail about the documents being sought
- Provide us a way to send the documents to them



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Can Be Requested under FOI?

Any document can be requested under FOI, without exception.

The definition of a ‘document’ is very broad. It covers ‘anything with marks on it’ whether in physical or electronic form.

Documents can include letters, emails, case notes, reports and briefs. But it also covers Microsoft Teams messages, post it notes, scribble on a white board, video recordings, etc.

Requested documents may be refused or redacted in certain circumstances, if the content is sensitive. However, this is the exception, not the rule.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Making FOI decisions

The Information Access Team liaises with other business areas to request documents. All relevant documents must be released to the FOI decision maker, regardless of sensitivities.

Business areas are asked to provide advice about potential harm if the documents were to be released. However, the final decision sits with the FOI decision maker.

The standard timeframe to process an FOI request is **30 days**. Extensions are available in certain circumstances.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Reviews of FOI decisions

Applicants have **internal** and **external** review rights under the FOI Act.

Internal reviews are completed by an independent NDIA decision maker within 30 days of receiving the request.

When conducting an internal review, we must undertake new searches for documents to maintain the integrity of the reviews process. This means we may contact business areas and request documents that have already been provided.

Applicants can also submit a request for an external to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner within 60 days.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Differences between FOI and PIA

PIA	FOI
Is covered by the NDIS Act	Is covered under the FOI Act
Decisions cannot be reviewed	Decisions are subject to internal and external review
Can only provide personal information	Can provide any information that is not exempt
More accessible and faster	Longer processing times
Streamlined and less legalistic	Strict legislative processing requirements

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Reminder: Accurate Record Keeping

All communications, decisions, and actions must be recorded accurately on the relevant business system.

Your notes should be accurate and factual with a consistent style, keep a neutral tone without opinion and identify other staff involved by their title and username.

Remember: Any person can ask to see and/or be given a copy of any document we hold here in the NDIA. This includes MS Teams chat history, notes and documents on our business systems, or even the sticky notes on your desk.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

QUIZ 3

SCENARIO

During a first planning meeting, a Child Representative requests information of their child's listed disabilities on PACE and a copy of the Occupational Therapist (OT) report submitted during the access process.

A Lawyer representing a participant emails you following a plan reassessment meeting requesting all medical documents relevant to injuries allegedly sustained by the participant.

A Plan Nominee attends their local NDIS office and requests a copy of their father's plan.

ANSWER

Provide them with information of the listed disabilities and advise them that a PIA request should be submitted to obtain a copy of the OT report

Advise them that a FOI request should be submitted

Provide them with a copy of the plan and support them to understand self-service options via the portal.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Information Access Resources

- Participant information access | NDIS
- Freedom of Information | NDIS



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Summary

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA) Induction and Training Manual

Purpose

This Induction and training manual provides new staff with a learning program that familiarises them with the Agency, Scheme and Stream Specific training. The objective of this resource is to make sure new starters are supported and have all the information required to successfully commence in the Participant Information Access (PIA) stream of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Team.

This resource aligns with Agency aspirations from the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and reinforces our commitment to participants as detailed in the Participant Service Charter.

To be used by

- Line Managers (LM)
- New Starters

Scope

This Manual provides you with what you need to know when working in the PIA stream of the FOI Team, such as procedures, training, culture, Work Health and Safety (WH&S) and prepares you for your new role.

Welcome to the PIA stream of the FOI Team

On your first day, you will receive:

- FOI & PIA Induction Manual (this document)
- FOI or PIA Training Manual

We are excited to have you start.

The FOI team is part of the Parliamentary, Ministerial, and FOI Branch, in the Government Division of the NDIA.

Parliamentary and Ministerial (PM) provide coordination and support services as well as advice on ministerial and parliamentary protocols to the ministerial offices, the NDIA Executive and staff.

The FOI team responds to requests made to the Agency under the FOI and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Acts.

s47F - personal privacy is the Branch Manager and s47F - personal privacy, our Director.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Contents

Participant Information Access (PIA) Induction and Training Manual 1
Purpose 1
To be used by 1
Scope 1
Welcome to the PIA stream of the FOI Team 1
Induction 4
1. New Starter Checklist 4
ESSentials 4
2. IT Items 4
3. Business System, Programs and Applications 4
3.1 CRM 4
3.2 Adobe Acrobat DC 4
3.3 LEX 4
4. SharePoint Access 5
5. Email Signature 5
6. Printing and Scanning 5
7. Annual Performance Plans 5
8. Other Important Administration Links to get you started 5
9. Work Health & Safety 5
10. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 6
11. Working from Home 6
12. NDIS and the NDIA 6
13. How the Agency interacts with Participants 6
14. NDIA values 7
15. e-Learning 7
16. Supporting New Starter on the job 8
17. Observation and Practice 8
18. Performance Development 9
19. Coaching 9
Guidance for the processing of PIA requests 9
PIA requests 9
How requests are made 9
Who can make requests 10
PIA Processing Timeframes 10

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Registration and Allocation of requests 11
1. Registration 11
2. Allocation 11
Processing requests 12
3. PIA Role Definition 12
3.1. Documents provided under PIA 12
4. Initial Assessment of request 13
4.1. Verify Identity 13
4.2. Confirm Authority 13
4.3. Confirm address for reply 14
5. AO: Preparing an AO assessment for your Delegate's review 14
7. AO: Preparing document bundle for Delegate review 17
8. Delegate: Reviewing documents for Release 20
9. AO: Release of Documents & Closing off Matter 22
9.1. AO: Closing off Matter on LEX 23
9.2. AO: Closing off Matter on PIA Database 24
9.3. AO: Closing Interaction note on CRM 24
9.4. AO: Advising Delegate that matter has been closed on all platforms 25
10. Frequently Asked Questions 26

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Induction

1. New Starter Checklist

The purpose of the New Starter Checklist is to help guide you and your Line Manager through the process of induction.

You can access a National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Checklist for New Starters and Line Managers via Checklist for New Starters and Line Managers.

ESSentials

ESSentials provides staff with a self-service tool to access HR information. This is accessed via the Intranet.

You can also update your personal address, emergency contact and work address. You can find these in the My Details – Address/Phone details tab. Updating your work address is important for making sure you receive emails that are site or location specific.

For further information regarding getting started with ESSentials you can view the Getting Started page on the intranet.

2. IT Items

Upon commencement, you will be issued with a laptop to perform your role. It is your responsibility to make sure any assets are updated in ESSentials as assigned to you. You can speak with your buddy or Line Manager to assist you with this allocation should you require further assistance.

3. Business System, Programs and Applications

3.1 CRM

CRM is the Business System (System) used by the Agency and access is required for you to conduct your day to day work.

Access to the System is requested in ESSentials. The Registration Team will have sought access to the System on your behalf prior to your commencement.

Further information on gaining access to CRM can be accessed by viewing the NDIA Standard Operating Procedure 'Requesting CRM Roles'.

The CRM Training Guide provides detailed instructions on how to use this application when processing requests for information.

3.2 Adobe Acrobat DC

Adobe Acrobat DC is the program used to combine and process documents for release under the NDIS and FOI Acts.

The Adobe Acrobat DC Training Guide provides detailed instructions on how to use CRM when processing requests for information.

3.3 LEX

LEX is the program used to manage the FOI and PIA requests received and processed by the NDIA. We also use LEX for reporting purposes, so it is imperative that the data for individual matters are correct and up to date.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

4. SharePoint Access

The NDIA uses SharePoint as a shared document library and it is reached via a website. That website is: *https://ndisgovau.sharepoint.com/sites*

Further information about how to use SharePoint can be accessed via SharePoint Workspace Introduction.

5. Email Signature

The NDIA has a standard signature block that is to be used for all email correspondence. How to create your NDIA – branded email signature contains instructions, the template text and logo. Refer to your Team Leader for further information.

6. Printing and Scanning

If you are in an office then before you can print documents, you need to add the NDIA printer to your physical Desktop. Instructions can be found here.

7. Annual Performance Plans

An Annual Performance Plan is the plan NDIA Senior Executive Service (SES) and NDIA Australian Public Service (APS) employees complete each year as part of the Annual Performance Cycle. They can be found in the Agency's Talent Management System – LEAP, (which you will learn about further down in this document) and are either automatically assigned by People and Culture or by an employee's manager.

8. Other Important Administration Links to get you started

- Light Up – Celebrating Brilliance (NDIA's recognition and celebration program).
- Acronyms – A list of the Agency wide approved used Acronyms.
- Terms and Definitions – This page contains terms and definitions relevant to the operation of the NDIS.

9. Work Health & Safety

Speak Up - Report an Incident
Speak Up is the staff doorway to raise incidents, issues or concerns. At the NDIA, we take care of each other and our community by making sure we raise incidents and concerns quickly so the Agency can address and mitigate issues. Speaking up is part of contributing to a positive risk culture at the Agency.

For more information, including advice on which icon to select based on your incident, issue or concern, read the ***How to Raise a Speak Up Quick Reference Guide*** which can be located on the Speak Up intranet page.

Screen Based work
At the NDIA most of us work on a computer, sometimes all day. Computer work is also known as screen based work. This work can cause injuries to our musculoskeletal system.

When we do screen based work we can move some parts of our body over and over while using small muscles with force. We can also hold our body in the same way for long periods.

To make sure we are comfortable, we need the right equipment set up the right way so we can sit or stand safely. We also need to know how to work in healthy ways such as not sitting or standing all day. The links below will take you to additional information regarding workplace health and safety:

Screen Based Work

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Work Health Safety and Wellbeing Newsroom

For further assistance:

- speak to your line manager
- for screen based work advice contact the WHS Team
- for workplace assessments contact the Workplace Supports Team

10. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

NDIA offers an independent EAP.

Note: This is not available to Labour Hire staff. Labour Hire recruitment agencies are required to provide an EAP similar service, and, as such, Labour Hire staff should contact their recruitment agency for these details.

Your Employee Assistance Program is:

- A confidential service
- Available to all employees
- Available for up to 6 sessions per concern

When using the EAP, you will speak with a qualified, experienced counsellor across a range of issues. To make an appointment to speak with Benestar call 1300 360 364 or visit Benestar and click on ***Individual Wellbeing***.

11. Working from Home

The NDIA is committed to providing a collaborative, productive environment while assisting workers to achieve a work/life balance that recognises their family, caring, cultural and other personal commitments.

The Working from Home intranet page outlines the Agency's policy and provides you with the necessary information to assist with working from home arrangements. This link also includes information for working from home during the COVID-19 event.

For COVID-19 specific information, please refer to the COVID-19 Information intranet page.

12. NDIS and the NDIA

The NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is described in the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act). The NDIS Act legislates how we support Australian citizens living with disability. Once a person gains access to the Scheme, they are called a 'participant'. The NDIA is the government agency that has been tasked with implementing and managing the NDIS in accordance with the NDIS Act.

13. How the Agency interacts with Participants

The NDIA makes decisions about whether someone is eligible to become an NDIS participant and if so, how much funding they will receive. This is based on legislation within the NDIS Act 2013 and sets out what supports and services are considered reasonable and necessary for the NDIS to fund. Visit the NDIS website to find out more.

Early Childhood Early Intervention partners
Early Childhood Approach helps children aged 0-6 years who have a developmental delay or disability. Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Partners employ ECEI Coordinators who help children and their

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

families access supports and services that are tailored to the child's needs. ECEI Coordinators will also help with connection to other services such as community health services, playgroups or other activities available in the area. You can visit the ECEI Partners in The Community page to learn more. Further information is available at Early Childhood Services (ECS) Branch on the intranet page.

Local Area Coordination partners

Local Area Coordination Partners employ Local Area Coordinators (LAC) who help people understand and access the NDIS. They also work with NDIS participants to develop and use their NDIS plan. For most people aged seven years and older, an LAC will be their main point of contact for the NDIS.

A LAC will connect people with disability to supports, services and activities in their community and other government services. LACs also work in communities to help them become more accessible and inclusive for all people with disability. You can visit the LAC Partners in The Community page to learn more.

14. NDIA values

The Agency's values guide the way staff and partners will work to deliver on our aspirations. The Corporate Plan provides the 'what'. The values set out 'how' we will work together to achieve these objectives.

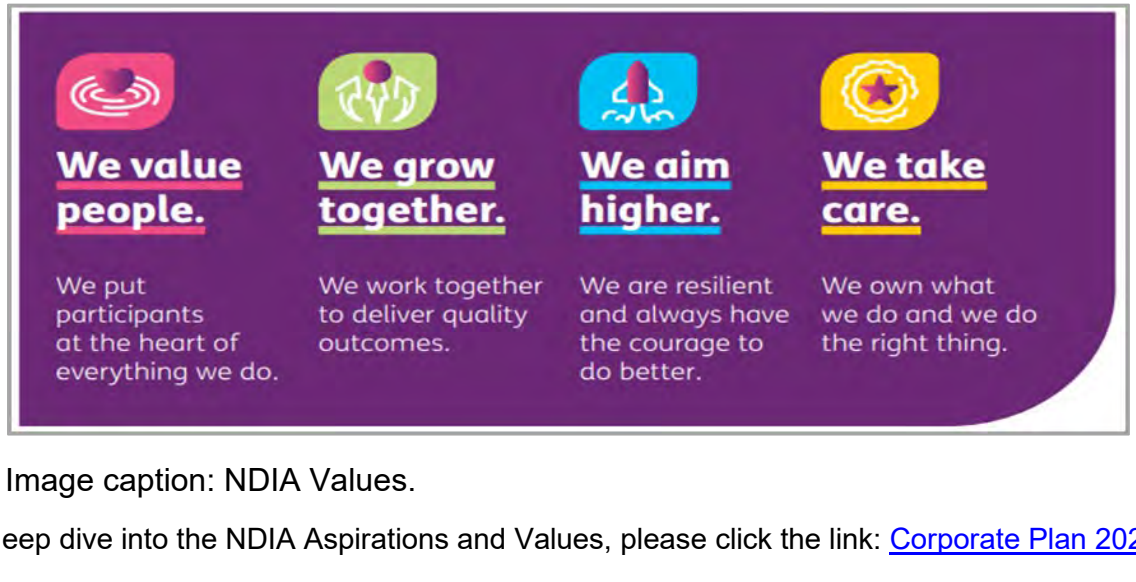


Image caption: NDIA Values.

For a deep dive into the NDIA Aspirations and Values, please click the link: Corporate Plan 2020-2024.

15. e-Learning

As part of getting you settled in your new role, a variety of e-Learning modules have been developed for you. The modules are split into 2 categories:

- Mandatory
- Core

These courses will be assigned to you and you will access them through LEAP – our online learning portal. Access LEAP through your intranet homepage and save to My Links on your Intranet home page. We encourage you to plan your time and prioritise these modules as they contain key information to help you understand our purpose, information handling and security measures as well as your wellbeing.

The first step to gaining access to the wide range of e-Learning courses available is to complete the ***Leap Access Request Form***. You will need your NDIA User ID and NDIA email before completing this form. Please include the NDIA User ID of your Manager (if known). Once completed, you will be required to forward this form to the National Learning and Development Team for processing.

Please see link below to access the form and email to forward completed form.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Form: LEAP Access Form

Email: Learning and Development.

Once access is gained to LEAP, the second step is to read the 'Accessing Learning on LEAP' Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and follow the instructions. The SOP in located on the LEAP intranet page.

Mandatory e-Learning
The Mandatory e-Learning Program is a series of development opportunities assigned to employees, typically upon employment commencement, to make sure our healthy and safe culture is maintained, our values are understood and lived and our legislative and operational obligations are met.

Please remember these will be assigned to you and will have a date required for completion. You can find the ***Mandatory Learning Matrix*** via the Mandatory Learning intranet page.

Core e-Learning
The Core e-Learning Program is designed for you to obtain knowledge for your role. This includes the stakeholders we engage, the participant plans and funded supports, creating suitable communications and good decision making, all of which will assist you in your role within the Parliamentary, Ministerial, and FOI Branch.

16. Supporting New Starter on the job

Team Leaders and team members support new starters throughout their learning journey by coaching, demonstrating processes, discussing new ideas and providing meaningful, frequent feedback. The on-the-job component of the Division New Starters program is an opportunity for new starters to practice, ask questions and access and apply the resources needed to perform their role and embed their learning.

There are several key ways Team Leaders and team members help support new starters on the job and identify the key areas for them to focus on at this stage in their learning journey.

17. Observation and Practice

The following structure is used when introducing a new process, procedure or concept, where the new starter has little or no experience.

Demonstrate/talk through/guide the new starter through the procedure without complications:

- If the procedure is long, break it into sections and demonstrate each section separately.
- Verbalise your thinking and decision-making.
- Reference the relevant Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or Practice Guidance.

Provide multiple practice opportunities:

- Provide guidance rather than direction
- Use open questions to prompt recall
- Reduce guidance as confidence grows

Provide feedback:

- Be specific
- Be constructive
- Invite questions to clarify understanding

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

18. Performance Development

Our Branch always strives for the best practice approach not only in the quality of our work and participant and legislative outcomes, but also personally and professionally.

For more information on the Agency's Organisational Capability and Performance approach please refer to the Human Resources intranet page.

19. Coaching

Coaching is a valuable approach to developing new starters (and others). Coaching works when the new starter has existing knowledge or experience, or the potential to 'work it out' for themselves.

The Agency uses the GROW model (Goals, Reality, Options, Way forward) as a framework for coaching conversations. GROW is also a part of our Just Brilliant Leadership Series and our Learning to Lead program. For further information, refer to Being an Agency Leader.

At its heart, coaching is about conversations with new starters. Those conversations empower them and support capability.

For more information on the GROW model or coaching, please refer to the following Coaching intranet page.

Guidance for the processing of PIA requests

PIA requests

The PIA process was developed in line with the Participant Service Charter, which promotes a transparent and responsive NDIA and is an easier and faster way for participants and their representatives to access their personal information.

Information about NDIS participants and prospective participants is protected Agency information under the NDIS Act but may be disclosed with the consent of the person to which it relates or their authorised representative. The PIA allows NDIS participants and prospective participants to access their personal information held on the NDIS Business System (CRM). Consistent with the NDIS Act, a participant's child representative/s or nominee (as listed on CRM) will be able to seek access to information on behalf of participants.

The FOI Team manage PIA requests on behalf of the agency.

How requests are made

A request can be made via the NDIS website or by emailing information.access@ndis.gov.au with the following proof of identity:

- full name
- date of birth
- address, and or
- NDIS reference number.

Participants and/or their representatives can request access to information about:

- Access to the NDIS, including information provided to support access request(s) and the reasons for the access decision

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

- Current NDIS plans, including the information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision
- Recent NDIS plan reviews, including information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision, and
- Medical and other documents that have been provided to the NDIA.

Who can make requests

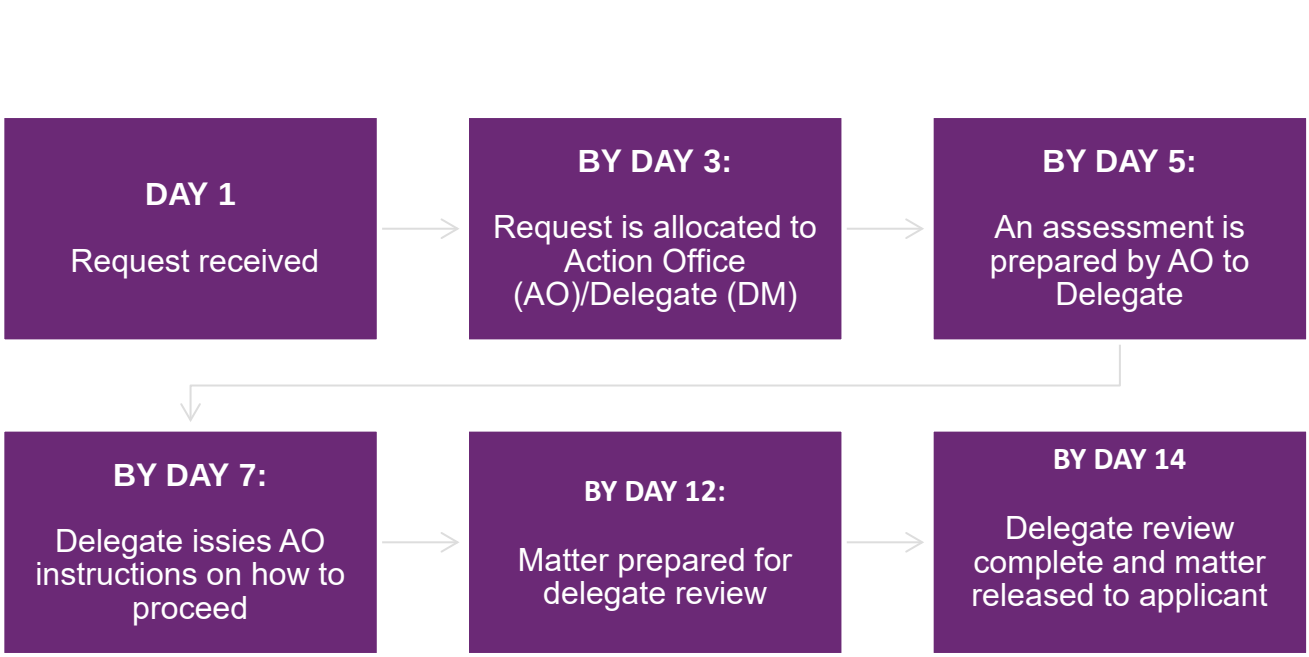
- NDIS participants
- child representatives
- nominees
- prospective participants or the person who acted for a prospective participant in making an access request, and
- third parties with consent from the participant.

Because PIA is a scheme through which participants can seek their own information, requests made by third parties not representing the participant, for example, lawyers representing the defendant in a participant compensation matter, or similar, cannot be processed under PIA but must be referred to the FOI process.

PIA Processing Timeframes

Our team aims to respond to PIA requests no later than 28 days from receipt of the request, in line with the Participant Service Guarantee (external). However, 14 days is the internal KPI we aspire to.

If you receive a request for documents or for information about a participant please immediately notify us by forwarding it to information.access@ndis.gov.au, to ensure we meet our required timeframes.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Registration and Allocation of requests

1. Registration

Upon receipt of a request, a determination will be made whether the request is appropriate for the purposes of PIA. Information can only be released under PIA if it meets the necessary prerequisites.

Once it is determined that the request can be processed under PIA, the following steps will be taken:

- a reference number will be assigned to the request.
- an individual folder on SharePoint and LEX will be created in which all key documents relating to the matter will be saved.
- the request will be registered on the PIA database, which is used to record all relevant data, monitor progress and to track trends, and
- an interaction record on CRM will be created to record that a request for information has been received and what documents have been released.

Once the information is released to the applicant, the interaction record will be closed.

2. Allocation

Based on staff capacity, the FOI Coordinator will allocate PIA requests to a PIA Action Officer (AO) and Delegate (DM) to process, review and release the requested information.

An allocation arrives in your Outlook Inbox via email, as follows:

Hi ***[AO name]***

Can you please take carriage of the below matter with ***[Delegate Name]*** as your Delegate.

******* Please discuss approach with Delegate prior to taking action on this matter *******

APP12 Reference No	**PIA 21/22-XXXX (*Participant Surname*)**
Applicant Name	*Who has requested the information*
Participant Name	*Who the information is about*
NDIS Ref No	*Participant's reference number*
Date of Request	*Date request was received*
Date due to DM	*Date AO has to have matter prepared and sent to Delegate*
Date Due	*Request expiration date*
Previous Request(s)	**Yes/ no**
Lex Created	*Registration process*
R Drive Created and Request Saved Down	*Registration process*
Recorded on PIA Database	*Registration process*

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Processing requests

3. PIA Role Definition

Responsibility for processing requests under PIA is necessarily separated to 2 key roles:

Action Officer (AO)	Responsible for assessing the request, gathering and collating documents and preparing them for release, as well as saving all internal and external correspondence onto respective SharePoint matter folder.
Delegate (DM)	Responsible for providing guidance to the AO, reviewing the request, and authorising the release of information under the NDIS Act as a delegate of the CEO.

3.1. Documents provided under PIA

Applicants may select which documents they are seeking using the NDIS website's online form.

Depending on the option(s) selected, the following documents will be available for release:

Access to the NDIS	
Access request form	Copy of access request form.
Access decision letter	Copy of access decision letter.
Determine the access decision	CRM – Pathway Tab – Screenshot/s of access decision
NDIS plan*	
Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan	Information collected at a planning meeting and includes participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation.
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan	Planner justifications include the draft and final NDIS plan.
Current NDIS plan	Copy of letter outlining current NDIS plan.
NDIS plan review	
Outcome of NDIS plan review	Copy of outcome of plan review letter.
Medical and other documents	
Evidence of disability	Copies of any evidence of disability (EOD).
Medical documents / assessment reports	Copies of medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

NDIS plan*	
Supporting evidence form	Copy of supporting evidence form.
Recognised disabilities tab	Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities in CRM.
Roster of care	Copy of Roster of Care (ROC).
Home and Living Supports decision	Copy of Home and Living Supports decision.
Payment summary	Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports.

**If sensitivities are present in such documents, it may be appropriate to consult with the Delegate or document owner and transfer the request to the FOI stream to process under the FOI Act.*

4. Initial Assessment of request

Once a request is allocated, it is the responsibility of the AO to ensure the request meets Identity and Authority requirements the email address for response is confirmed on CRM.

Please refer to the CRM Training Guide for instructions on CRM use.

4.1. Verify Identity

To comply with Australian Privacy laws, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the applicant is who they say they are. The way this is done is to collect 3 pieces of personal information about the applicant when they complete the online request form on the NDIS website, which we can match with the information we have recorded in CRM. This is known as a 3-point security check.

For information about what kinds of information can you use to complete a 3 point security check, please refer to the 'NCC Verifying Identity, Confirming Authority, and Disclosure of Information SOP'.

4.2. Confirm Authority

When the applicant is not the person who is the participant to whom the request relates, the applicant must have the authority to act on behalf of the participant, and this is given through what is known as express consent. Where express consent has been given, it will appear in CRM. A 3 point security check must be completed with the applicant before providing any details from the record.

Appropriate authority include:

- The applicant is a Plan Nominee on the participant's CRM
- The applicant is a Child Representative on the participant's CRM
- The applicant is a prospective participant or is the person who acted for the prospective participant in making the current access request under the NDIS Act, and/or

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

- The applicant has provided a letter of authority signed by the participant and dated within the last 12 months.

Where an applicant does not fit one of the above categories, the request should be denied. The applicant will be provided a response outlining the reasons the request was denied, including alternative options for accessing the information they are seeking.

4.3. Confirm address for reply

Once the applicant's identity has been confirmed, the email address provided by the applicant should be checked against email address on the participant's CRM record. If the email address is different, or no email address has been recorded in CRM, then it should be confirmed with the applicant as soon as the request is allocated.

Supporting material

NDIS Act 2013:

1. *Section 74 – Authority to Act on behalf of a Child*
2. *Section 75 – Definition of Parental Responsibility*
3. *Section 78 – Authority to Act as Plan Nominee*
4. *Section 86 – Appointment of Plan Nominee*

5. AO: Preparing an AO assessment for your Delegate's review

An assessment to the DM is the first step to the processing a request for information under PIA and must be sent within **48 hours** of being allocated the matter, please hit 'Reply All' to the allocation email, to ensure a trail is kept, for record keeping purposes.

Please open up a new PIA Processing Checklist and save it onto SharePoint's matter folder and action as you process request.

This assessment will aid in determining whether POI/Authority and Consent requirements have been met, if the email address provided matches CRM records; and the volume of the scope of request.

If requirements have not been met, please draft an email seeking POI and/or Authority for your DM to review, these templates can be found in PIA Email Templates.

Whilst assessing the matter, please also **extract the requested documents** from the 'Documents' and/or 'Pathway' tabs of the participant's CRM file and save onto the correct folder within SharePoint.

Instructions on how to extract and save documents can be found in CRM Training Guide.

Part of assessing a matter is opening up individual document folders in CRM, in order to determine whether a document falls in scope of the request.

The AO Assessment must be sent to the DM and have yourself copied in, followed by saving the email onto the Matter SharePoint folder named **'3. Internal communication'**.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Please find email templates at PIA Email Templates or refer to the below:

<table>
<tr><td>Subject</td><td>AO ASSESSMENT: PIA 20/21-XXXX (XXXX) - DUE: Day Month Year</td></tr>
<tr><td>Body</td><td>
PIA 21/22-XXXX (XXXXX)
NDIS Ref: XXX XXX XXX
DUE Date: Day Month Year

Hi [DM Name]

Proof of Identity
I am/am not satisfied the applicant has provided sufficient POI. I have therefore prepared the attached email for your review, seeking POI.

Name ✓/X
DOB ✓/X
Address ✓/X
Reference number ✓/X

Consent/Authority
I am/am not satisfied the applicant has sufficient authority to receive the requested information. I have therefore prepared the attached email for your review, seeking a signed letter of authority.

Email address match/mismatch
I am/am not satisfied that the email address provided matches CRM. I have therefore prepared the attached email for your review, seeking email address confirmation.

Scope
The original scope is as follows:

“…”

I have identified the following documents that satisfy the scope of the request:

From the NDIS file of Participant Name (NDIS Ref: XXX XXX XXX):
<table>
<tr><th>Inbound folder</th><th>Documents</th><th>Comments</th></tr>
<tr><td>E.g. ARF & EOD</td><td>GP Letter
OT report</td><td>All documents from this folder in scope</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>
<table>
<tr><th>Outbound folder</th><th>Documents</th><th>Comments</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>
Planning documents
• Plan 1234569, dated xx.xx.xxxx
Other documents
</td></tr>
</table>

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

	• Description **Volume** I have identified X documents that satisfies the scope of the request: • Approx. xx pages **Next steps** [*DM Name*], can you please consider this preliminary advice and issue an instruction on how to proceed. Kind regards [*Your Name*] Freedom of Information Officer Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI Branch Government Division **National Disability Insurance Agency**

6. Delegate: Providing matter instruction to the AO

Upon receiving an AO Assessment, the DM must provide instructions on next steps within **48 hours** of receiving the AO Assessment. Please 'Reply All' when issuing instructions to the AO to ensure a trail is kept. As the AO is unable to action matter further without receiving instructions, it is imperative that timelines are met.

Please open up a new PIA Processing Checklist, save it onto matter folder and action as you process request.

The DM Instruction must be sent to the AO and have yourself copied in for record keeping.

If POI/Authority requirements have not been met, the AO should have provided a draft email seeking such for you to review, attached to their AO Assessment.

Please make your own assessment whether POI/Authority and Consent requirements have been met, if the email address provided matches CRM records, and the volume of the scope of request. Please review the draft email seeking this information and instruct that it be sent with a Privacy Check (PC) if required.

Ensure you open and check individual document folders in CRM, in order to determine whether a document found within folders falls in scope of the request and instruct accordingly.

If, as the DM, you are concerned that disclosure to the participant might be detrimental to the participant's health or well-being, then you may consider declining to process the request under PIA and referring the applicant to FOI.

Email templates found at PIA Email Templates or refer to the below:

Subject	DELEGATE INSTRUCTION: PIA 21/22-XXX (XXXX) DUE: Day Month Year
Body	**PIA 21/22-**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

NDIS Ref:
DUE Date:

Dear [*AO Name*]

Thanks for your assessment.

Proof of Identity
I agree / don't agree the applicant has provided sufficient POI. Thank you for drafting this email for my review. Please send the attached email seeking POI (with changes/without changes) with a PC and save correspondence onto SharePoint.

Consent / Authorisation
I agree / don't agree the applicant has sufficient authority to receive information. Thank you for drafting this email for my review. Please send the attached email seeking authority (with changes/without changes) with a PC and save correspondence onto SharePoint.

Email address match/mismatch
I am/am not satisfied that the email address provided matches CRM. Thank you for drafting this email for my review. Please send the attached email seeking email confirmation (with changes/without changes) with a PC and save correspondence onto SharePoint.

Scope
I agree / don't agree we should provide the applicant with documents outlined in your assessment.

- Comment here or include comments in AO assessment email in red

Next Steps
Can you please have the matter prepared for my review by Day Month Year.

Thank you.

[*Delegate Name*]
Delegate – Participant Information Access **(PIA)**
Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI
Government Division
National Disability Insurance Agency
E:

7. AO: Preparing document bundle for Delegate review

After receiving instructions, ensure you send any external correspondence seeking further information (POI/Authority/Email confirmation) from the applicant as soon as practicable, however no later than one business day and save any such correspondence in the **'2. Correspondence with Applicant'** folder in the SharePoint's matter folder.

Once the above actions have been completed (as required), you may start bundling the documents for delegate review. Please refer to the PIA Processing Checklist and the Adobe Acrobat DC Training Guide for detailed instructions.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

A summary of this has been set out below:

1. The relevant extracted documents will be combined and provided to the DM (with appropriate deletions/edits, where required).
2. The PIA reference number will be added to the header and page numbers added to the footer and security markings to both.
3. The AO will then send the following to the DM for review:

- the request
- the bundle of documents, and
- draft covering email to applicant.

Once documents have been processed for delegate review, please hit 'Reply All' to ensure a trail is kept, noting email templates are found at PIA Email Templates or refer to the below:

<table>
<tr><td>Subject</td><td>FOR DELEGATE REVIEW: PIA 20/21-XXXX (XXXX) - DUE: Day Month Year</td></tr>
<tr><td>Body</td><td>
PIA 21/22-XXXX (XXXXX)
DUE Date: Day Month Year

Dear [Delegate Name]

Please find attached my covering email and documents for release in relation to this matter.

Scope
A request was made seeking the following documents under PIA:

"…"

Contents of Release
<table>
<tr><td>Covering Email</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Addressed to: Applicant's Name
• Email address: applicant@email</td></tr>
<tr><td>Documents</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. List Documents and any sensitivities identified
2.</td></tr>
</table>
AO Considerations:
- I have reviewed and can confirm the applicant has provided sufficient POI
- I have reviewed and can confirm the applicant has sufficient authority to receive the documents
  ▪ Confirmed – eg Authorised Rep
- I have reviewed and can confirm the documents provided satisfy the scope of the request.
- I have reviewed and can confirm the documents do not contain any sensitivities

Next Steps:
Can you please review the attached email and documents and instruct release by: Day Month Year.
</td></tr>
</table>

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Thank you.

[*Your Name*]

Freedom of Information Officer
Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI Branch
Government Division
National Disability Insurance Agency

7.1. Document sensitivities

Documents containing sensitive information, get marked up for redaction before being sent to the DM for review.

Sensitivities include:

Access to the NDIS		**Common document sensitivities**
Access request form	Copy of access request form.	• NIL. However please carefully review, to ensure document can be released to the participant
Access decision letter	Copy of access decision letter.	• NIL, as participant would have access already
Determine the access decision	CRM – Pathway Tab – Screenshot/s of access decision	• Staff names
NDIS plan*		**Document sensitivities**
Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan	Information collected at a planning meeting and includes participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation.	• Page 1 of Subsection 3.3 – *Record additional streaming factors* – **please remove page** • Page 2 of Subsection 3.3 – *Re-streaming justification* – **please mark up for redaction if there is a justification** • Subsection 3.11 – *'Draft Plan'* – **please remove pages** • Please remove title *'Subsection 3.12'* from Subsection 3.12 Final Plan
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan	Planner justifications include the draft and final NDIS plan.	• Staff names and log on IDs
Current NDIS plan	Copy of letter outlining current NDIS plan.	• NIL, as participant would have access already

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

NDIS plan review		Document sensitivities
Outcome of NDIS plan review	Copy of outcome of plan review letter.	• NIL, as participant would have access already
Medical and other documents		**Document sensitivities**
Evidence of disability	Copies of any evidence of disability (EOD).	• NIL. However, please carefully review to ensure document can be released to the participant
Medical documents / assessment reports	Copies of medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions.	• NIL. However, please carefully review to ensure document can be released to the participant, without issues
NDIS plan*		**Document sensitivities**
Supporting evidence form	Copy of supporting evidence form.	• NIL. However, please carefully review to ensure document can be released to the participant, without issues
Recognised disabilities tab	Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities in CRM.	• Staff names
Roster of care	Copy of Roster of Care (ROC).	• Other residents' personal information (please delete from bundle)
Home and Living Supports decision	Copy of Home and Living Supports decision.	• Staff names and internal email address
Payment summary	Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports.	• NIL

8. Delegate: Reviewing documents for Release

The DM will review the request and the participant's CRM file to ensure the correct documents have been extracted and are appropriate for release through the PIA.

The DM must be satisfied that:

- the applicant is requesting their own information or the applicant has sufficient authority to receive the information on the participant's behalf
- the documents do not contain personal information about a third party, and
- the documents have been processed as per our PIA AO Checklist and contain all relevant information, including headers and footers.

If the above are satisfactory, the DM will issue instruction for the release of documents to the applicant.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Please hit 'Reply All' to ensure trail is kept for record keeping, email templates are found PIA Email Templates or refer to the below:

Subject	DELEGATE REVIEW COMPLETE: PIA 20/21-XXXX (XXXX) - DUE: Day Month Year
Body	Hi *[AO Name]* Thank you for preparing this PIA Matter for release. **Contents for Release:** **Covering Email** • **Addressed to:** Applicant ✓ • **Email:** Applicant email ✓ • **Client NDIA number and address confirmed:** ✓ **Document** **Documents – NO SENSITIVITIES INAPPROPRIATE FOR RELEASE** ✓ ***Or address here any changes you have made in detail*** **Delegate Approval:** - I am satisfied that the applicant has provided sufficient POI ✓ - I am satisfied the applicant has sufficient authority to receive the documents ✓ - I am satisfied the documents provided satisfy the scope of the request. ✓ - I am satisfied the documents do not contain any sensitive information inappropriate for release ✓ *I [Delegate Name], authorise this release of information under section 60(2)(b)(iii) of the NDIS Act 2013 (Cth).* **Next Steps:** Can I please ask that you: 1. **Remove any protective markings** 2. Sanitise documents for release and apply any redactions 3. Prepare the release email with docs attached (split into 9MB bundles where appropriate) 4. Release the documents to applicant with PC 5. Update LEX and the PIA database to reflect my decision 6. Close the Interaction Record on CRM 7. Save the final documents, emails, etc, in the shared drive 8. **Email me** confirming that you have: a. Sent decision b. Who PC'd decision c. Saved all docs to shared drive

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

	d. Updated LEX / Database Thank you. ***[Delegate Name]*** Delegate – Participant Information Access **(PIA)** Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI Government Division **National Disability Insurance Agency** **E:** Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

9. AO: Release of Documents & Closing off Matter

Once the DMe is satisfied and has authorised the release of the documents, the AO will:

- make any final edits/deletions and remove security markings and hidden information (please refer to Adobe Acrobat DC Training Guide for detailed instructions)
- sanitize document bundle and split into 9MB files, where necessary
- release the documents to the applicant ensuring that a privacy check has been completed by another member of the team, and
- close matter on all relevant platforms, by updating the PIA Database, closing matter off on LEX and closing the CRM interaction that the Registration Team would have added to the participant's file, please send an email to the delegate confirming the above have been completed.

Email templates found at PIA Email Templates or refer to the below:

Subject	Subject: PIA 21/22-XXXX – Release of Information
Body	Our reference: Dear Applicant Thank you for your request for information. We are sorry that it has taken us longer than expected to provide you with information, due to higher than normal demand we are currently experiencing some delays. We appreciate your patience and understanding. You have requested access to: *"Scope verbatim"* We have verified your identity and we are satisfied that you are authorised to receive the information you have requested. Accordingly, the information you have requested is attached. Due to the size of the documents they have been split across XX emails, this being **Part 1 of x**. This information is being released in accordance with the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth).*

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Please let me know if you would like the documents in a different format.

Kind regards

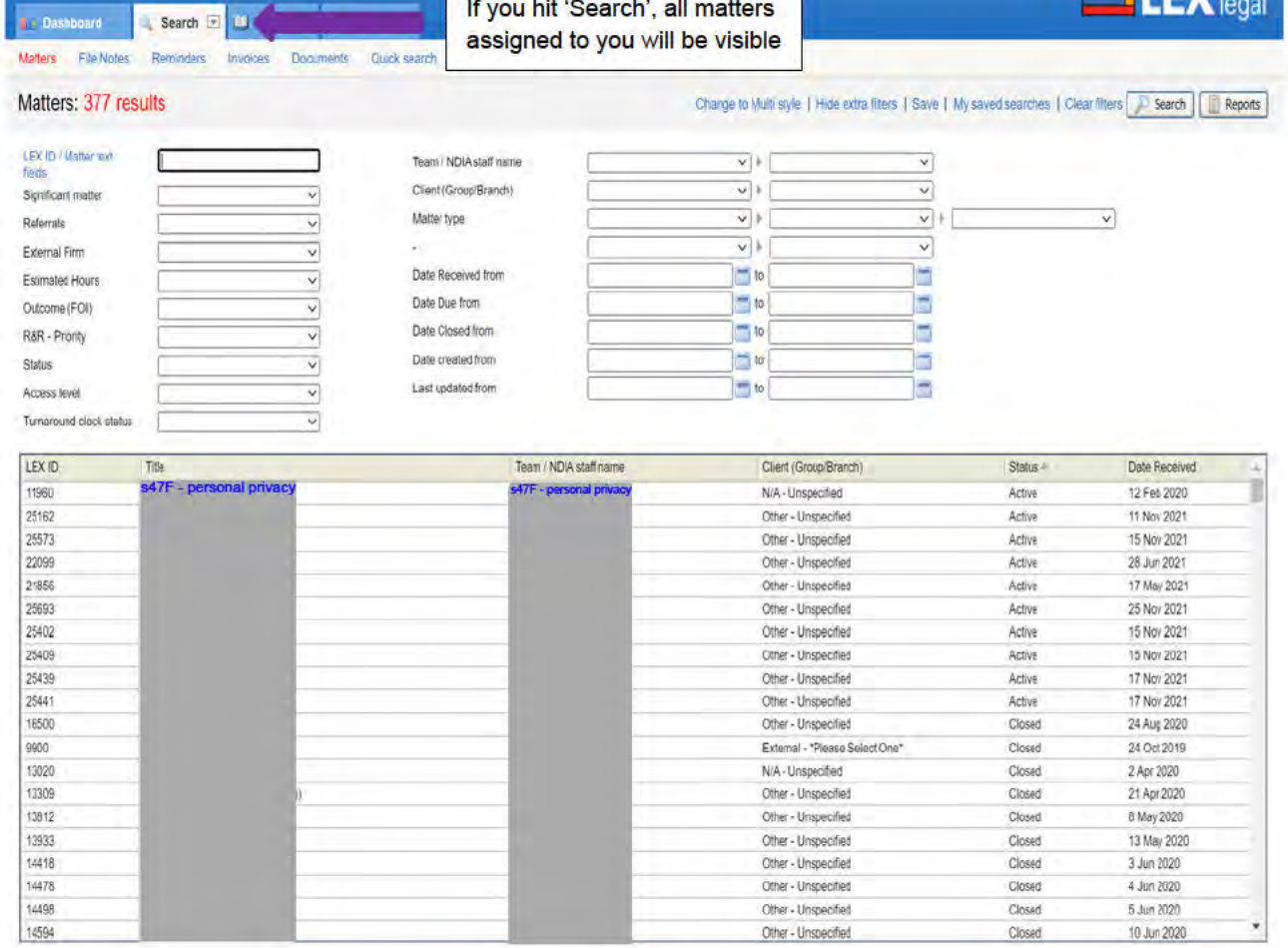
[DM First Name]
Delegate – Participant Information Access **(PIA)**
Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI
Government Division
National Disability Insurance Agency
Email: Information.Access@ndis.gov.au

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

9.1. AO: Closing off Matter on LEX

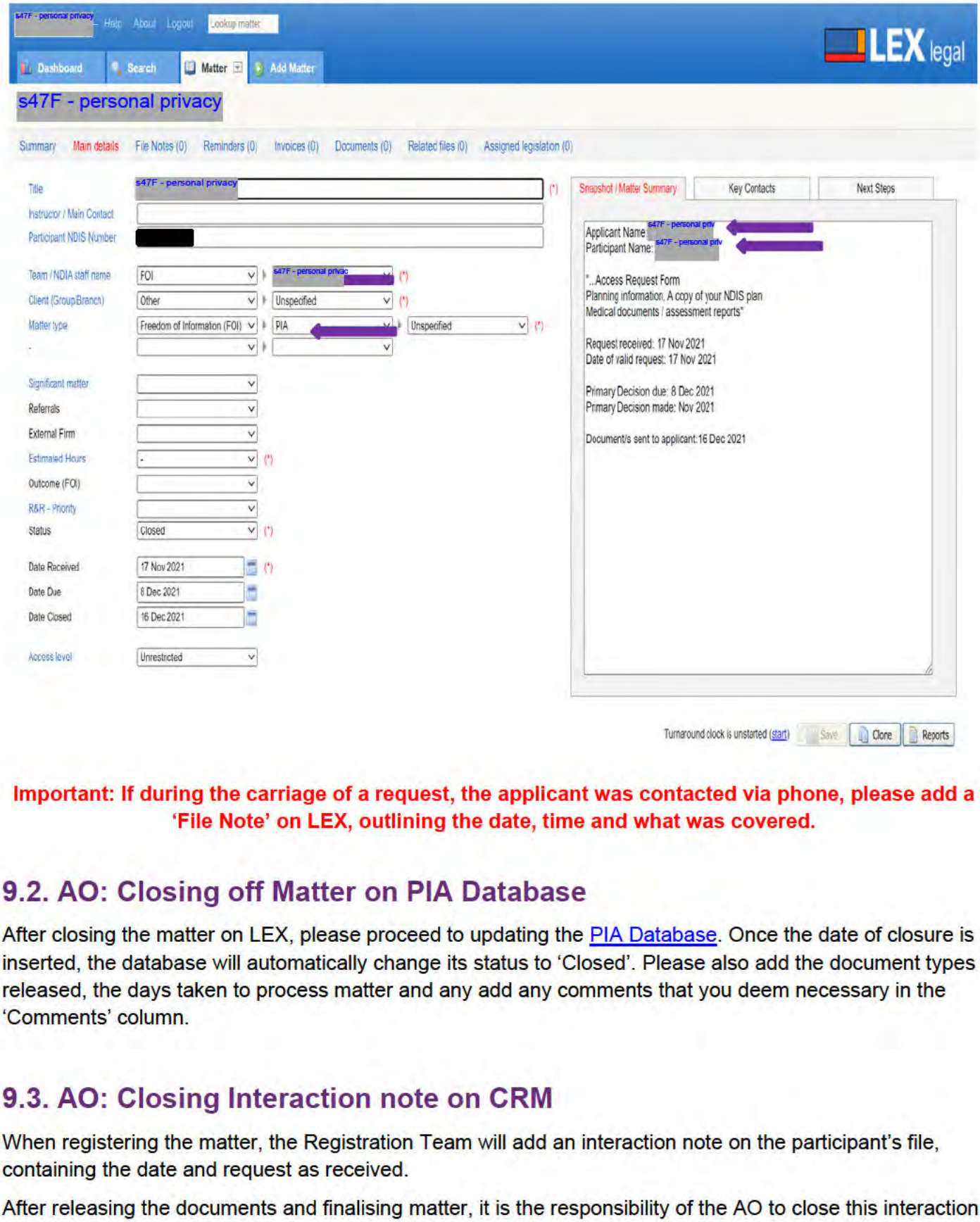
Part of closing a matter off on relevant platforms, includes closing it off on LEX. As per below, if you click on 'Search', all matters allocated to you as the AO will be visible for review.

Once found, please click on the matter you wish to close.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

When the matter is found, please click on 'Main Details', as seen below and note what needs to be changed and updated, as per the arrows:



Important: If during the carriage of a request, the applicant was contacted via phone, please add a 'File Note' on LEX, outlining the date, time and what was covered.

9.2. AO: Closing off Matter on PIA Database

After closing the matter on LEX, please proceed to updating the PIA Database. Once the date of closure is inserted, the database will automatically change its status to 'Closed'. Please also add the document types released, the days taken to process matter and any add any comments that you deem necessary in the 'Comments' column.

9.3. AO: Closing Interaction note on CRM

When registering the matter, the Registration Team will add an interaction note on the participant's file, containing the date and request as received.

After releasing the documents and finalising matter, it is the responsibility of the AO to close this interaction and note the documents released.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Please include the following word at the top of the interaction recorded:

Freedom of Information (FOI) alert – A request for documents has been finalised by the FOI Team on insert Date. For more information, please contact: foi@ndis.gov.au

Documents released under the NDIS Act:

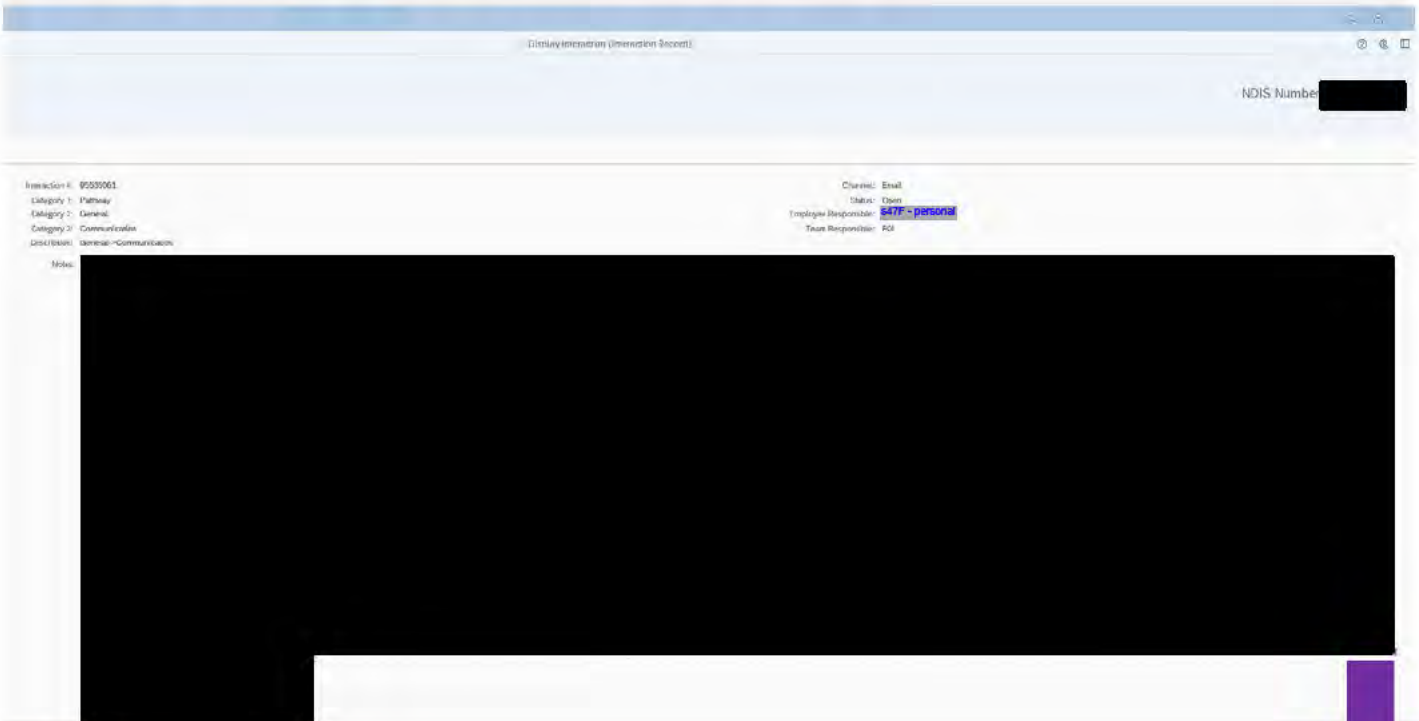
ARF

EOD

Pre-planning and planning information

Plan approval letter

To do this, click 'Edit' on the bottom right hand corner of the screen:



9.4. AO: Advising Delegate that matter has been closed on all platforms

Please 'Reply All' to the Delegate Review Complete email received by the DM, advising that you have completed all required actions and closed matters on all platforms.

Subject	MATTER CLOSED ON ALL PLATFORMS: PIA 21/22-XXXX
Body	Hi [*DM name*] Please be advised this matter has been released and the following complete: Removed any protective markings 1. Sanitised documents for release and applied redactions 2. Released the documents with a PC by XXXX 3. Updated LEX and the PIA database to reflect decision

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

	4. Closed the Interaction Record on CRM 5. Saved the final documents, internal and external emails, in SharePoint Thank you. [*Your Name*] Freedom of Information Officer Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI Branch Government Division **National Disability Insurance Agency** Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

10. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are all Outbound correspondence found in Outbound Documents?
A. No, correspondence regarding access is sometimes found in Inbound documents, too.

Q. Do I need to inspect every Inbound folder and every document within each folder, even if they are not titled anything related to the scope of my request?
A. Yes, to ensure all documents falling in scope of request will be captured when processing.

Q. I can't find the participant's ARF or EOD on the file. Where is it and how do I process this request?
A. Sometimes, you will find that your participant does not have an access request form (ARF) or Evidence of Disability (EOD) form on their file. This is usually because they have entered the NDIS as a 'defined participant'. A 'defined participant' means that the participant was receiving supports from a different Commonwealth, state or territory funded program before the NDIS was implemented. Defined programs accepted by the NDIS will have similar access requirements to the NDIS. You can read more about defined programs here at Transitioning to the NDIS | NDIS and List C – Defined Programs | NDIS.

If you find that your participant doesn't have an ARF but you aren't sure if they are a defined participant, you can check in two main areas of CRM – the 'Internal Use' tab, or the 'Finalise and Approve' tab in the pathway.

Q. Why do people ask for a full file request for a compensation claim?
A. The NDIS is an insurance scheme that supports those Australians (and/or appropriate visa holders) who have a disability that has resulted in a substantially reduced capacity. The NDIA does not assess how these disabilities and diagnoses occur, but takes a no fault approach to the provision of supports. This means, it doesn't matter how the participant got their disability (genetics, medical episode, unknown reason, traumatic injury, etc.) we provide funding for support.

Some of our participants will have access to the NDIS due to an injury or medical episode such as a car accident, medical negligence, domestic violence, etc. These participants may also seek compensation due to these diagnoses. Compensation is a lump sum or periodic payment for a personal injury that is at least in part for the cost of supports the NDIS may fund. Compensation Recoveries team has been established to account for compensation to avoid the NDIS duplicating funding of the types of supports provided for in compensation payments. To assist our Compensation Recoveries team identify what funds the NDIS is

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

responsible for, and what funds the compensation amount is responsible for, we provide participant files to lawyers (with consent) and/or participants for negotiation.

This is why all of the file is provided under a 'full file request'. You can read more about Compensation and the NDIS here: Compensation Recoveries (ndia.gov.au)

Q: Do I need to include quotes in my document bundle?
A: This depends on the request itself. Usually when a participant and or authorised representative requests medical assessments and reports, we would include the quotes due to the intent of the request. This way, the participant has the full report and accompanying quote to be best informed if they are unhappy with a funding decision.

We would also provide quotes under the 'full file request' for compensation as the quotes relate directly to the funding provided by the NDIS.

Q: How do I know which documents to number in Adobe? Some of the files have many documents within the one file. Do I number all of them individually or just number the overall file?
A: You only need to number the documents as you save them. If there is an ARF with 4 supporting reports all in the one file, just name the one file. You don't need to name all of the additional reports in that file.

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
v.1	47F - personal privacy	Initial drafting	Current	11/02/2022
v.2	47F - personal privacy	Adding induction information	Historic	02/03/2022

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

National Disability Insurance Agency

Freedom of Information & Privacy

Governance, Legal & Compensation

Administrative Access Scheme

Introduction & Planning

November 2019 - V1.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Administrative Access Scheme

1. **Introduction (pg. 2)**
    a. Summary
    b. Initiative/ Issues

2. **Background to Administrative Access Scheme (pg. 3)**
    a. What is an administrative access scheme?
    b. Is administrative access permitted by the FOI Act?
    c. Is administrative access permitted by the privacy Act?
    d. What is the difference between FOI requests and administrative access?
    e. Types of documents appropriate for release under admin access?
    f. Considerations for administrative access team

3. **DHS Case Study (pg. 9)**
    a. Process
        i. Triage
        ii. Processing
        iii. Delegate review and release

4. **NDIA Information Release Team (pg. 11)**
    a. NDIA documents available under admin access
    b. Implementation strategy
    c. Team structure
    d. Process
    e. Release email template

5. **Area for further consideration (pg. 14)**
    a. Website
    b. Standardised form
    c. Privacy notice
    d. Case management system
    e. Record keeping
    f. Consent
    g. FOI Transfer to admin access team
    h. Complaint handling
    i. Training Material
        i. Task cards
        ii. Process
        iii. Induction
    j. Promotion of admin access scheme
        i. Internal
        ii. External
    k. Matter Reference

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

1. Introduction

a. Summary

Following an increase in the number of FOI requests received by the Freedom of Information Team, and the predicted growth of the team, the Freedom of Information & Privacy team are looking to expand its functions by developing an administrate access team, the purpose of which is to reduce the pressure on the FOI/ Privacy teams, and to provide simpler and quicker means of access to participants seeking access to documents held by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

b. Initiative/ issue

Initiative/issue	Relevant dates
Increase in FOI requests • **Issue:** the number of FOI requests is rapidly increasing, largely from participants wanting access to their own personal information (expected to reach 2,000 this FY). • **Risk:** Negative feedback from participants. • **Resolution:** Review of NDIA policy and implementation of administrative access scheme to provide participants with access to information outside of FOI. • **Status:** Recruitment for admin release team finalised – review and policy and drafting of admin release scheme about to commence.	• Review of policy and drafting of admin release scheme due end **December 2019**. • Implementation to commence before **March 2020**.

2. Background to Administrative Access Scheme

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

a. What is an Administrative Access Scheme?

Administrative access means release of government information in response to a specific request.

The Information Commissioner encourages agencies to consider establishing administrative access arrangements that coexist but operate independently to the FOI Act, to provide an easier and less formal means for individuals to make information access requests (including requests to correct personal information).

This may be as informal and flexible as providing information or documents when requested by a member of the public, or collating and releasing data or statistics following a specific request. Alternatively, an agency may choose to establish and notify on its website an administrative access arrangement that is to operate alongside the FOI Act, either generally or for specific categories of information or documents.

Administrative access arrangements should operate alongside FOI Act processes. Importantly, there should be an efficient process for referral of requests to the formal FOI process where FOI is more appropriate or where the requester would prefer to apply under the FOI Act.

An administrative access arrangement should be tailored to the size of an agency, its work, the requests it typically receives for information or documents, and its regular procedures for public contact and access.

Administrative release of an individual's own personal information must also comply with the minimum requirements set out in Australian Privacy Principle (APP) 12 of the Privacy Act even if the agency has separately formalised a process for applying for access and correction under the Privacy Act.

b. Is Administrative access permitted by the FOI Act?

The FOI Act does not restrict the circumstances in which government information can be released. Section 3A(2) states that it is not the intention of the Parliament in enacting the FOI Act to limit the power of agencies to publish information or give access to documents, or to prevent or discourage agencies from doing so. An agency may disclose information without a formal FOI request, including information which would be exempt under the Act.

It is open to an agency, after receiving an FOI request, to discuss with the applicant the option of providing access on an administrative basis. This may benefit the applicant by providing information as well as documents, more quickly and without charge.

In its discussions with the applicant, the agency should inform the applicant about the key differences between processing a request under the FOI Act and providing access through administrative access arrangements, including the fact that it is not open to the applicant to seek merits review of a decision to refuse access to information or documents under an administrative access arrangement except in relation to the individual's own personal information.

The agency will also need to seek the applicant's agreement to withdraw the FOI request if the applicant is satisfied with the administrative release option.

c. Is administrative access permitted by the Privacy Act?

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

The APPs in the Privacy Act set out standards, rights and obligations in relation to the collection, handling, holding, accessing and correcting of an individual's own personal information. APP 12 provides that an agency must, on request, give an individual access to the personal information it holds about the individual, subject to some exceptions.

This can be done on an administrative basis, as long as the minimum access requirements set out in APP 12 are met. These include that an agency must respond to the request within 30 days, give access free of charge and, if practicable, in the manner requested by the individual, and explain in writing any refusal to provide access.

APP 13, which deals with correction of incorrect personal information, is similar in approach. An agency can handle an individual's request to correct personal information about them on an administrative basis, as long as the minimum procedural requirements set out in APP 13 are met.

For detailed information about the APPs, see the Information Commissioner's APP Guidelines. A key principle stated in Part 12 of the APP Guidelines is that agencies should endeavour to provide access to an individual's own personal information in a manner that is as prompt, uncomplicated and as inexpensively as possible.

d. What is the difference between FOI requests and Administrative Access?

FOI request	Administrative access
A request for access to documents made under the FOI Act must meet certain requirements (for example, it must be in writing).	A request to an agency for information or documents may not need to meet any specific requirements, though an agency may choose to establish a particular process that involves (for example) the applicant filling out a request form or entering information in an online portal. If the request is for the individual's own personal information, agencies should be mindful of the requirements of APP12 which sets out minimum access requirements that must be met when an agency receives a request from an individual for access to their personal information.
A request must be acknowledged within 14 days and a decision made in 30 days or a longer period if particular circumstances apply, e.g. third party consultation.	The Information Commissioner recommends that requests for information and documents that are handled under administrative arrangements be processed within 30 days. If this cannot be done, and the request could alternately be made as an FOI request, the applicant should be advised of this option. However, it is open to the applicant and the agency or minister to agree to a longer period to provide administrative access to documents as long as the

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

	applicant is made aware of their right to make a request under the FOI Act where relevant timeframes apply. Under s 15A of the FOI Act, if a request for access to personnel records under an administrative arrangement is not processed within 30 days, the applicant may apply under the FOI Act for access to their personnel records. Note however, that under the Privacy Act, an agency must respond to a request by an individual for their own personal information within 30 days.
A request for access to documents under the FOI Act is to existing documents. An agency is not strictly required under the FOI Act to create a new document to satisfy a request.	Administrative access requests can be answered in different ways, by discussion between the applicant and the agency. For example, the agency may offer to provide an oral explanation of a decision or action; create a new document rather than provide a redacted version of existing documents; or assemble data or statistics for the applicant.
An agency must provide a statement of reasons explaining a decision to refuse an FOI request and the agency's findings on any material questions of fact. It would also be appropriate for a schedule of exempt documents to be provided to the applicant.	Agencies are not obliged to provide a statement of reasons for a decision not to release information administratively (unless the information is the applicant's own personal information, in which case the agency is obliged under APP 12 to give a written notice of refusal). It is good administrative practice to explain why a request has been refused, and the applicant should be advised of their right to make an FOI request for agency documents.
Applicants have review rights. An applicant may apply for either an internal review or Information Commissioner review of an access refusal decision made under the FOI Act.	There is no right to merit review of a decision to refuse access to information or documents under an administrative access arrangement. Complaint options that may be open to the applicant include: complaining under the agency's standard complaint handling processes; complaining to the Ombudsman about how the request was handled; or, if the person requested access to their own personal information, making a privacy complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).
An agency must publish information released in response to FOI requests in a disclosure log on its	Agencies are not obliged to publish information they release administratively. However, agencies should adopt a proactive publication stance. If there is no legal need to protect the information it should be open to public access.

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

website (subject to certain exceptions).	
An agency cannot place any conditions or restrictions on an applicant's use or further publication of the document (although the applicant does not gain protection from ss 90-92 of the FOI Act, discussed below).	Administrative access should not be provided on less favourable terms than FOI access (where that would be available). That is not to say that agencies cannot make special access arrangements for particular purposes: for example, it is common to impose a temporary embargo on public reporting of government announcements or news releases; and researchers are sometimes given conditional access to confidential or privileged information.

e. Types of Documents Appropriate for Release via Admin Access

The types of information and documents that may be appropriate for administrative access will depend on the nature of the information and the functions and activities of the agency. Some types of information that may suit release under administrative access arrangements include:

- documents containing the personal information of the applicant (*for example, correspondence to the applicant, applications made by the applicant, agency assessment of those applications, documents supplied by the applicant and records of contact with the applicant*)
- documents containing the personal information of an applicant who is a current or former employee of the agency (for example, performance appraisals, remuneration information, group certificates, workplace health and safety assessments, incident reports involving the employee may be released through administrative access arrangements, which can be considered as 'an established procedure in an agency' for the purposes of s 15A(2) of the FOI Act)
- statistics or data relating to the agency's key functions and activities, excluding data containing personal information and sensitive unit level data about individuals (for more information on publishing sensitive unit record level data, refer to the OAIC's publication De-identification and the Privacy Act)
- information available on the agency's website that the applicant would like to access in a different format (for example, where the document is an audio recording and the applicant wishes to receive the document as a transcript)
- documents that would be released in full if the request were made under the FOI Act
- Information that can be provided more simply and efficiently than through an FOI request, such as information from documents that would be heavily redacted if released under the FOI Act, and information about the process followed or issues considered in reaching or preparing for a particular decision. In such circumstances, a summary could be provided
- Information that may promote the principles of open government.

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

f. Considerations for Administrative access Team

- **Administrative access arrangements prominent on website**

Are the details of the administrative access arrangements set out on our agency's website? (Including on the FOI or Access to Information page).

- **Types of information available through administrative access**

Have we clearly explained on the website what sorts of information or documents are available on an administrative basis and what sorts of documents should be pursued through the standard FOI request process.

- **Arrangement for requesting documents**

Have we explained the arrangement for requesting information or documents through administrative access (where requests should be sent, what contact details should be given, how quickly the person can expect a response, the likely form access will be given in).

- **Interaction with the FOI Act**

Have we clearly explained how the administrative access arrangements interact with the FOI Act (including when an applicant may be directed to make a formal FOI access request). It should also be made clear to the public that they may go straight to the FOI process if they prefer.

- **Administrative access to an individual's own personal information complies with the Privacy Act**

If the administrative access arrangements cover access to or correction of an individual's own personal information in your agency, we have to ensure that the arrangement complies with the minimum requirements of the APP 12 and 13 in the Privacy Act.

- **Proof of identity (POI)**

Do we have proof of identity requirements for requests for an individual's own personal information or where a third party has a legal right to access an individual's personal information?

- **Thirty day turnaround**

Do our processes ensure that requests are acknowledged promptly and resolved in 30 days.

For non-personal information requests likely to take longer than 30 days, applicants are made aware at the time of the request of their right to make a request under the FOI Act, advised of the rights accruing under an FOI request and agreement sought to continue as an administrative request.

For requests for an individual's own personal information that are likely to take longer than 30 days, applicants are made aware at the time of making the request of their right to make a request under either the FOI Act or the Privacy Act, advised of the rights accruing under each Act and that continuing under administrative access will be taken to be a Privacy Act request.

- **Complaint handling**

Have we clearly explained how applicants can complain about how you handled their request under administrative access arrangements (including to the Commonwealth Ombudsman or, for requests for an individual's own personal information, to the OAIC generally after first complaining to the agency).

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

- **Record keeping**

Standard agency record keeping processes apply to documents released in response to an administrative access request (and statistics are kept, if appropriate).

- **Review**

Will we carry out regular reviews to ensure that administrative access is operating effectively and to identify any information that is routinely requested and could be published on your IPS under s 8(4).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

3. "Case Study" – Department of Human Services - Information Release

In 2016, the Department of Human Services formed an Information Release team, to release Medicare claims information (MPH), Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme claims (PBS) documents via an Admin Access scheme, as well as Centrelink payment details.

This team was split into 2 streams, Medicare (managing MPH and PBS claims) and Centrelink (releasing payment summaries etc.).

Initially the backlog sat at around 160,000 requests, however the info release team (with a team of approx. 50-120 labour hire contractors) was able to work through this backlog in less than 12 months, providing access to documents held by the department to Centrelink and Medicare customers.

a. Info Release Process

i. Triage:

As the Info Release team grew and developed, so did its processes. Initially, the team worded out of a centralised inbox, with requests coming in, and being taken by each action officer. However a triage team was eventually established to reduce time on each matter, and to bring some consistency in registration.

Note: *This is a structure that I would recommend for the Information team based on our teams the size and growth over the past 12 months.*

DHS created a request form, which would be attached to an incoming email from the customer or a third party representing the customer.

When a new request was be receive by the department, POI (Proof of Identity) s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies would be confirmed, the registration officer would then review and confirming all details completed on the form were filed in correctly. The matter was then registered in a computer system called s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies (run through SharePoint) with the original request attached to the s47E(d) - c record, and then sent to an Allocations Officer.

An allocation officer (FOI/ Privacy co-ordinator's for our purpose) would then divide the work between the Medicare and Centrelink teams, depending on the information requested, requests on hand and the officer's experience.

A standard allocation was approximately 30 matters a day, with 15 for part time staff.

ii. Processing

The Info Release Officer would take carriage of a matter, complete a secondary s47E(d) - certain check through CDMS (Customer Directory Management System - DHS), and further confirm all details on the form corresponded with the information contained within CDMS. The screen would be saved and attached to the s47E(d) - c record to allow the delegate a quicker review time.

The officer would then input the required information into SAS (IT system) which would generate a report containing, for example, s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies

A matter could be finalised within about 8-15 mins depending on IT system speeds. High performing staff could action up to 50 requests per day, however the faster an officer worked, the higher the likelihood of errors occurring, the kick back effect meant a potential 4-10 day delay.

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

iii. Delegate review and release:

DHS's delegation allowed for permanent APS6 staff or higher to release documents. The delegate would then conduct a final POI check, confirming all details requested matched the report and then either send the documents to the customer or return to an AO for further action.

The Information Release team further had a small team referred to as the "FOI transfer", in which a new request would be received by DHS FOI team, transferred to the information release team and then actioned internally. Confirmation was then sent to the FOI team and the matter was sent.

The rationale behind this was that some documentation being requested would exceed the 30 day FOI statutory timeframe, and as such, they used the Information Release team to divert these matters, to be action by the Info Release team, noting that (with the applicants consent) more than 30+ days could be taken to action the matter.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

4. NDIA Information Release Team

a. Background to team

Around September 2018, the Freedom of Information team was taken over by Director s47F - personal privacy. This brought about the recruitment of a small team that was established (separate to the Information Law team) to process FOI matters.

Around Jan 2019, the FOI team formally broke away from the Information Law team, allowing the FOI team to establish their own processes, procedures and practices.

Over the past 12 months, the FOI team has grown from a team of 5 to an approximately 35 staff, with an additional 10 or so staff working with the Privacy team in order to accommodate the ever increasing number of requests being received by the Agency.

Due to FOI being a slow and at times technical process, the establishment of an administrative access team will look to ease the burden on the FOI and Privacy teams, and provide Participants and their families an alternate option to seeking access to documents held by the Agency.

b. NDIA documents available under admin access

There are a number of documents that can be released administratively as opposed to the involved FOI Process. The following documents can be made available under an Admin Access Scheme:

Outbound Documents: Documents addressed to and sent to the Applicant

- Access Documents
  - RE: your Move to the NDIS
  - RE: Your Acces to the NDIS Participant Portal
  - Access Request – Supporting Evidence Form
  - Your NDIS Access Request has been successful
  - Your NDIS Plan has been approved
  - Updated bank account details
  - Medical docs (only attached to ARF sent by applicant)
  - Access not met
- All NDIS Plans
- S100/48 review request letters

Inbound Documents: Documents provided by the applicant to the Agency

- Email chains between NDIS and *Applicant*
- PEDICAT's

CRM:

- Contacts (possible s47F)
- Disabilities
- Details (possible s47F's)
- Budget – if data can be confirmed to be correct (unlikely)

Data: Records held by the Agency that do not contain sensitivities

- Transcripts of Phone calls

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

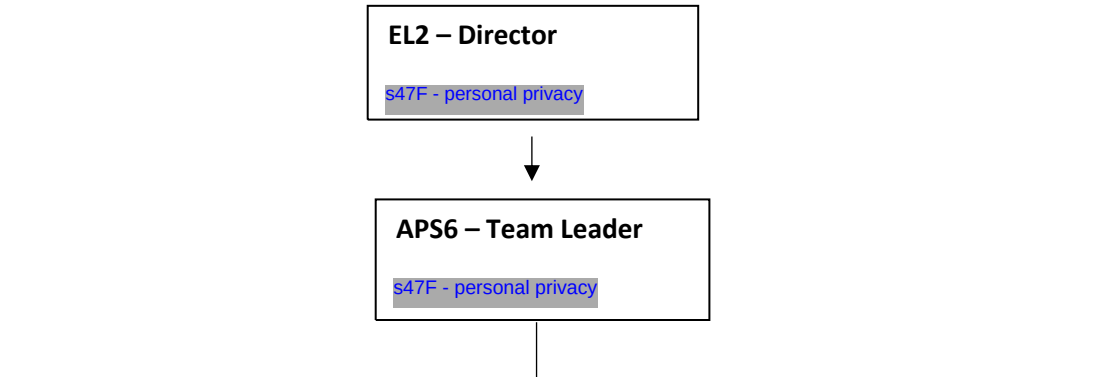
c. Implementation strategy

Implementation Strategy:

Delegation: who can release information?

- In line with FOI delegation:
  - **SES Band 1 – GM**
  - **EL2 – Director**
  - **APS6 - Team Leader**

d. Team structure



Note: PIA can act as an introduction to Information Law. We can look to bring new staff into the Agency as PIA AO's, allowing time to develop an understanding of consent, authority, the FOI act, the Agency, CRM etc. This introduction would further provide a good talent pool which could be used to recruit for the FOI Team.

e. Process

Registration:

Request received by centralised inbox – s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies

- POI / Authority/ Consent
- Registration
- Allocation

Processing:

Further POI check conducted

Documents pulled from CRM

- **Inbound**

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

- **Outbound**
- **Screenshots of CRM**
    - **Consult re: transcripts**

Documents PDF'd – Attached to an Email and sent to delegate for review.

f. Release email template

Release of Documents:

Our Ref: AAS-0001

Your Ref: xxx/xxx/xx

Dear *Participant/ Guardian/ third party*

Please find **attached** documents in relation to your request released in accordance with section 60(2)(iii) of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth).

Please let me know if you would like these documents in an alternative format.

Kind regards,

Information Release Officer
Legal Services Branch
Governance, Legal & Compensation
National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

5. Areas for Further Consideration

a. Website

Consultation with Media/IT team regarding creation of Admin Access Scheme webpage for front facing NDIS page.

Potentially looking at putting a link on the homepage to Admin Access

Intention of which is to try and push people seeking simple docs to PIA, hopefully diverting from FOI.

- Further noting that significant requests should go through FOI
- Look to link both pages
- Providing info regarding which docs can be sought under AAS.

b. Standardised form

Standard form containing check boxes for available docs. This could be in either or both hard copy or online. The DHS form further contains privacy notices, and consent sections.

c. Privacy notice

"Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988, and is collected by the NDIA for the assessment and administration of supports. This information is required to process your application or claim. Your information may be used by the department or given to other parties for: the purpose of research, or investigation, or where you have agreed, or where it is reviewed or authorised by law.

You can get more information about the way in which the NDIA will manage your personal information, including our privacy policy at www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/policies/privacy or by requesting a copy from the Agency. "

***NOTE:** This privacy notice was taken from the standard DHS wording*

d. Case management system

Assist in allocation

Attachments can be saved to record

Increased reporting capacity

Enquire about gaining access to IRCS (held by DHS – share network?)

e. Record keeping

Creation of an IR database/ allocation system

Noting there is no legal requirement to record data

Name – TP – ref – IRO – IN – Due – Out – Finalised

Seek assistance from legal reporting manager

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

f. Consent

The DHS form includes consent sections, which could be integrated during actioning of the matter. A similar arrangement could be considered.

g. FOI Transfer to admin access team

Emphasis on strong and clear communication between the applicant and IRO.

Potential standard wording/ scripts could look to be developed.

h. Complaint handling

Link provided in release of docs or a post office box attached to a shredder.

i. Training materials

i. Task cards

CRM task cards have been developed and would require minimal changes.

ii. Process

FAR

iii. Induction

Agency induction already exist in the FOI space, would be very simple to transfer over.

j. Promotion of admin access scheme

i. Agency awareness

Agency Awareness:

- Launch a similar campaign throughout the Agency
  - Similar to EZ's privacy awareness week

ii. Public awareness

Front facing website

Promotional material?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Participant Information Access (PIA)

Actioning Officer (AO) Processing Checklist

This step: To be completed by the AO throughout the carriage of all PIA matters and saved onto the relevant SharePoint matter folder.

1. Complete Matter Assessment

Ensure you complete matter assessment and send to Delegate within 48 hours of allocation.

Complete Proof Of Identity (POI) check: • Name ✓ • DOB ✓ • Address ✓ • Ref ✓ At least 3 of 4 have to be provided and match NDIS records in order to confirm participant's identity.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Complete Authority and Consent check: A letter of authority or consent form has been provided and signed by participant or an authorised representative; within the last 12 months, or for the duration of the personal injury claim, if from legal firms.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Check the email address on record and whether it matches the email address provided in request.	☐ Yes	☐ No
If POI or authority requirements have not been met and or the email address does not match our records, please draft an email seeking the needed information from the applicant for your Delegate to review using the correct template, found in PIA Email Templates.	☐ Complete	☐ NA
Provide a detailed list of documents and their relevant document folders falling in scope as part of your assessment, noting only the documents found in **Appendix 1** can be released through PIA	☐ Complete	
Extract the documents into relevant **Original Documents** of the SharePoint matter folder Please ensure you number documents when saving; and add a document description: For example: '*1. ARF 2021'*	☐ Complete	
Ensure you have 'Replied All' from allocation email and send AO Assessment to the Delegate and copy yourself in, using the correct template, found in PIA Email Templates. Save email in SharePoint's matter folder named Internal Correspondence as soon as sent.	☐ Complete	

2. Process documents

After receiving instructions from the Delegate, begin the processing stage of the request.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Save delegate instructions in SharePoint's matter folder named Internal Correspondence as soon as received.	☐ Complete	
If necessary and instructed to, prepare and send the cleared follow up emails seeking POI, authority and/or email confirmation, with a privacy check. Ensure you save email in SharePoint's matter folder named Communication with Applicant as soon as sent.	☐ Complete	☐ NA
If a request seeks access to a payment summary, prepare and send a consultation email to Scheme Finance and attach the Request for Payment Information, using the correct template (found in PIA Templates).	☐ Complete	☐ NA
Combine the documents in scope for Delegate review, using Adobe Acrobat DC.	☐ Complete	
Save combined documents onto **Working Versions** folder within matter folder in SharePoint and name file: 'PIA 21/22-XXXX - Documents AO'.	☐ Complete	
Add headers and footers to the document bundle, using Arial Font, red and size 12, and the security marking: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE. Your header and footer should be centred and look as follows: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE FOI 21/22-0001 Page 1 of 100 OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE	☐ Complete	
Number individual documents using **CAPITILISED BOLD ARIAL** Font, **red** and **size 12** and place it on the right hand side of first page of each document, aligned with header. For example, '**DOCUMENT 1**' ***Tip:** Individual documents are bookmarked in Adobe, so you can easily access documents without the need to scroll through.	☐ Complete	
Read documents and mark up document sensitivities, ensuring they are blank boxes (matching colour of document background), and adding comments where necessary for clarity. Common sensitivities: staff names, streaming questions and justifications, internal email addresses and third party information.	☐ Complete	

3. Send prepared document bundle for delegate review

The next step is to submit the prepared document bundle for delegate review, alongside the drafted release email.

Ensure POI and/or authority requirements have now been met, if not initially.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Begin preparing the 'For Delegate Review' email, using the correct template (found in PIA Email Templates). Please ensure you adequately describe any sensitivities that have been marked up. For example, 'streaming justification marked up for redaction'.	☐ Complete	

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Draft and attach 'Release of Information' email using the correct template (found in PIA Email Templates).	☐ Complete
Ensure you have replied all, to maintain the email trail, prior to sending. Save email in SharePoint's matter folder named Internal Correspondence as soon as sent.	☐ Complete

4. Prepare documents for release after delegate review complete

Once delegate has reviewed documents for release, they will issue a 'Delegate Review Complete' email and instruct on release.

Save delegate instructions in SharePoint's matter folder named Internal Correspondence as soon as received.	☐ Complete	
Upon receiving 'Delegate Review Complete' email from Delegate, carefully review any changes and ensure you communicate with Delegate in instances where you need clarity about changes.	☐ Complete	
Open up the version of documents reviewed by the delegate, and save onto working versions of SharePoint's matter folder as 'PIA 21/22-XXX – Documents DM'.	☐ Complete	
Apply redactions (where necessary)	☐ Complete	☐ NA
Remove hidden information	☐ Complete	
Sanitise documents	☐ Complete	
Save as 'PIA 21/22-XXXX – Documents' onto Final Bundle folder of SharePoint's matter folder	☐ Complete	
Split final document bundle into 9MB size files (where necessary)	☐ Complete	☐ NA

5. Prepare release email

Once final bundle is ready for release, prepare and send documents to the applicant.

Using the 'Release of Information' email cleared by the Delegate, prepare email for release and attach the final bundle/s.	☐ Complete
Place email in 'Info.Access' Drafts folder and ask another member of the team to conduct a privacy check.	☐ Complete
Once privacy check has been completed, send email to applicant. Save sent email/s in SharePoint's matter folder named Communication with Applicant as soon as sent.	☐ Complete

6. Close matter

After the release of documents to applicant, please close matter off on all platforms.

Open LEX and search for the released matter, click on 'Main Details' and update the matter information: 1. Change status to 'Closed' 2. Add closure date, and 3. Relevant details in Matter Summary	☐ Complete

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Update the PIA Database to reflect the date of closure, documents released and any relevant comments, as required.	☐ Complete
Open participant's CRM file and close off the interaction added by the registration team when request was received.	☐ Complete
Ensure you have saved all relevant correspondence and documents onto SharePoint's relevant matter folders.	☐ Complete
Notify the Delegate that matter is now closed, using the 'Matter Closed' template found in PIA Email Templates.	☐ Complete

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

APPENDIX 1

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE THROUGH PIA

Access to the NDIS	
Access request form	Copy of access request form.
Access decision letter	Copy of access decision letter.
NDIS plan*	
Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan	Information collected at a planning meeting and includes participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation.
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan	Planner justifications include the draft and final NDIS plan.
Current NDIS plan	Copy of letter outlining current NDIS plan.
NDIS plan review	
Outcome of NDIS plan review	Copy of outcome of plan review letter.
Medical and other documents	
Evidence of disability	Copies of any evidence of disability (EOD).
Medical documents / assessment reports	Copies of medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions.
Supporting evidence form	Copy of supporting evidence form.
Recognised disabilities tab	Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities in CRM.
Roster of care	Copy of Roster of Care (ROC).
Home and Living Supports decision	Copy of Home and Living Supports decision.
Payment summary	Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

ndis

Welcome to Information Access

What are our team's functions?
What does each sub-team do?
What does each staff role do?



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Overview: The Information Access Section



The Information Access Section:

- Manages some (but not all!) requests for information made to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
- Manages and actions **Participant Information Access (PIA)** and **Freedom of Information (FOI)** requests in line with legislative guidelines and timeframes.
- Liaises with internal and external stakeholders to manage requests for information.
- Manages the publication of documents via the NDIA's disclosure log.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Philosophy Underlying Information Access

The philosophy underlying information access:

- When government is more open to public scrutiny it becomes more accountable.
- If people are adequately informed and have access to government-held information, there is likely to be more public participation in the policy-making process and in government itself.
- Groups and individuals who are affected by government decisions should know the criteria applied in making those decisions.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Philosophy Underlying Access to Personal Information

Every individual has a right to:

- Know what information is held in government record about them personally, subject to certain exemptions to protect essential public interests.
- Inspect files held about or relating to them.
- Have inaccurate material concerning themselves held on file or in computerised databases corrected.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth).



The FOI Act gives any person the right to:

- Request access to **any document** the NDIA holds.
- Ask for information the NDIA holds about them to be changed if it is incomplete, out of date, incorrect or misleading.
- Seek a review of a decision not to release information or document and/or to not to amend a person's personal record.

The standard timeframe to process an FOI request is 30 days. However, the FOI Act contains many ways to extend that timeframe.

The NDIA received about **2,400** FOI requests this financial year! We're the 4th biggest recipient of FOI requests in the Commonwealth!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)



PIA is an easier and faster way for participants and their representatives to access their personal information.

PIA releases commonly requested, non-sensitive personal documents to participants or their authorised representatives. These documents are extracted from the NDIS Business Systems. They are released under the NDIS Act .

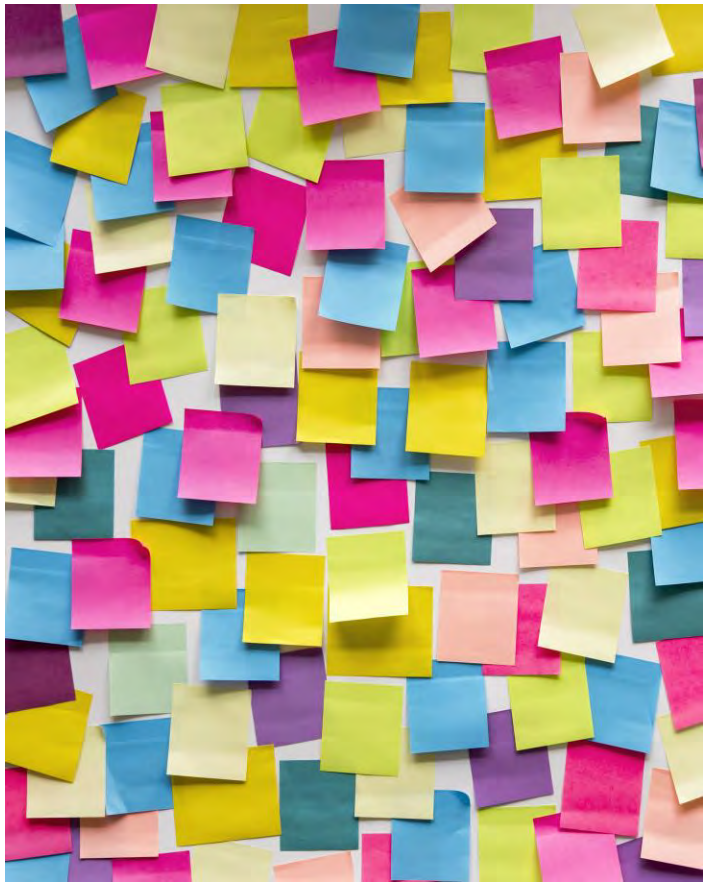
We aim to respond to PIA requests no later than 28 days from receipt of the request, in line with the Participant Service Guarantee (external)

The NDIA received around **13,000** PIA requests this financial year!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Other Ways to Access Information at the NDIA



The Information Access section is not the only way for people to access documents. Many other teams can release basic documents to participants or their authorised representatives.

- Any participant-facing staff member can release documents that are designed for release such as letters and NDIS plans. This includes planners, complaints staff and call centre staff.

Some information access requests are complex and are handled by other specialist teams.

Some of the requests our team doesn't process include:

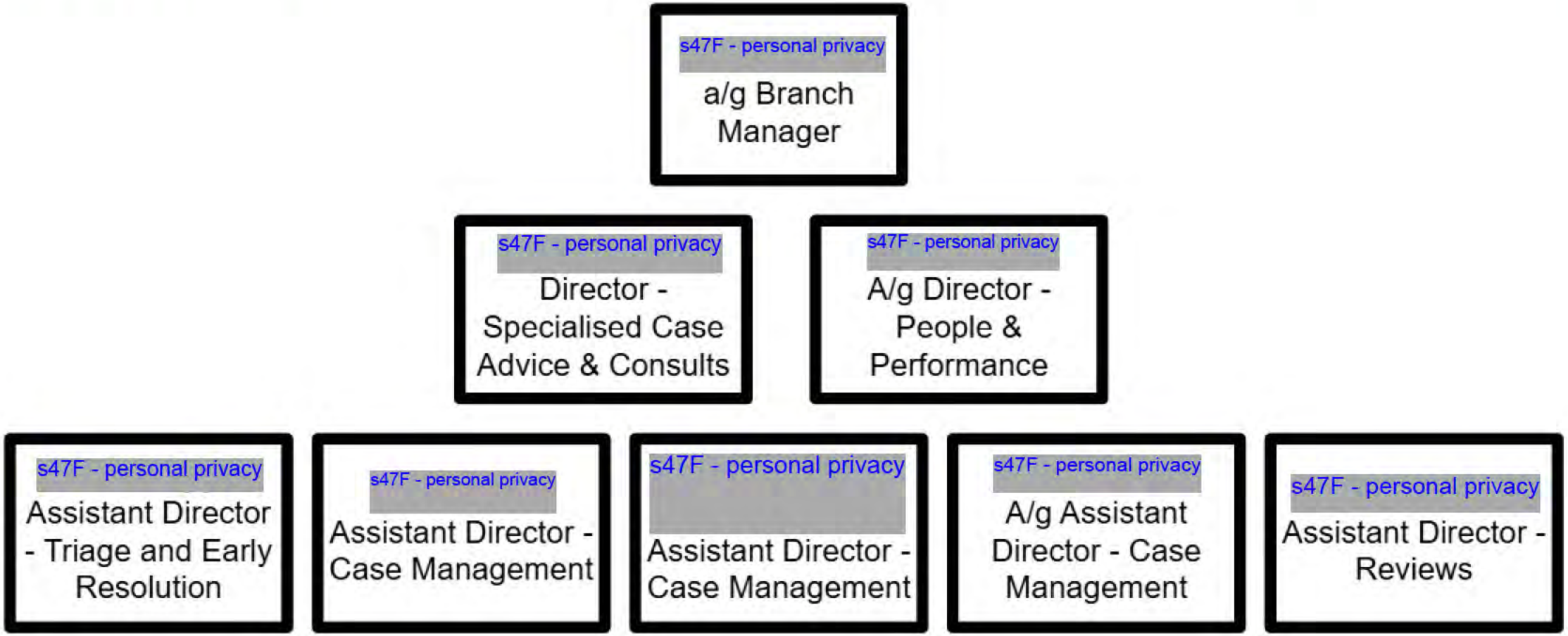
- Subpoenas,
- Courts and police officers trying to compel the release of information without consent
- Law firms seeking compensation recovery amounts.

Further reading: Information Release Mechanisms at the NDIA

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

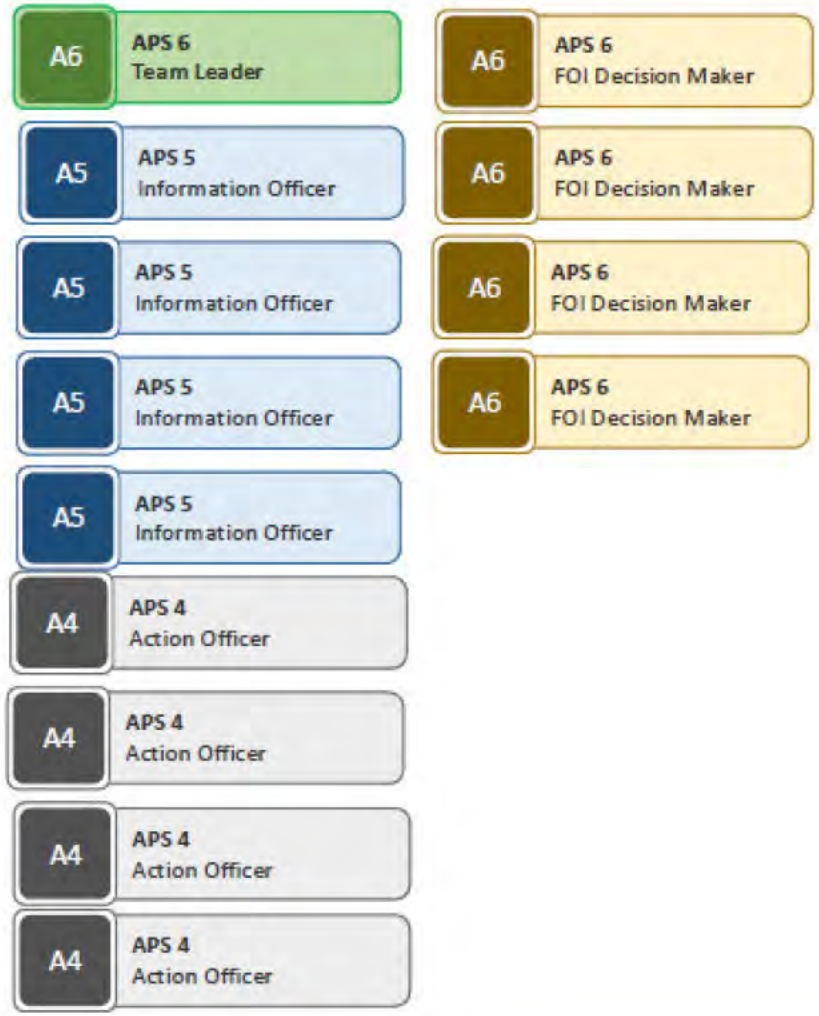
FOI 26/27-0866

Organisational Structure – Information Access Section



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Organisational Structure – Sub-teams



There are about **80 staff** in our team in total. We have 5 sub-teams. Each sub-team has the same basic structure:

Each team has:

- One Executive Level 1 (EL1) Assistant Director
- One APS 6 Team Leader (TL)
- Multiple APS 6 decision makers (DMs)
- Multiple APS 4 and APS 5 level action officers (AOs).

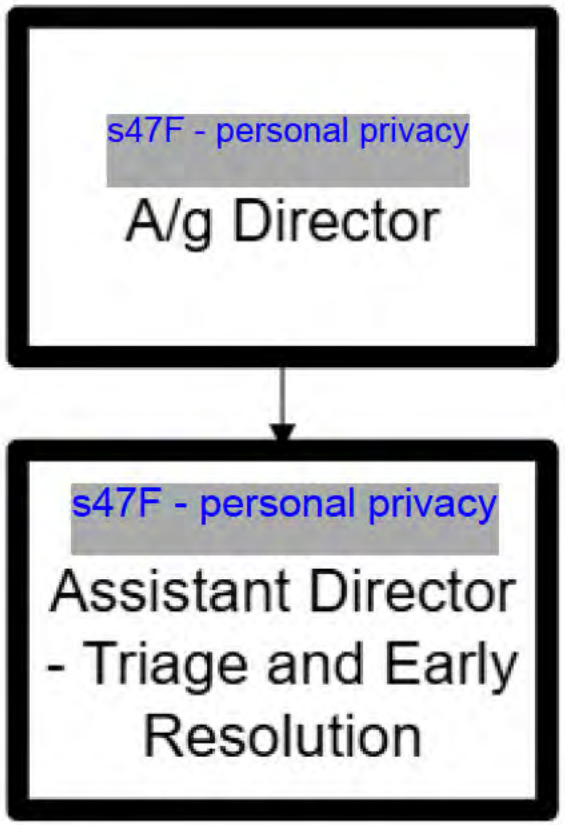
The EL1 is the manager for the overall team. The EL1 is the direct line manager for all APS 6 staff.

The APS 6 team leader is the direct line manager for all APS 4 and APS 5 staff in their reporting line.

The number of staff in each team varies by their work type: the Reviews team is the smallest and s47F - personal privacy case management team is the biggest (because her team does the most PIAs).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Triage & Early Resolution (TER) Team



The Triage, Early Resolution & Reviews team is responsible for:

- Managing all FOI matters for their **first 5 days.**
- Managing correspondence that comes through to the Information Access and FOI shared mailboxes.
- Reviewing the scope and validity of FOI requests. This includes attempting to obtain any information required to progress a PIA or FOI request.
- Registering FOI requests on the relevant business system.
- Conducting initial assessments on all FOI requests to obtain preliminary information that informs whether the documents are held by the NDIA, if the request is too big or unclear, or if the request requires special oversight.
- Early resolution matters may be progressed by **2 or more staff** at different APS levels working together.

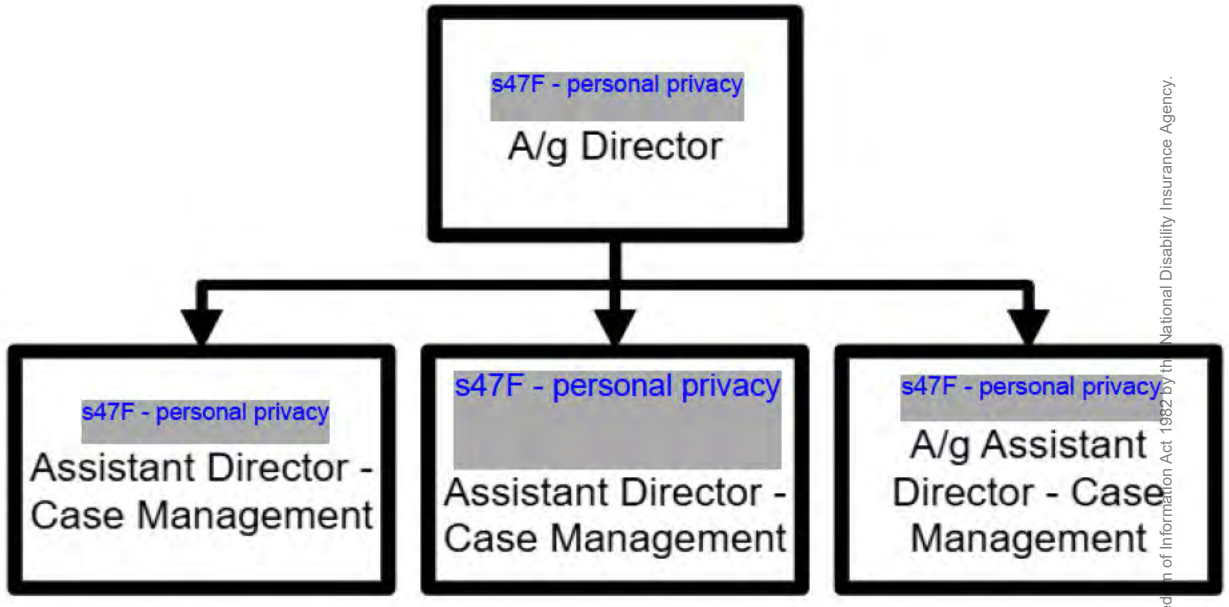
This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Case Management (CM) Teams

The 3 Case Management teams are responsible for:

- Registering, processing and responding to requests received via the PIA scheme.
- Responding to and managing requests received via the FOI scheme for the release of any **personal** documents held by the NDIA.



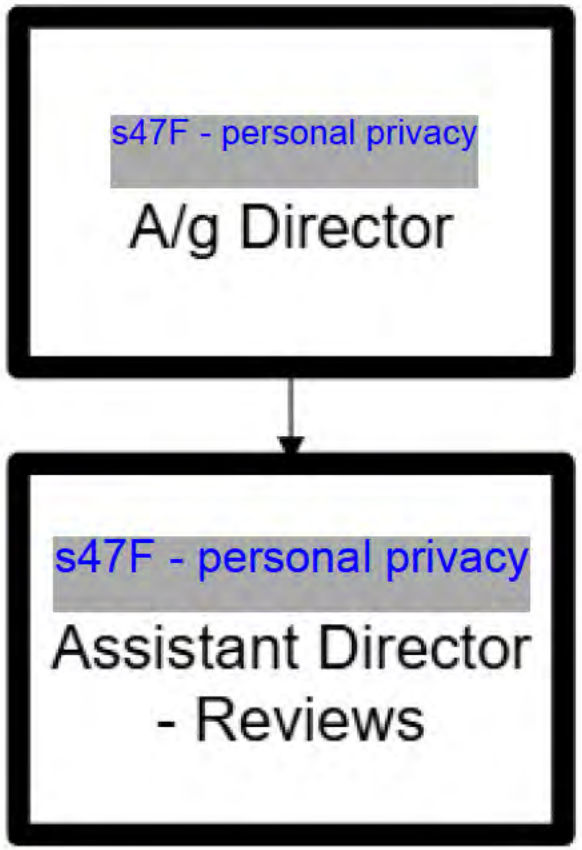
- Responding to and managing requests received for the release of **non-personal** information the agency holds. These may include requests to release policy documents, documents about Agency procedures, briefings, insurance policies etc.

Each team specialises in a particular kinds of request. Each matter is generally progressed by **2 staff** at different APS levels working as a pairing.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Reviews Team



The Reviews team is responsible for:

- Managing and actioning **internal reviews** on FOI matters where required.
- Managing and actioning submissions to the Office of the Australian Information Commission (OAIC) for decisions under **external review** where required.
- Managing and actioning submissions to OAIC regarding OAIC complaints, investigations, and other applications where required.
- Each review matter is generally progressed by **2 staff** at different APS levels working as a pairing.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Roles and responsibilities – APS 4 and APS 5 level staff

Triage Officers

- Manage the shared mailboxes.
- Register requests on business system/s.
- Refer work to other business areas when required.
- Support applicants to make valid requests.
- Support applicants to provide consent and points of identity (POI) information.
- Release disclosure log documents.

Action Officers (AO)

- Assess the scope of matters, and the POI and consent details provided.
- Identify, gather and process documents for release.
- Prepare correspondence and draft decision letters.
- Support DMs to engage with other stakeholders such as other business areas and the OAIC.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Roles and responsibilities – APS 6 level staff

Decision Makers (DM)

- Decide what documents are within scope.
- Review business area advice about the potential detriment of disclosure.
- Decide what is suitable for release in accordance with the legislation.
- Justify their decision in a written statement of reasons.
- Provide processing instructions to AOs.

Review the work of AOs for individual cases.

Team Leaders (TL)

- People and performance focused role.
- Team leaders are the direct line managers for all APS 4 and APS 5 level staff in their team.
- Team leaders train staff, provide generalised performance feedback, and support APS 4 and APS5 staff with capability development.
- Team leaders don't have a caseload of matters.
- Team leaders action DM feedback about recurring issues with AO performance.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Further reading about role expectations

Case Management:

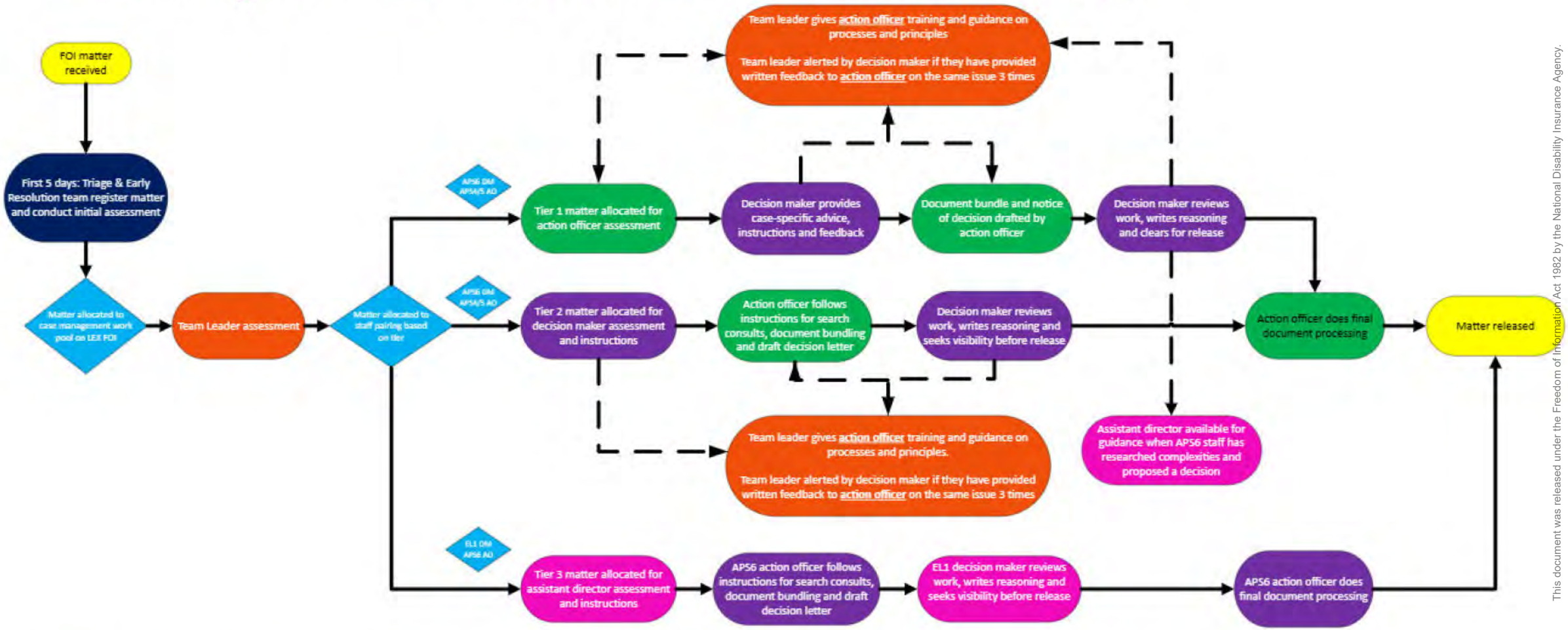
- Comparison of work at different APS levels: Case Management team
- Comparison of Decision Makers and Team Leaders in Case Management

Triage & Early Resolution:

- Comparison of work at different APS levels: Triage & Early resolution team
- Comparison of Decision Makers and Team Leaders in Triage & Early Resolution

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Example Information Access Work Flow



Link to work flow graphic: [Information Access work flow graphic]

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Something fun to end on!

Here's a short and funny introduction to the wacky world of freedom of information, designed for complete beginners!

CMFOI_ International Access to Information day 2024.09.27.mp4

Speech - FOI - International Access to Information day 2024.docx



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Questions or feedback?

Please email me via s47F - personal privacy@ndis.gov.au

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

ATTACHMENT A | DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION ACCESS SCHEME

Access to the NDIS

Information about access to the NDIS, including the information provided to support an access request and the reasons for the access decision.

- Access request form
- Access decision letter

NDIS plan*

Information about a current NDIS plan, including the information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision.

- Pre-planning documents, including participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation
- Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan, including draft and final NDIS plan
- Copy of letter outing current NDIS plan

**Documents related to previous NDIS plans also available upon request*

NDIS plan review

Information about the most recent NDIS plan review, including the information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision.

- Outcome of NDIS plan review

Medical and other documents

Medical and other documents provided to the NDIS, including:

- Evidence of disability
- Supporting evidence form
- Roster of care
- Home and Living Supports decision
- Copies of medical documents, assessments or reports provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions
- Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities in CRM.
- Finance generates Payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

ndis

Introduction to Participant Information Access (PIA) for Team Leaders

Overview of PIA risks, sensitivities and quality assurance

ndis.gov.au | July 2025

1

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Agenda

- What is the Participant Information Access (PIA) scheme?
- Parameters of PIA requests
- Comparison with FOI
- What are the pain points in PIA processing?
- What are the risks and sensitivities of PIA processing?
- How do Team Leaders support staff processing PIA matters?
- Links to training resources
- Questions

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Is the Participant Information Access (PIA) Scheme?

The PIA scheme is at the heart of what we do here in the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)! We value people! We put participants at the heart of what we do! Helping participants access their own information promptly is a rewarding part of our work.

Participants have a right to access their own personal information. They have a right to understand how the NDIA made decisions that affect them.

Many PIA requests are lodged by people who have not met access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Many are lodged by people whose NDIS funding has changed. They are seeking information to lodge an internal review or Administrative Reviews Tribunal Review. On a personal level, when we release PIAs promptly, we ensure each individual person can exercise their review rights.

On a broader level, when we release PIAs efficiently, we demonstrate the Australian government's commitment to openness and transparency. We help to build trust with the community!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Is the Legal Basis for PIA?

- PIA is an administrative information release scheme.
- It is created by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and its parameters are determined by the NDIA.
- However, it must meet the minimum requirements of administrative access schemes set out by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). This means the PIA scheme must meet the minimum requirements of access set out in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Australian Privacy Principle 12 [APP 12]).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Comparison with Freedom of Information (FOI)

In 2024/25 financial year, we received 2,400 FOI requests and 13,000 PIA requests. That means PIA is **5 times** as popular as FOI!

We expect a full-time staff member to process **5 FOI matters each week.** 2 staff members work together on each FOI matter, including an APS 6 decision maker.

We expect a full-time staff member to process **25 PIA matters each week**. One staff member at the APS 4 level works independently on each PIA matter. The NDIA has designed PIA to make this higher volume of work, and faster pace of work possible.

Further reading: Comparison of PIA, APP 12 and FOI

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Pain Points: Part 1

Growing popularity of PIA

- In the 2023-24 financial year, the NDIA received 7,500 PIA requests. In the 2024-25 financial year, the NDIA received 13,000! That's a 70% increase!

Large requests

- Many PIA applicants submit their requests via the online webform and tick every single documents, regardless of whether they already have it, whether they need it, or even whether it exists.

Applicant expectations

- Applicant assume that PIA requests are processed automatically. They may have unrealistic expectations of how long it takes the NDIA to manually extract documents. This may lead to complaints. Many applicants send identical follow-up requests – assuming their first request was never received. This causes duplication of work.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Pain Points: Part 2

High volume of fast-paced, repetitive work.

- Staff may complete tasks on auto-pilot and miss risks, sensitivities and complexities. This can result in **privacy breaches**. It means sharp practices and/or fraud may go unreported.

- Staff may get matters and participant records mixed up. They may save documents to the wrong SharePoint folder or make copy-paste errors, resulting in **privacy breaches.**

Limited APS 6 oversight. No one scrutinises PIA work in detail.

- APS 4 staff may take short-cuts because they work independently. This may result in participants not receiving all the documents they have requested and/or poor customer service to explain why certain documents did not exist.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Parameters of PIA Requests

- Designed for participants and the representatives only. Applicants who do not represent the participant cannot use PIA (e.g. third party law firms).
- Applicants must have valid consent.
- Living participants only (because the *Privacy Act 1988* does not apply to deceased people).
- Currently limited to a defined range of personal documents only. These documents have been selected because they are commonly requested, easy to find (on PACE), and are usually low-risk (because they have been provided to us by the participant OR are designed for release to the participant).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Complexities, Risks and Sensitivities: Part 1

PIA staff manage 13,000 requests each year. 95% of these requests may be low-risk. But that means 5% of requests are high-risk and must be escalated. That's 650 high-risk matters each year! That's 12 each week! We need APS 4 staff to identify these high-risk matters independently.

- Sharp practices. For example, support coordinators (SC) charging participants to lodge PIA requests on their behalf. SCs may lodge 50 requests for different participants in a single day. They may lodge a PIA request for each participant every 3 months.

- No evidence of informed consent. For example, support coordinators sending us unsigned consent forms or multiple consent forms with the same copy-pasted signature. Support coordinators seeking access to documents beyond the scope of their role as SC, such as evidence of a participant's compensation reduction amount.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Complexities, Risks and Sensitivities: Part 2

- Record-keeping issues across the agency. For example, staff members can upload documents to the wrong participant's PACE file. Staff may write inappropriate comments in participant's planner justification document without realising that the participant has a right to access that material. In once case, I have seen planner justifications that revealed that the participant was suspected of fraud!

- Some medical reports are **highly sensitive** and are not suitable for release via PIA. For example, a confidential psychologist report that was never supplied to the participant containing triggering information about that person's social history. Or a psychologist report that was written while the participant was incarcerated and reveals their offending history.

- Many PIA documents contain the **personal information of third parties** and are not suitable for release in full to all applicants. Some planner justifications contain the full names of NDIA staff members. Releasing these documents would breach staff personal privacy.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Supporting Action Officers on PIA Matters

- Training on registrations – s47F - personal privacy to deliver this
- Checklist for team leaders to quality check regos
- Quality checking 3 random registrations each week (plus 2 other items) every week in a 1:to:1 meeting.
- Recording in form and then collate these in a Microsoft Teams form – to get big picture data. Monthly meetings report
- s47F - persona is running training about consent for APS 4 staff this week.
- Training on PIA processing (locating docs, extracting, processing, explaining decision via email) - s47F - personal privacy (?) next week
- Checklist on team leaders reviewing PIA bundle
- Checklist for APS 4 staff - staff to fill it in for every matter and save it to the SharePoint.
- More training about **privacy breaches** – consequences for people, what to do when it occurs
- Training on more subtle privacy breaches
- Buddies – on specific issues. s47F - personal privacy rego buddy. s47F - personal privacy (?).
- Knowledge article - develop a guide that shows everyone in one document including examples of what documents look like (e.g. Home & Living decision letter). And also tips on navigating PACE – one supporting evidence form + dozens of medical documents. With insights from NCC staff.
- Test cases on LEX FOI – for training purposes. Quality check these before allowing them to process live matters.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Links to Training Resources

PIA registrations:

- Standard Operating Procedure – Registering PIA matters on LEX FOI
- Checklist for Team Leader – Quality Checking PIA Registrations
- Video: PIA registrations

PIA processing (to be updated by 7 July 2025)

- Procedure: Privacy Checks
- PIA processing checklist - Updated 3 July 2025
- PIA training: points of identity (POI) and consent - Small update 3 July 2025
- PIA document locations in CRM - To be updated.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Questions or feedback?

Please email me via s47F - personal privacy **@ndis.gov.au**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

ndis

Introduction to Personal Information and Participant Information Access (PIA) for Action Officers

What kinds of personal information does the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) hold and how does the PIA scheme work?

ndis.gov.au | July 2025

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Agenda

- The **2-week training plan** for APS 4 Action Officers in PIA registrations and processing

Part 1: Personal Information

- What is **personal information?**
- What **kinds of personal information** does the NDIA hold?
- Why does the NDIA **share information?**
- Why do applicants **want to access** information about participants?
- What are the **consequences** of releasing personal information to the wrong person?

Part 2: Participant Information Access (PIA)

- Why does the **Participant Information Access (PIA)** scheme exist and how does it work?
- What are some of the **challenges** of PIA processing?
- What are some of the **risks and sensitivities** of PIA processing?
- What do you do if you find a **complex case?**
- Links to **training resources**
- **Questions**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

2-Week Training Plan in PIA Processing

W/c 30 June 2025:

Wednesday morning: Introduction to personal information and PIA with s47F - personal privacy

Wednesday afternoon: Introduction to case management systems and registrations with s47F - personal privacy

Thursday morning: Introduction to verifying identity and consent with s47F - personal privacy

Thursday afternoon: PIA registrations in depth with s47F - personal privacy

Friday morning: Complex consent issues with s47F - personal privacy

Friday afternoon: Practical PIA registrations, checked by your team leader

W/c 7 July 2025

Risks of PIA documents with s47F - personal privacy

Complex case studies with s47F - personal privacy

Writing good release emails with s47F - personal privacy

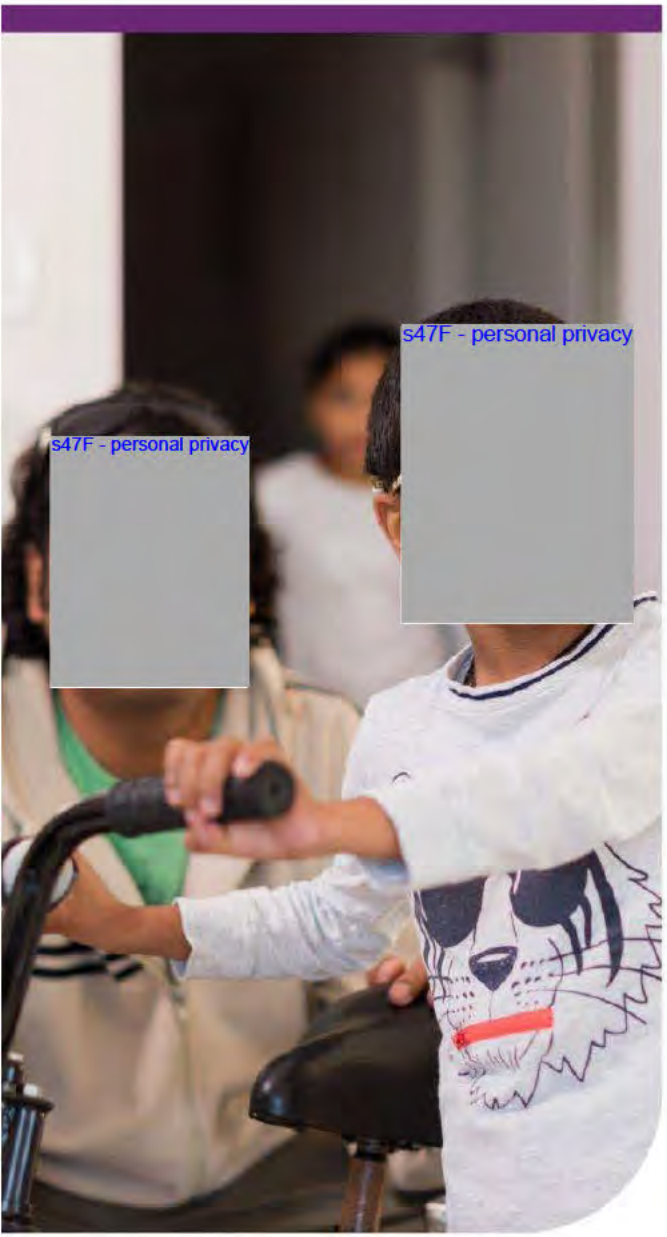
Practical training in locating and extracting documents from PACE and CRM

Practical training in processing documents using Adobe Acrobat Pro DC

Practical training in privacy checks, release emails and closing matters on LEX FOI

Practical PIA processing, checked by your team leader

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.



Part 1: Personal Information

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What is personal information?

For discussion:

Is there a definition of personal information?

Does a document need to have a person's name on it to be considered personal information?

Are different kinds of personal information more sensitive than others?

Further reading:

- What is personal information?
- What is personal information? | OAIC

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Kinds of Personal Information Does the NDIA Hold?

For discussion:

Who do we hold information about?

Is the information we hold sensitive?

Why do we collect people's personal information?

Do we have any obligations about collecting and storing personal information:

Further reading:

- Privacy | NDIS
- Chapter 5: APP 5 Notification of the collection of personal information | OAIC
- Chapter 6: APP 6 Use or disclosure of personal information | OAIC

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Joint Personal Information vs. Third Party Personal Information

Joint personal information is any personal information that "belongs" to multiple people simultaneously. It usually describes the relationship between 2 people. impossible to separate the information belonging to the participant from that belonging to the father.

Third party personal information is personal information that belongs only to a separate third party. However, it may be mixed into a document containing the personal information of someone else.

Example: "The participant lives with her father (joint personal information). Her father is also an NDIS participant with a diagnosis of autism (third party personal information)."

If the applicant was the father himself, we could release this document in full. But if the applicant was a support coordinator, we might want to remove information about his disability status because this is sensitive information that could lead to him being discriminated against. If we did this, we would explain in our release email that we have removed third party information from the documents.

Further reading: What is personal information? | OAIC

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Why Does the NDIA Have So Many Ways to Share The Personal Information We Hold?

For discussion:

Once the NDIA receives personal documents, do we have an obligation to share them with others?

Further reading:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013
- What is freedom of information? | OAIC
- Chapter 12: APP 12 Access to personal information | OAIC

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Why Do Applicants Want to Access Information About NDIS Participants?

For discussion:

What uses could someone have for documents about a participant?

Participants have a right to access their own personal information. They have a right to understand how the NDIA made decisions that affect them. Information is a valuable and powerful resource which is at the heart of every government decision and activity. Getting the right information at the right time can change someone's life!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Are Some of the Consequences of Releasing Personal Information Incorrectly? (Part 1)

Safety Risks: Unauthorised access to personal information can expose individuals to physical harm. For example, if an individual's address or contact details are leaked, it could lead to stalking, harassment, or even violence. In cases of domestic violence, the exposure of a victim's location can be particularly dangerous

Financial Harm: Misuse of personal information can lead to financial fraud, such as unauthorised credit card transactions or identity theft. Misuse of personal information could affect a person's ability to access services and other financial supports or compensation.

Discrimination: Mishandling sensitive personal information, such as health records or disability status data, can lead to discrimination in various aspects of life. This includes employment, housing, and access to services. For instance, if an employer gains unauthorised access to an employee's health information, it could result in unfair treatment or job loss.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Are Some of the Consequences of Releasing Personal Information Incorrectly? (Part 2)

Reputational Damage: Exposure of sensitive information can harm an individual's reputation, affecting their personal and professional life.

Emotional and Psychological Impact: Breaches of personal information can cause significant stress and anxiety, impacting mental well-being.

Legal Consequences: Organisations that fail to protect personal information may face legal penalties and loss of trust from customers and stakeholders.

Can you think of any others?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.



Part 2: The Participant Information Access (PIA) Scheme

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Does the Participant Information Access (PIA) Scheme Exist?

For discussion:

What are the disadvantages of only having a Freedom of Information (FOI) release mechanism?

In particular, how do the legalistic complexities of FOI schemes impact people with disability?

Further reading: Comparison of PIA, APP 12 and FOI

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Is the Participant Information Access (PIA) Scheme?

The PIA scheme is at the heart of what we do here in the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)! We value people! We put participants at the heart of what we do! Helping participants access their own information promptly is a rewarding part of our work.

Many PIA requests are lodged by people who have not met access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Many are lodged by people whose NDIS funding has changed. They are seeking information to lodge an internal review or Administrative Reviews Tribunal case. On a personal level, when we release PIAs promptly, we ensure each individual person can exercise their review rights.

On a broader level, when we release PIAs efficiently, we demonstrate the Australian government's commitment to openness and transparency. We help to build trust with the community!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Comparison with Freedom of Information (FOI)

In 2024/25 financial year, we received 2,400 FOI requests and 13,000 PIA requests. That means PIA is **5 times** as popular as FOI!

We expect a full-time staff member to process **5 FOI matters each week**. 2 staff members work together on each FOI matter, including an APS 6 decision maker. This means each FOI matter is allotted 15 staff hours (on average).

We expect a full-time staff member to process **25 PIA matters each week**. One staff member at the APS 4 level works independently on each PIA matter. This means each PIA matter is allotted only 1.5 hours staff hours (on average). That's only 10% of the time allotted to FOI matters!

The NDIA has designed PIA to make this higher volume of fast paced work possible.

Further reading: Comparison of PIA, APP 12 and FOI

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Parameters of PIA Requests

- Designed for participants and the representatives **only.** Applicants who do not represent a participant cannot use PIA (e.g. third party law firms).
- Applicants must have valid informed consent. There are no exceptions to this.
- Living participants only (because the *Privacy Act 1988* does not apply to deceased people and because any nominee relationship or signed consent form ends upon an individual's death).
- Currently limited to a defined range of personal documents only. These documents have been selected because they are commonly requested, easy to find (on PACE), and are usually low-risk (because they have been provided to us by the participant OR are designed for release to the participant).
- The Information Access team limits what documents are **automatically** provided through PIA. We only provide the most recent NDIS plan and planner justifications (unless the applicant is specifically seeking an older one). We only provide medical documents supplied in the past 6 months (unless the applicant specifically seeks older reports).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Pain Points: Part 1

Growing popularity of PIA

- In the 2023-24 financial year, the NDIA received 7,500 PIA requests. In the 2024-25 financial year, the NDIA received 13,000! That's a 70% increase! If the scheme continues to expand at this rate, in 12 months time we'll be receiving 20,000 PIA requests each year!

Large requests

- Many PIA applicants submit their requests via the online webform and tick every single documents, regardless of whether they already have it, whether they need it, or even whether it exists.

Applicant expectations

- Applicant assume that PIA requests are processed automatically. They may have unrealistic expectations of how long it takes the NDIA to manually extract documents. This may lead to complaints. Many applicants send identical follow-up requests – assuming their first request was never received. This causes duplication of work.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Pain Points: Part 2

Applicant complaints

- Applicants may have valid reasons to be aggrieved before they even lodge their PIA request. They may need documents by a strict deadline to lodge a review. This means you need strong customer service skills to empathise with applicants and de-escalate challenging situations.

High volume of fast-paced, repetitive work.

- It's easy to get participant records mixed up and/or save documents to the wrong SharePoint folder or make copy-paste errors, resulting in **privacy breaches.**

- It can be challenging to identify higher level risks, sensitivities and complexities when working at a fast pace. This can result in **privacy breaches**. It means sharp practices and/or fraud may go unreported.

APS 4 staff members work independently

- This means there is no "second pair of eyes" to check that all requested documents have been provided or that a release email clearly explains why certain documents did not exist.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Complexities, Risks and Sensitivities: Part 1

PIA staff manage 13,000 requests each year. 95% of these requests may be low-risk. But that means 5% of requests are high-risk and must be escalated. That's 650 high-risk matters each year! If you process 25 PIA matters each week, you are almost guaranteed to encounter one matter that requires escalation every single week! APS 4 staff are expected to identify these high-risk matters independently.

- Sharp practices. For example, support coordinators (SC) charging participants to lodge PIA requests on their behalf. SCs may lodge 50 requests for different participants in a single day. They may lodge a PIA request for each participant every 3 months. In rare circumstances, the payment integrity team may alert us to an active investigation into a provider's practices.

- No evidence of informed consent. For example, support coordinators sending us unsigned consent forms or multiple consent forms with the same copy-pasted signature. Support coordinators seeking access to documents beyond the scope of their role as SC, such as evidence of a participant's compensation reduction amount.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Complexities, Risks and Sensitivities: Part 2

- Record-keeping issues across the agency. For example, staff members can accidentally upload documents to the wrong participant's PACE file. Staff may write inappropriate comments in participant's planner justifications document without realising that the participant has a right to access that material. In one case, I have seen planner justifications that revealed that the participant was under investigation for fraud!

- Some medical reports are **highly sensitive** and are not suitable for release via PIA. For example, a confidential psychologist report that was never supplied to the child representative which contains accusations that the child representative is abusing the child. Or a psychologist report that was written while the participant was incarcerated and reveals their offending history.

- Many PIA documents contain the **personal information of third parties** and are not suitable for release in full to all applicants. Some planner justifications contain the full names of NDIA staff members or free-text notes describing allegations of fraud. Releasing these documents would breach staff personal privacy or compromise active fraud investigations.

- In rare circumstances, the **participant may die** during the PIA processing period. This means any consent form they signed becomes invalid.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What Do You Do If You Find A Complex Case?

- Don't ignore it! If it doesn't feel right, then it probably isn't!
- Document your findings via a file note on LEX FOI
- Speak to your team leader promptly

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Links to Resources

PIA registrations:

- Standard Operating Procedure – Registering PIA matters on LEX FOI

Overview of PIA:

- Participant information access | NDIS – external page designed to help NDIS participants understand what PIA is. It explains who the PIA scheme is for, how long it takes, and the information we need to process a request (evidence of consent).
- Participant Information Access Request | NDIS – external webform that allows NDIS participants to easily request documents through PIA. This page lists all documents available through PIA.
- Participant Information Access (PIA) (ndia.gov.au) – intranet page to help NDIA staff understand what PIA is. This page explains the difference between PIA and FOI.
- Administrative access | OAIC – a more complex resource published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). This page explains the legal requirements of administrative release schemes such as PIA.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Questions or feedback?

Please email me via s47F - personal privacy@ndis.gov.au

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

DOCUMENT 9
OFFICIAL
FOI 25/27-0366
OFFICIAL
Page 1 of 34

ndis

Risks and Sensitivities of Participant Information Access (PIA) Documents

Plus complex case studies and tips on writing good release emails

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

FOI 26/27-0866

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

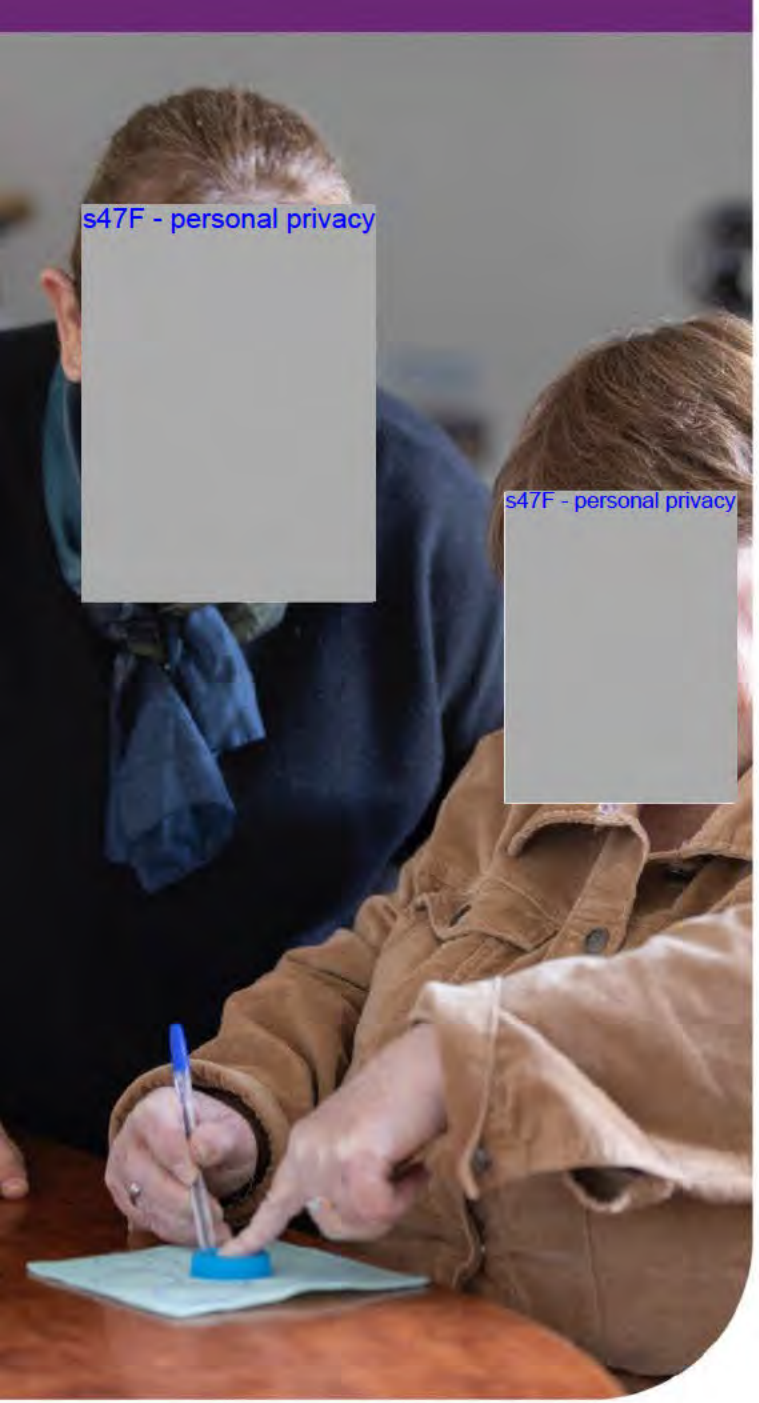
I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Agenda

- **Part 1: Documents provided under PIA in depth**
  - The risks they may contain
  - Why they may not always exist
  - Guidance on what to provide when multiple versions exist
- **Part 2: Complex case studies**
  - When a participant does not exist on our records
  - When some of the requested documents do not exist
  - How to redact parts of documents, especially planner justification comments not suitable for disclosure
  - Analysing a public trustee's authority to understand what is suitable for disclosure
- **Part 3: Writing good release emails**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.



Part 1: Documents provided under PIA in depth

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Introduction

The Participant Information Access (PIA) scheme has been designed to facilitate the efficient release of low-risk documents to NDIS participants.

PIA is designed for **participants and the representatives** only to limit the risk of disclosure. This is because all individuals have a right to access their own personal information. If a person is an authorised representative, they have a right to access a participant's information. Other applicants must demonstrate they are representing the participant in another capacity (such as advocate, legal representative or support coordinator) and have valid informed consent.

In addition, only a defined range of personal documents are approved for release via PIA. These documents have been selected because they are commonly requested, easy to find (on PACE), and are usually low-risk (because they have been provided to us by the participant OR are designed for release to the participant).

However, there are always exceptions to this. This training presentation discusses those exceptions.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Documents Available Through PIA

Your NDIS application

- Access Request Form
- Access Decision Letter
- Supporting evidence form

Your NDIS plan

- Planning information
- Planner justifications
- A copy of your NDIS plan

Your internal review of an NDIA decision

- Outcome of NDIA internal review

Other documents

- Medical documents / assessment reports
- Listed disabilities
- Roster of care
- Home and living supports decision
- Payment summary

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Access Request Form – Part 1 of 2

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. child representative's home address and contact number)

What If This Document Does Not Exist?

- If a person is **defined** in the program, no access request form will exist. This is because the participant was transferred automatically from a state-based program.
- The person may have completed a **Verbal Access Request** (VAR) form. These are not released via PIA.
- The person may have a record on our systems but never have submitted an access request form or even applied to the NDIS!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Access Request Form – Part 2 of 2

Other things to look out for:

- If a person has applied to the NDIS several times, there could be **multiple** versions of this form. Provide the most recent form, unless otherwise stated.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Access Decision Letter- Part 1 of 2

Not for disclosure to any PIA applicant:

- **Draft** access decision letters. These are not yet approved for release the participant and cannot be released via PIA. We must allow Service Delivery to make their primary decision before re-releasing copies of it!

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. information that may be relevant to another sibling who may be accessing the NDIS)

What If This Document Does Not Exist?

- If a person is **defined** in the program, no access decision letter will exist. This is because the participant automatically transferred from a state-based program.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Access Decision Letter – Part 2 of 2

Other things to look out for:

- If a person has applied to the NDIS several times, there could be multiple versions of this form. Provide the most recent letter, unless otherwise stated.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Supporting evidence form

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. child representative's home address and contact number)

What If This Document Does Not Exist?

- Supporting evidence form is **not** a mandatory form. It may not have been completed by the participant.
- If a person is **defined** in the program, no supporting evidence form will exist. This is because the participant transferred from a state-based program.
- The person may have completed a **Verbal Access Request** (VAR) form without this form attached.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Planning information/Planner justifications – Part 1 of 3

Planning information/planner justifications are the second-most unpredictable document we release via PIA (second only to medical documents). This is because they are free-form internal notes that have not previously been disclosed to the participant. In theory, everything recorded in these notes is already known the participant.

Not for disclosure to any PIA applicant:

- Full names of staff (leave staff IDs)
- Allegations of fraud (not previously been disclosed to the participant)
- **Draft** planner justifications. These are not yet approved for release the participant and cannot be released via PIA. We must allow Service Delivery to make their primary decision before re-releasing copies of their notes!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Planning information/Planner justifications – Part 2 of 3

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. the participant's carer describing the impact of caring for the participant on their own life or medical conditions)
- Streaming factors. These are questions used to identify how much support the participant needs to engage with the NDIA. Depending on the answers and the applicant, these may reveal sensitive information.

What if this document does not exist?

- This is because the person has never met access to the NDIS or has not yet received their first approved NDIS plan.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Planning information/Planner justifications – Part 3 of 3

Other things to look out for:

- A participant may have planning information/planner justifications for every plan in the system. Provide the **most recent notes** only, unless an applicant has specifically requested a previous document.
- This document can be generated automatically via CRM in a minute. It is usually 100+ pages long. However, it must be manually copy-pasted out of PACE. This makes it time-consuming to provide in full. Call up the applicant and ask them which part of the funding has changed recently and offer to **only provide** those components of the planner justifications document. This gives them what they actually need more promptly, without wasting time providing unnecessary information.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

A copy of your NDIS plan – Part 1 of 2

Not for disclosure to any PIA applicant:

- **Draft** plans. These are not yet approved for release the participant and cannot be released via PIA. We must allow Service Delivery to make their primary decision before re-releasing copies of it!

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. child representative's home address and contact number)

What if this document does not exist?

- This is because the person has never met access to the NDIS or has not yet received their first approved NDIS plan.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

A copy of your NDIS plan – Part 2 of 2

Other things to look out for:

- A participant may have multiple approved NDIS plans in the system. Provide the **most recent plan only**, unless an applicant has specifically requested a previous document.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Outcome of NDIA internal review - Part 1of 2

Not for disclosure to any PIA applicant:

- **Draft** internal review letters. These are not yet approved for release the participant and cannot be released via PIA. We must allow the Internal Reviews team to make their primary decision before re-releasing copies of it!

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. child representative's home address and contact number)

What if this document does not exist?

- This is because the participant has never lodged a request for internal review – or their internal review request has not yet been finalised.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Outcome of NDIA internal review – Part 2 of 2

Other helpful information:

- s100 request means: Internal review request
- s48 request: Request for a plan review
- s26 request: Review of Reviewable Decision (RORD)

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Medical documents / assessment reports – Part 1 of 3

Medical documents are the most unpredictable, potentially highest-risk document we release via PIA. This is why we classify all PIA documents seeking access to documents are classified as **Tier 1B.** This classification acknowledges that extra consideration must be paid to the sensitive material contained in medical reports.

Not for disclosure via PIA

- Sensitive medical documents not intended for further distribution

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. child representative's home address and contact number, information about family member's medical conditions).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Medical documents / assessment reports – Part 2 of 3

What if these documents do not exist?

- This may be because the participant is **defined** in the program. This is because the participant was transferred automatically from a state-based program without needing to provide medical evidence of their disability. The state-based program may hold their original medical documents.
- The person may have a record on our systems but never have submitted any medical documents or even applied to the NDIS!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Medical documents / assessment reports – Part 3 of 3

Other things to look out for:

- A participant may have dozens or even hundreds of medical reports on the system. They can be stored in numerous locations on PACE/CRM. They may be stored as attachments to other documents or inside subfolders. Please check our records thoroughly.
- Our PIA webform clearly states that we will provide all medical documents which are relevant to the most recent plan and were submitted in the **6 months** prior to the plan being finalised. If the applicant is specifically seeking some of other medical document, they must specifically ask for it via email.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Listed disabilities

What if this document does not exist?

- This is because the individual has not met access to the NDIS and no disabilities have been recorded.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Roster of care

Not for disclosure to any PIA applicant:

- Full names and details of other NDIS participants receiving care services in the same site.

What if this document does not exist?

- This is because the participant does not reside in supported independent living (SIL) and therefore does not have a roster of care.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Home and living supports (H&L) decision

Potential sensitivities that depend on the applicant's identity:

- Third party personal information (e.g. child representative's home address and contact number)

What if this document does not exist?

- This may be because the participant has never lodged a request for home and living supports – or their request has not yet been finalised. E.g. children who live at home with their parents will not have a H&L decision.
- It may also be because the participant received a decision in June 2022 or earlier. In these cases, the decision will be incorporated into their NDIS plan.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Payment summary

What if this document does not exist?

- This is because the individual has not met access to the NDIS or has not claimed and NDIS services yet.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Part 2: Complex Case Studies

1. When a participant does not exist at all on our records.

2. When some of the requested documents do not exist and we need to explain why.

3. How to redact small parts of documents, especially planner justification comments not suitable for disclosure.

4. Analysing a public trustee's authority to understand what is suitable for disclosure

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL
FOI 25/27-0366

ndis

PART 2: Writing good release emails Participant Information Access (PIA) Documents

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Page 34 of 134
OFFICIAL

Points to note -

- Email templates are designed to be a starting point to save time. Please adjust them to suit your audience.
- If you are writing to a participant, check their preferred communication method first. You can do this in PACE, CRM or they may specify in the original request.

The Australian Public Service Style Manual has lots of guidance about clear, concise writing.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Language and word choice

Subject

- The subject line is what the reader sees in their inbox. If the subject line is misleading or missing information, it may not get read!

Salutation

- The salutation directly addresses the person you're sending the email to. PIA correspondence should be gender-inclusive and avoid references to gender whenever possible (for example, Mr, Ms, Mrs).

If you are writing to a person for the first time, it's proper to use their full name. For example:

Dear Jane Smith

However, you may use their first name once you have established a rapport. For example:

Dear Jane (or Hi Jane)

Body

- The body of the email outlines the purpose the correspondence. It's important to understand your audience when responding. We need to write clearly and concisely in our emails. You don’t want to misunderstand an important point. Try to avoid using jargon, acronyms or "agency language".

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Part 2: Writing good release emails

- If the PIA has been delayed, apologise and explain that we have received a large volume of PIAs recently.
- Itemise all documents you provide.
- Itemise all documents you cannot provide and explain why.
- Try to help the applicant find what they need. Let them know they can ask Service Delivery for an explanation of decision letter. They can lodge an FOI for more complex documents. They can access other documents via the portal or directly from their providers.
- Let the applicant know what they can do if they aren't happy with our response to their PIA. Can you offer a call to explain things verbally?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Example Case 1

Release Email - Release email DRAFT.msg

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complex Case Study

Who can request information under the Participant Information Access scheme?

What requests cannot be processed under the Participant Information Access Scheme?

What should you do if you receive a request like this?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complex Case Study

If the request for participant Information contains mistakes, what should you do?

What are the requirements for POI (Proof of Identity) and Consent?

What are our next steps if POI and Consent are NOT met?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complex Case Study

What should you do if you can't find an Access Request Form, Evidence of Disability or Access Decision Letter?

What types of participant information should we look out for, that may be sensitive to release?

How many days do we aim to respond to the request?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complex Case Study

An authorised applicant requests all historical NDIA documents under PIA. Some of the documents include Third-Party Information, what should we do?

A Participants Nominee was removed from CRM and PACE 6 months ago. Can we still provide them with Information?

A Participant seeks access to their own mdical information, and you identify some potentially sensitive and triggering information. What can you do?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Further resources

- PIA email templates - this document contains many emails that can be used to communicate with applicants. Be wary of copy-pasting them.
- The Australian Public Service Style Manual has lots of guidance about clear, concise writing.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Questions or feedback?

Please email me via s47F - personal privacy@ndis.gov.au

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Assessing PIA Requests Before Registration

To register a new PIA matter, the email must satisfy these five conditions:

- **There is a clear request for information**
- **The information requested is available through the Participant Information Access Scheme**
- **The scope is distinct from previous active PIA requests**
- **The applicant isn't excluded from PIA for some reason**
- **The wording of the request is specific enough for the PIA team**

Question	If not, consider the following actions
1. Is there a request for information?	a. Request to upload new **consent forms,** forward to Enquiries (enquiries@ndis.gov.au) Reply to applicant that their email has been forwarded. b. Requests for **progress updates** (for ACTIVE matters) forwarded to AO/DM pairing and saved into SharePoint. c. **General feedback** (such as about Webform), forward to Enquires, Feedback or Online team as appropriate. Reply to applicant that their email has been forwarded. d. Requests to **change plans or decisions** (such as to update bank account details), forward to Enquiries. Reply to applicant that their email has been forwarded. e. Requests that previous request be **processed urgently** forwarded to AO/DM pairing and saved to SharePoint f. **Advice on the general process** of requesting information – either use template response or get a senior member of Strategy team to write back. g. Requests for progress updates/urgency (for **recently CLOSED matters**). Forward to AO/DM and add text that matter has recently been closed – they may need to check applicant received information. h. PIA requests to **delete information**, forward to Privacy team. Reply to applicant that their email has been forwarded. (**PIA** requests only). i. IF YOU AREN'T SURE, FLAG THE EMAIL AND ASK SOMEONE.
2. Is the information requested available through PIA? CHECK THE PIA WEBFORM	a. Does the applicant formally state they want the request processed under the **Freedom of Information Act** (without a PIA referral email)? Even if the scope of the request is suitable for PIA, drag email to FOI inbox and alert FOI triage officer (such as via Teams chat) for their actioning. FOI Triage officer will write to them to ask them if they want to withdraw the FOI

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOR WHAT WE CAN PROVIDE	request. If they do withdraw, FOI Triage officer will forward the email back to Information Access. b. If the scope of request falls outside PIA, can the requested scope be **processed through FOI**? This includes request for interactions, non-personal information (such as policy documents. Using template reply, email the back to the applicant to ask them whether they want to narrow their request to PIA-only documents or officially transfer to the FOI stream. c. Can it be processed by another team such as **Compensation**? (For example, a request to calculate a recoverable amount, which is an original document). Forward to Compensation (compensation@ndis.gov.au). Other examples might be requests to approve NDIS plans currently in draft mode – forward to Enquiries and reply to applicant suggesting they speak to LAC/planner. d. Can it be processed by Enquiries/NCC? This includes requests for very small pieces of information, such as what is my NDIS number? Enquiries can also provide documents that have already been released, such as letters. Forward to Enquiries. Reply to applicant that their email has been forwarded. e. Can it be processed by **Releases & Resolutions (R&R) or Legal Services?** For example, lawyers issuing subpoenas, a police officer seeking information without consent, a coronial inquest into a death, a child protection agency seeking information without consent but with their own legislation. Alert Director, who may instruct you to contact the applicant to make the request suitable for PIA (such as by obtaining a consent form) or alternatively, the Director may forward the email to R&R (information.requests@ndis.gov.au) or the Legal Services to ask if R&R can take carriage of the matter. f. IF YOU AREN'T SURE, FLAG THE EMAIL AND ASK SOMEONE.
3. Is the scope distinct from previous active PIA requests? CHECK SCOPE FOR PREVIOUS REQUESTS ON LEX	a. If it's **exactly duplicating an allocated, ACTIVE PIA matter**, send the email to AO/DM pairing just so they are aware. Save the email to the SharePoint folder. b. If it's providing **additional information for an allocated, ACTIVE PIA matter**, send to AO/DM pairing and ask if they can expand the scope or want it registered as a new matter. c. If it's **providing additional information for an UNALLOCATED PIA matter**, add the new email to the existing allocation template (sitting

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	in the REGISTERED folder), add a comment that there are two emails, update the scope on LEX, drag the second email into the SharePoint folder. d. If it's **requesting additional information for a recently CLOSED PIA matter**, register it as a new PIA. e. If it **exactly duplicates an existing FOI matter**, move it to actioned (FOI matters take priority). If both requests were sent within a short space of time, tell FOI Triage Officer who may choose to write back to the applicant to get them to withdraw the FOI. If this occurs, register it as a new PIA. f. IF YOU AREN'T SURE, FORWARD THE EMAIL TO THE AO/DM OF THE DUPLICATE REQUEST AND ASK FOR ADVICE.
4. Is the applicant excluded from PIA for some reason?	a. If the applicant is a **defendant lawyer or insurer** seeking information about claimant participants, send standard template response referring them to FOI. When they reply, forward their email (and any attachments from the original email) to FOI with an explanation. b. If it's due to **third party privacy concerns** such as a Domestic Violence/AVO alert on participant record (which means a parent cannot access personal information about their ex-partner for privacy reasons, send standard template response referring them to FOI. When they reply, forward their email (and any attachments from the original email) to FOI with an explanation. c. If the applicant is seeking information about a **deceased participant**, send standard template response referring them to FOI. When they reply, forward their email (and any attachments from the original email) to FOI with an explanation. d. If the applicant is **not an advocate or representative of the participant** (for example, business person seeking access to NDIS information for own tax purposes), send standard template response referring them to FOI. When they reply, forward their email (and any attachments from the original email) to FOI with an explanation.
5. Is the wording of the request specific enough for the PIA team	a. If the **wording of the request different** from the terminology we use on the PIA webform? If so, send a template response to the applicant asking them to submit their query through the webform. b. If the applicant replies that they are having **difficulty using the webform** or can't use it at all, send the follow-up template response that request they select from options below.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

NDIS Participant Information Access Scheme – Outline

Application

Applications are open to

- an NDIS participant
- a child's representative for an NDIS participant
- a nominee for an NDIS participant
- a prospective participant or the person who acted for the prospective participant in making an access request under the NDIS Act

An application must include

- sufficient information to identify the participant or prospective applicant and enable their file to be located
- sufficient information to establish (where an applicant is acting on behalf of a participant or prospective participant)
    - authority to act on behalf of the participant for the purposes of the NDIS Act
    - that the applicant is the same person as acted on behalf of the prospective participant in making an access request under the NDIS Act

An application can be made for

- documents on the participant's or prospective participant's own NDIS file in CRM
    - documents can be selected from a list of the types of documents available under the administrative access scheme
    - alternatively an application can be made by reference to a stage in the NDIS process such as an access request, current plan, or previous plan
- documents relating to fraud, compensation or legal advice or directions for an AAT process involving the NDIA will be excluded

An application can be made by

- completing an application form (this will be an online application form that will not allow the form to be submitted unless mandatory fields are completed). This can be completed on behalf of the applicant by the FOI Team or potentially the National Contact Centre
- providing all the information necessary to
    - identify the NDIS participant or prospective participant
    - establish the applicant's identity and authority to act on behalf of the NDIS participant or prospective participant
    - identify the documents sought - for example:
        - all the documents available
        - documents relating to the participant's current plan

Timeframe

- applications will be processed within 28 days (this complies with the requirements in the Privacy Act for requests for access to personal information of 30 days and aligns with decisions under the Participant Service Guarantee when implemented). An internal benchmark will be 14 days

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Processing

- applications will be processed by the FOI team who will access the NDIS file, find the requested documents, and convert them into a printable format. Documents will be mailed or emailed until they can be made available through the participant portal

Editing

- limited material will be excluded or redacted from documents of the kinds identified as being available under the administrative access scheme
- staff names, where they are not the planner Local Area Coordinator or delegate, will be redacted from copies of the documents given to the participant/prospective participant
- where material is redacted or access is refused applicants will be advised of other avenues for seeking access to the documents, including by making statutory access requests under the FOI Act and Privacy Act.

Decisions

- a decision to provide access to documents in response to an application will be made by an NDIA staff member authorised by the CEO under the NDIS Act to do so
- decisions on applications for access to NDIS files will be made in accordance with administrative access scheme policies and guidelines, which will be published on the NDIS website

Record keeping

- a record will be kept of each application
- administrative access scheme application records will be linked to NDIS participant and prospective participant files

Documents

Copies of documents

- access to requested documents will be provided by email to the applicant
- or in hardcopy sent by registered post to the applicant
- however if it appears that disclosure of information in the documents to the participant would be detrimental to their health or wellbeing they may be given to a qualified person (as provided for under the FOI Act) instead of the participant

Categories of documents available

- documents on NDIS participant and prospective participant CRM files in the following categories will be available:
    - CRM pages containing summary information about the participant/prospective participant
    - CRM pages containing information about people to contact in relation to the participant's NDIS participation
    - CRM pages containing personal details of the participant and their NDIS plan
    - Documents about interactions with the participant/prospective participant at various stages:
        - Access
        - Pre-planning
        - Planning
        - Implementation

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- Monitoring
- Review

- Records of general interactions about miscellaneous issues relevant to the participant's NDIS participation
- Documents relating to specialist advice such as
  - Supported independent living
  - Specialised disability accommodation
  - Complex support needs
  - Technical advice on disability supports, including home and vehicle modifications
- Documents recording inquiries, including inquiries from the participant/prospective participant and providers
- Documents recording feedback and complaints, including information about the person giving the feedback or making the complaint and the action taken by the NDIA in response
- Records of payment inquiries
- Records of a participant's/prospective participant's
  - Access application
  - Pre-planning
  - Planning
  - Implementation
  - Monitoring
  - Reviews

  Including:
  - Access request form
  - Record of consent provided by the participant/prospective participant
  - Document providing evidence is support of the access request
  - Impairment assessment
  - Decision on whether the prospective participant meets access criteria
  - Participant statement
  - Completed outcomes questionnaire
  - Completed assessment tools and checklists
  - Participant streaming factors and streaming decision
  - Completed risk assessment questionnaire
  - Completed planning conversation tool
  - Determination of funded supports
  - Determination of plan management
  - Draft plan
  - Final plan
  - Records of supports
  - Determination of funded supports
  - Provider quotations
  - Budget
  - Payment requests
  - Record of periodic payments
  - Records of staff tasks in relation to scheduled and unscheduled plan reviews

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

But excluding

- Records of compensation recovery action undertaken by the NDIA

- CRM pages to record the participant's budget including approved, allocated, spent and available funds
- CRM pages to record details of the participant's disabilities
- CRM pages to record referral of the participant for provider and community support
- Documents sent or received by the NDIA in relation to the participant/prospective participant, including
  - Evidence of disability
  - Proof of identity
  - Quotes for service provision
  - Nominee request
  - Correspondence from providers about the participant
  - Appointment of a nominee for the participant
  - Appointment confirmations and reminders
  - Plan approval
  - Plan extension
- Records of the participant's stream
- Documents relating to the participant's request for assistive technology and/or home modifications.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL

PIA end-to-end without NCC - TASK CARD

1. Registration, Allocation and Initial Assessment

Register matter Follow steps in PIA registration standard operating procedure. Registering PIA matters on LEX FOI - Standard Operating Procedure.docx The matter will automatically be allocated to **your name for** processing. If you will not continue processing this matter, re-assign it to Work pool – PIA case management in the **staff member/action officer field.**	☐ Yes	☐ No
Allocate matter If required, allocate additional matters to yourself via LEX FOI. Go to search tab. Clear all fields. Search for **status:** active **Matter type:** PIA **Staff member/action officer:** Work Pool - PIA case management **Date of valid request:** Add dates here to access oldest matters easily. eg 01/08/2025 to 07/08/2025. Click **search.**	☐ Yes	☐ No

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

This shows all registered PIA matters that have not yet been assigned to a staff member. If there are none for that date range move to the next week – eg 08/08/2025 to 14/08/2025 etc Allocate the oldest matters first.		
Check Proof of Identity (POI) against PACE / CRM Using the information from the webform submission pop out window containing the original request and accompanying files, complete POI and Consent checks: Complete Proof of Identity (POI) check in CRM: • Name • DOB • Address • Ref At least 3 of 4 of the above, must be provided by the applicant and these details must match NDIS records to confirm applicant's identity.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Check POI and consent using this guide as reference: PIA training_ POI Consent_ V1 approved March 2023.docx If the applicant is a parent, check if they are listed as a parent and as a child representative in CRM. In cases where the applicant is **not** the participant, a nominee or child representative and no valid consent	☐Yes	☐ No

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

form has been submitted with the request, check Consent against information held in CRM or PACE. In CRM, consent documents can be found in Inbound Documents, Consent under details TAB. Contracts and in interactions. In PACE, consent documents can be found in participants file under **Documents tab**. Check whether consent is recorded on CRM, and the applicant is listed under **Contacts tab** as a nominee or guardian or in some cases they are listed as an authorised representative(s) under Details tab, Consent tab in CRM. In PACE, consent will be recorded within participants file under **Relationships tab**. Check if a letter of authority/consent has been provided by the participant or an authorised representative; signed within the **last 12 months**.		
Proof of Identity (POI) and/or Consent NOT met If POI and/or Consent requirements have not been met, please draft an email seeking the required information from the applicant for your Delegate to review. Use the correct template, found in PIA Email Templates.	☐Complete	☐ N/A
If you send an email, save a copy to LEX FOI		N/A

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

Save all emails (internal and external) to the documents tab on LEX FOI. Edit each document to give it a meaningful category. For advice on automatically uploading emails to LEX FOI, see this procedure: Procedure - Automatically uploading emails to LEX FOI via the Drop-Box.docx		

2. Locate, Extract and Process Documents

Interpret scope of requested documents If the webform requests documents relating to a participants' plan, this means the request is for those documents relevant to the **most recent plan** and not all plans. If a request asks for medical documents, we take this to mean all medical documents which are relevant to the most recent plan and were submitted in the **6 months** prior to the plan being finalised.	☐ Complete	N/A
Locate documents in PACE and/or CRM. Use this guide to locate documents on CRM: PIA training_Documents provided under PIA and locations_V1 approved March 2023.docx **Save documents** into the matter SharePoint folder using these **naming conventions.** Naming conventions have been chosen to match up the document type with the webform listing.		

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

This document description will assist the participant to understand what parts of their request were able to be provided. **Your NDIS Application** A. YYYY-MM-DD Access Request Form **OR** A. YYYY-MM-DD Access Decision Letter **OR** A. YYYY-MM-DD Supporting Evidence Form **Your NDIS Plan** B. YYYY-MM-DD Planning Information **OR** B. YYYY-MM-DD Planner Justifications **OR** B. YYYY-MM-DD NDIS Plan **Your internal review of an NDIA decision** C. YYYY-MM-DD Outcome of Internal Review **Other Documents** D. YYYY-MM-DD (Medical Document/Assessment Title) **OR** D. YYYY-MM-DD Listed Disabilities **OR** D. YYYY-MM-DD Roster of Care **OR** D. YYYY-MM-DD Home and Living Supports Decision		
If any documents do not exist or cannot be found, add a file note to LEX FOI. You will refer to these notes in your release email.		
If a request seeks access to a payment summary, conduct an initial search for payment summary using	☐ Complete	N/A

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

the Participant's NDIS number in the following folder in SharePoint: 1. Freedom_of_Information 2. Participant_Information_Access 3. a. Matters 4. FY 2025-2026 Payment Summary reports 5. Folder for current month will be available. Select as appropriate. If case the payment summary has not yet been made available in the folder as specified above, complete a Payment Request email using the appropriate email template and send email to payment summary request officer.		
Use Adobe Acrobat DC to save documents as PDFs. Note there are multiple ways to create a PDF. Depending on the formatting of the document, you may need to use any of the below methods: 1. **Inbound CRM documents -** save as PDF. 2. **Outbound CRM Documents -** print to PDF. 3. **Create PDF-** Export as PDF- Planning and H&L documents. 4. Keep original version of document s (in original format) when creating new PDF version of documents. This is so you can verify the PDF process has not distorted the original contents. It is also because we may need the original for accessibility reasons.	☐ Complete	N/A

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

3. Prepare Documents and Release Email

Remove hidden information	☐ Complete	N/A
Sanitise documents	☐ Complete	N/A
Save as **PIA 25.26-XXXX – Documents** in the SharePoint matter folder Documents > Final Bundle.	☐ Complete	N/A
Draft **Release of Information** email using the correct template found in PIA Email Templates. • Explain your decision on POI/consent. • Add list of all documents released in dot point form. • Add customised explanation if any documents could not be required and why. • Attach documents for release Drag draft to the Information Access drafts folder	☐ Complete	N/A
If required, split final release email into multiple parts to ensure no single email exceed 9MB in size	☐ Complete	☐ NA

4. Privacy Check, Release and Closure

Ask a colleague to perform a privacy check on all your release emails. If they give feedback, implement it before releasing any emails. Use this checklist when performing PCs: Checklist - FOI - Privacy Checklist.docx	☐ Complete	N/A
Once privacy check has been completed, send email to applicant. Save sent email/s in the LEX FOI documents tab	☐ Complete	N/A

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

Close the matter in LEX FOI **Main details** 1. Go to the matter summary main details page. 2. Update **Status** field to **Closed** and enter the date closed 3. Enter the **outcome.** 4. Select save. **Tasks** 1. Close off all remaining tasks for this matter **File notes** 2. Add matter closed file note and fill out all details. 3. Add page numbers file note and follow the instructions.	☐ Complete	N/A
Open participant's PACE file and close off the PACE case, The PACE case reference number will be in the main **notes** box on LEX FOI.	☒ Complete	N/A
Ensure you have saved all relevant correspondence and documents into SharePoint (for working documents) or LEX FOI (for sent correspondence)	☐ Complete	N/A

5. Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
V1.0	s47F - personal privacy	Initial version based on LEX FOI processing steps	DRAFT	2025.07.03
V1.2	s47F - personal privacy	Applying redactions to sensitivities using the redact tool.	Approved	2025.09.25

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Processing Checklist

For Internal Use Only

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
V1.3	s47F - personal privacy	SOP Under review		2025.10.30
V1.4	s47F - personal privacy	Redactions removed	Approved	2025.11.06
V1.5	s47F - personal privacy	Review/revised SOP		2026.09.03

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI / PIA INBOX MANAGEMENT

URGENT Any correspondence from applicants in relation to an FOI matter on foot - forward immediately to relevant DM and AO.

URGENT Emails from other agencies requesting transfer of an FOI request under section 16 of the FOI Act - do not accept, but send as a matter of priority to FOI EL1, cc Director. Please note the urgency - this is an FOI matter "on the clock" (FOI legislated deadlines apply).

URGENT Emails from applicants requesting internal review of FOI decisions - register and allocate as IR, log on all platforms.

Emails from any participant raising complaint (only) about FOI decision following releases - forward to relevant DM and AO, cc FOI EL1 **-** send to FOI EL1 for advice.

The FOI manager will determine whether it is a potential request for internal review.

All emails from the Information Commissioner:

1. notifying or relating to a review matter: send to FOI EL1, requesting advice as to DM and AO pairing. On receipt of that advice, log on all platforms.

2. Notifying decisions on requests for extension of time - send to relevant DM and AO, cc FOI EL1

3. Anything else from OAIC to be forwarded to Director.

Do not reply to anything from OAIC unless directed to do so.

Requests for information from justice authorities (police, courts, etc):

Regardless of any other legal authority submitted with the request, if participant consent is provided, or can be provided, process as FOI.

If no consent provided, or able to be provided, refer to R&R team, s47F - personal privacy, cc

Requests from child protection authorities (State child protection offices etc) under related legislation - Refer to s47F - personal privacy, Legal Services Team.

All emails from the Ombudsman: forward to the Director

Complaints Team enquiries and queries from other line areas - forward to Director.

PIA / FOI ALLOCATION

For FOI if:

1. Sent to the FOI inbox by the applicant and:

a. is a request for documents
b. Provides address for decision (email address or providing other address)

Or

2. Sent to the FOI inbox by another area of the agency **and:**

a. Applicant states it is a request under the FOI Act
b. is a request for documents

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

c. Provides address for decision (email address or providing other address)

If a line area forwards a request for documents to the FOI inbox and the request does not mention FOI, then it is **not** a valid FOI request at that point and the applicant may be contacted to ascertain whether they want their documents under the FOI Act, or (where the documents requested are suitable for PIA release), whether they want them under PIA, in which case they may clarify their request through redirection to the webform.

Or

3. Addressed to **any** agency address and:

a. States it is a request under the FOI Act
b. Is a Request for documents
c. Provides address for decision (email address or providing other address)

For PIA if:

1. A request is sent to the Info.Access inbox and does not mention FOI
And
2. Is a request for documents that fall within the defined set of PIA documents.

If someone sends a request for PIA documents to Info.Access inbox, refer them to webform (template available).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

Guide

For Internal Use Only

Comparison of three information release mechanisms

This guide compares the different requirements for releasing information via 3 information release schemes.

- The Participant Information Access (PIA) scheme is an administrative release scheme created by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). The NDIA sets the parameters for this scheme including which applicants can use it and which documents can be released via it. However, the scheme must meet the minimum requirements of information release via the *Privacy Act 1988.*
- Australian Privacy Principles 12 (APP 12) is another way to access documents (personal information only) via the *Privacy Act 1988.*
- Freedom of Information (FOI) is another way to access **any** document that an agency holds (personal and non-personal documents) via the *Freedom of Information Act 1982.*

In the NDIA's Information Access team, we can theoretically release a document under any of these mechanisms. However, we mostly use PIA and FOI. This is because our staff are specifically trained in FOI and PIA and because we have traditionally seen APP12 releases as the responsibility of the Privacy team. However, this approach sometimes disadvantages applicants. There are many occasions where the Information Access team choosing to process a request via APP12 is the best outcome for an applicant.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
Timeframe	28 days	30 days	30 days with the possibility of multiple extensions.
Extensions	No extensions	No extensions	Multiple extensions: with agreement of the applicant, for complex or voluminous requests, to do third party consultations, to bring a deemed matter back into time to preserve review rights
Review rights	No review rights.	No review rights.	Many levels of review rights: internal review, OAIC review and ART review
Complaints mechanisms	An applicant could complain to the Agency if they are unhappy with how their request was processed.	An applicant could complain to the Agency if they are unhappy with how their request was processed.	An applicant could complain to the Agency if they are unhappy with how their request was processed.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
		An applicant then has the right to lodge a privacy complaint with OAIC if they are unhappy with the Agency's response.	An applicant then has the right to lodge a FOI complaint with OAIC if they are unhappy with the Agency's response.
Acknowledgement letter	Not required.	Not required.	Required within 14 days.
Request format	PIA requests can be made in writing or over the phone. Applicants do not need to state they are making a PIA request.	APP 12 requests can be made in writing or over the phone. Applicants do not need to state they are making an APP 12 request.	FOI requests can only be made in writing. Applicants **must** state that they wish for their request to be processed under the FOI Act.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
Documents	Only documents listed on the PIA webform.	Any personal information about the person.	Any document including non-personal information and third-party personal information.
Applicants	Only NDIS participants or their representatives	Applicants can seek information about themselves or about another person if they have consent to receive information about that person. This includes staff.	Any applicant.
Consent	Must have consent.	Must have consent.	The FOI Act is silent about consent. Personal information can be released without consent if it is reasonable to do so and/or if there are relevant public interest factors in favour of release.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
Deceased participants	**Cannot** process requests about deceased participants – consent dies with the person.	**Cannot** process requests about deceased people. The Privacy Act does not apply to deceased people. Information about deceased people is no longer considered "personal information" under the Privacy Act.	**Can** released information about deceased people. Section 47F of the FOI Act specifically protects the privacy of all people living and dead.
Third party information	Requests are generally referred elsewhere if there is sensitive third-party information contained in the documents.	Third party information must be redacted. Applicants do **not** have any right to seek the information of third parties under APP 12.	May be released, pending a third-party consultation and depending on whether the disclosure would be reasonable or in the public interest.
Consultations	No capacity to do consultations.	No requirement to do consultations.	Agency must do a request consultation process before refusing a request because it is too large to process.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
		If a request is too large to be processed, it can be refused without a request consultation process. If a request contains third party information, this can be refused without consulting the affected third party.	Agency must do a third-party consultation if it intends to release information of an affected third party.
Redactions	Minor redactions are possible but generally are avoided. PIA doesn't have review rights – this means we want to avoid redacting information without giving the applicant the right to object to our decision.	Any FOI exemption can be used to redact information – however, if we are applying significant redactions, it is in the applicant's interest to request the documents formally via FOI so they get review rights.	Any FOI exemption can be used to redact information.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
Statement of reasons	Agency must provide reasons for any refused documents – because administrative release schemes must at least adhere to the minimum requirements of APP 12 releases. This means release emails **must** explain the reason why documents do not exist or have been refused.	Agency must provide reasons for any refused documents. This includes explaining why we could not provide copies of documents that do not exist.	Agency must provide reasons for any refused documents in accordance with the additional requirements set out in section 26 of the FOI Act.
Overdue matters	Matter is overdue but remains active.	Matter is overdue but remains active.	Matter becomes a deemed access refusal. That is, the Agency is deemed to have made a decision to refuse the request.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

	PIA	APP12	FOI
Decision making level	No minimum APS level.	No minimum APS level.	Only APS6 staff and above are authorised decision makers in the NDIA.

Circumstances where APP12 may be preferable

- Applicant is seeking personal documents beyond the scope of PIA but **cannot make a request in writing** because they have a vision impairment or a cognitive disability. They are either seeking their own documents, or they have consent to access another (living) person's documents.
- Applicant has made a written request for personal documents beyond the scope of PIA, but their request does not state it is for the purposes of the FOI Act. They are either seeking their own documents, or they have consent to access another (living) person's documents. They have **not responded to multiple contact attempts to confirm they wish for their request to be processed via FOI,** potentially because of their disability.
- Applicant is a law firm that is seeking the person documents of a (living) person. They originally made their request in the form of a subpoena. Their subpoena was originally received by the Releases and Resolution team, who told them the NDIA cannot process it – unless they get a signed consent form. When the law firm provided consent, the R&R team forwarded the request to the FOI team. The request does not state it is for the purposes of the FOI Act so is invalid. The law firm is

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

seeking personal documents beyond the scope of PIA or is representing a third-party so cannot be transferred to PIA. **The applicant has already been waiting several months, and the court date is imminent.**

- Applicant has made a written request for personal documents beyond the scope of PIA, but their request does not state it is for the purposes of the FOI Act. They are either seeking their own documents, or they have consent to access another (living) person's documents. We have followed standard practice and asked the applicant to specifically state that they wish for their request to be processed via FOI, but **they insist that they do not wish to make a request via the FOI Act.** They quote the NDIS website or the NDIA's privacy policy, which specifically state the NDIA will give people access to their own personal information without needing to go through FOI.

- Applicant has made a written request for personal documents beyond the scope of PIA, but their request does not state it is for the purposes of the FOI Act. They are either seeking their own documents, or they have consent to access another (living) person's documents. Their request meets the definition of a streamlined release: it is for less than 10 documents that can be sourced from PACE or CRM, and these documents would ordinarily be released in full. **This matter can be efficiently processed by an APS5 early resolution staff to be completed in its entirety.** Forcing it through FOI so it must be signed off by an APS6 DM doesn't seem necessary, as the matter is low-risk.

Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	s47F - personal privacy	Created guide from information shared previously to Complex Personal team	APPROVED	2024.06.01
1.1	s47F - personal privacy	Added introduction and links to give context	Approved	2025.07.01

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

1.2	s47F - personal privacy	Added scenarios where APP12 may be preferable	Approved	2025.08.07

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Validity Criteria: Information Requests

This table highlights some key differences in how we assess whether information requests are valid depending on stream. This covers 5 common methods of information release: Participant Information Access (PIA), Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12), Freedom of Information (FOI) access, Freedom of Information (FOI) consent amendment and FOI Internal Review (IR).

For more detailed information on each of these request types, please refer to the relevant sections of these legislative acts:

- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act)
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act)

For more information about the key differences between PIA, APP12 and FOI, please see this guide: Guide - FOI - PIA vs APP12 vs FOI comparison.docx

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
Address Do we need an address? Not necessarily. We can be flexible and work out an accessible solution that meets the applicant's needs. For example, we have sometimes left PIA documents at an NDIA office for a participant to pick up in person because they had no	**Address** There aren't strict requirements about whether we need an address for APP12 requests, but we **prefer** an address for reply – home address **or** email address.	**Address** We need an address for reply – this can be a home address **or** an email address.	**Address** We need an address for reply – this can be a home address **or** an email address.	**Address** We need an address for reply – this can be a home address **or** an email address.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
other way to receive them.				
Method Request can be made via **any** method: writing, over the phone, in person, via a YouTube video, etc	**Method** There aren't strict requirements about APP12 requests, but we **prefer** requests to be made in writing. Technically, a request could be made via **any** method: writing, over the phone, in person, via a YouTube video, etc	**Method** Request **must** be made in writing.	**Method** Request **must** be made in writing.	**Method** Request **must** be made in writing.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
Stream Applicant does **not** need to request their matter is specifically processed via PIA. We can choose to divert it to this stream (unless it has been specifically requested via another stream).	**Stream** Applicant does **not** need to specifically request their matter is specifically processed via APP12. We can choose to divert it to this stream (unless it has been specifically requested via another stream).	**Stream** Applicant **must** show their intention for their request to be specifically processed via FOI.	**Stream** Applicant does **not** need to specifically request their matter is processed via FOI. We have to assume that the request was intended to be processed with this stream if it comes to us.	**Stream** Applicant can only apply for an IR if they have received a decision letter relating to a **valid FOI that they specifically identify** (this can be for an access or amendment matter). We can't accept internal reviews for PIA or APP12 matters.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
POI/Consent Applicant **must** satisfy minimum points of identity (POI) and consent. Otherwise, they have not proven they have a right to access personal information in accordance with the NDIS Act or the Privacy Act.	**POI/Consent** Applicant **must** satisfy minimum points of identity (POI) and consent. Otherwise, they have not proven they have a right to access personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act.	**POI/Consent** Applicant does **not** need to provide POI or consent for their request to be accepted and for processing to commence. The statutory timeframe starts in accordance with the FOI Act and we seek that information later, if required.	**POI/Consent** Applicant does **not** need to provide POI or consent for their request to be accepted and for processing to commence. The statutory timeframe starts in accordance with the FOI Act and we seek that information later, if required.	**POI/Consent** Applicant does **not** need to provide POI or consent for their request to be accepted and for processing to commence. The statutory timeframe starts n accordance with the FOI Act and we seek that information later, if required.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
Applicant eligibility Only **participants or their authorised representatives** are eligible to lodge PIA requests. This is why we must know people's identity and see evidence of their consent before proceeding. If another applicant tries to lodge a request via this stream, we cannot accept it. We	**Applicant eligibility** People can only request personal information about **themselves or someone else they have consent** to receive information about. This is why we must know people's identity and see evidence of their consent before proceeding.	**Applicant eligibility** People **don't need to give their name** to make a valid FOI request! Anyone can request personal information about anyone via FOI – even if there isn't any evidence they have any authority to receive that information. We must still treat the request as valid and liaise with them during the statutory timeframe	**Applicant eligibility** People **don't need to give their name** to make a valid FOI request! Anyone can request personal information is amended via FOI – even if there isn't any evidence they have any authority to receive that information. We must still treat the request as valid and liaise with them during the statutory timeframe to	**Applicant eligibility** Applicants can only request internal review if they had **internal review rights**. If the primary FOI decision was overdue when it was released, the applicant does not have internal review rights.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
should consider which alternate information release scheme would be the best fit for them.	If another applicant tries to lodge a request via this stream, we should consider which alternate information release scheme would be the best fit for them	to get the information we need.	get the information we need.	
Other limitations We can only accept requests for **approved documents,** as listed on our online PIA webform. If people want access to other documents, we should	**Other limitations** We can only accept requests for **personal** information. If someone requests non-personal documents, it cannot be treated as an	**Other limitations** We can accept a request for any document – **provided we have enough information to identify the document and the document**	**Other limitations** There are **extensive** requirements that applicants must meet to make a valid amendment request via the FOI Act. Please	**Other limitations** Applicants can only seek internal review within **30 days** of their primary FOI decision being made (assuming

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
consider which alternate information release scheme would be the best fit for them.	APP12 request. We should consider which alternate information release scheme would be the best fit for the applicant.	**already exists on the date the FOI request is made.** Unclear requests or requests for new documents to be created are not valid FOI requests – see practical refusal reasons in **section 24AA(1)(b).** More info: Early Resolution - How to decide if a request	read **section 49** of the FOI Act in depth. If an applicant cannot satisfy these strict requirements, we can consider if they meet the looser requirements under Australian Privacy Principle 13 (APP13) and consider if they've made a valid request for correction via the *Privacy Act 1988.*	they had internal review rights). Seek advice from the Reviews team to determine if an IR is valid.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)	Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)	Freedom of Information (FOI) access	Freedom of Information (FOI) amendment	Internal Review (IR)
		should be processed via FOI.docx		

Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	s47F - personal privacy	Initial Version	DRAFT	2025.07.09

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

DOCUMENT 16
OFFICIAL
FOI 25/27-0866

ndis

NCC Training: PIA Documents- Locating, Extracting and Storing Documents in PIA

Training Session to support the NCC Participant Information Access Work Knowledge Article- Locating and Extracting Documents in PIA

ndis.gov.au | 06 January 2026

Created by: s47F - personal privacy

Training Date: 18/06/2026

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL
FOI 26/27-0866

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin and in the spirit of reconciliation, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing knowledge and connection to land, sea, waterways and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past present and emerging.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL
Page 202 of 334

Background & Overview

Reference: Participant Information Access Work Knowledge Article: *NCC PACE Knowledge Management Portal*

Training Overview:

- To support National Contact Centre (NCC) staff to action Participant Information Access (PIA) requests provided by the Information Access & Privacy Branch.
- To provide support and understanding of the NCC Knowledge article relating to accessing, locating, extracting and storing information during the processing of Personal Information Access (PIA) requests.
- To develop staff capability in working with documents and information stored in PACE/CRM business systems
- Session 1- 60 minutes (Presentation of Information in Knowledge article and demonstrating creating Planner Justifications and Listed Disabilities using PACE/CRM, 10 minute break, 20 minutes practice using the templates/answering questions and showing additional locations for PIA documents within PACE/CRM.

Created by: s47F - personal privacy

Version Control: Last Updated **16/06/2026**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Function of PIA and the role of NCC

Participant Information Access (PIA): PIA allows individuals and their authorised representatives to access their own personal data and information, with privacy safeguards and identity verification before release.

The PIA process with support of the NCC, provides administrative support in locating, extracting, recording and facilitating the release of documents from NDIS business systems (CRM/PACE) to participants or their authorised representatives, under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act).

What types of Information can be requested:

In PIA, we handle requests for the following information:

What information do you want?

Your NDIS application
Access Request Form, Access decision letter, Supporting evidence form

Your NDIS plan (for current and past NDIS Participants only)
Planning information, Planner justifications, A copy of your NDIS plan

Your internal review of an NDIA decision
Outcome of NDIA internal review

Other documents (including medical)
Medical documents / assessment reports, Listed disabilities, Roster of care (We will only have this document if the participant is in Supported Independent Living), Home and living supports decision, Payment summary

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA Requests

Information requests:

Information requests can be submitted via webform or via email to the Information Access inbox.

For information requests submitted via webform, documents supplied relate to the ***current plan*** and only those within the previous 12-month period are included. If requested, medical documents are included up to the 6 months prior to a Plan approval.

If the plan has been extended or updated, please include additional copies of the plan extension/update with the current plan.

What information do you want?

Your NDIS application
Access Request Form, Access decision letter, Supporting evidence form

Your NDIS plan (for current and past NDIS Participants only)
Planning information, Planner justifications, A copy of your NDIS plan

Your internal review of an NDIA decision
Outcome of NDIA internal review

Other documents (including medical)
Medical documents / assessment reports, Listed disabilities, Roster of care (We will only have this document if the participant is in Supported Independent Living), Home and living supports decision, Payment summary

TRAINING EXAMPLE

From: Participant Email <Name@gmail.com.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 17 June 2026 2:59 PM
To: INFORMATION ACCESS <Information.access@ndis.gov.au>
Subject: Request for NDIS Information

Dear NDIS,

I'm hoping to get a copy of all my past history as I need an assessment completed. Could I please have a copy of my access documents I submitted then and all of my medical documents please that you have on file?

NDIS: 4XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Name:
DOB:
Address:
Phone:

Thanks,

Participant

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Process Overview

This is a brief overview of the process *(**Procedure 4**- Page 6)* outlined in the knowledge article. After this overview slide, I will be referring directly to the knowledge article relating to the information below and using PACE/CRM systems.

1. **Review Request**
   - Navigate to the PIA Agent Tracker (click new item for your allocation)
   - Review the original request email/webform request to determine the documents requested.
2. Search for the participant's NDIS number and **locate participant record** in PACE/CRM
3. **Find the relevant document(s) or information**
   - Preview or open the document to make sure it is for the correct participant and matches the document request.
   - Locate the relevant template (Listed Disabilities/Planner Justifications) if needing to extract information
   - Extract the information required and add to templates
   - **Save all documents in correct Sharepoint folder (Original documents)** using correct naming conventions. Please include the full report name when saving and not acronym e.g YYYY-MM-DD *Functional Capacity Assessment.pdf (not FCA)*
4. **Review the request and documents** saved in original documents folder on the Sharepoint.
   - Ensure all documents are saved and stored correctly
   - Check Planner Justifications/Listed Disabilities have been saved as Word documents (tin case of review by AO)
5. **Add enquiry note** in PACE system

Person account is accessed by the National Contact Centre to help process a Participant Information Access request.

Date accessed: DD/MM/YYYY
Details of the request: Include what documents were processed.
Name:Log on ID:Service OfficerNational Contact Centre

Reference: Link

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Process Overview- Reference

(page 4 onwards)

4 Procedure

Follow the relevant procedure steps to complete the enquiry.

4.1 Participant Information Access (PIA) requests

When you have found your allocated matters:

- Go to **SharePoint link** and select the link.
- Click **Original Request** folder.
- Open the **Webform Submission** form or **Information Request** email.
    - This will tell you which documents you need to retrieve and save.
    - It also includes the participant's NDIS number.

What information do you want?

Your NDIS application
Access Request Form, Access decision letter, Supporting evidence form

Your NDIS plan (for current and past NDIS Participants only)
Planning information, Planner justifications, A copy of your NDIS plan

Your internal review of an NDIA decision
Outcome of NDIA internal review

Other documents (including medical)
Medical documents / assessment reports, Listed disabilities, Roster of care (We will only have this document if the participant is in Supported Independent Living), Home and living supports decision, Payment summary

Do you want information about you or someone else?
About someone else

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Trouble Shooting/Additional Information

If you are unable to locate specific documents, consider the following:

- Has the participant met access? We will only have some documents on file (e.g., NDIS plans) if the participant has met access.
- Is the participant a Defined Participant or was access granted via a Verbal Access Request? If so, we may not have an access request form or supporting information on file.
- The Interactions and Case History in CRM/PACE can give information to support Access Documents/Access request queries.
- See additional Knowledge articles contained in this guide or on the Knowa 2.0 portal for specific help in an area you are seeking e.g., How to Upload and Link Documents to Cases in PACE Knowledge Article.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Questions and/or feedback?

Please contact your team leader with any further questions regarding this process and please see further additional knowledge articles.

- **NCC Service Officers (NCC SOs)** please send your feedback to your NCC Team Leader. Your Team Leader may have an answer to your question or have information to share with you to resolve your questions and feedback.
- **NCC Team Leaders (NCC TLs)** please review the feedback from NCC SOs and provide advice, information and resolve questions where possible. NCC TLs can request new or updated NCC Guidance Resources and assistance using the relevant form on the National Contact Centre Service Desk on the intranet.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Freedom of Information



s47F - personal privacy

Parliamentary, Ministerial & FOI Branch

March 2021

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What does the FOI team do?

The FOI team is responsible for:

- Managing the processing of, response to, and reporting on FOI requests for NDIA documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act)
- Undertaking internal reviews of FOI decisions
- Working with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) on OAIC reviews
- Undertaking Australian Privacy Principle 12 requests to provide a right to access personal information held by the NDIA.
- Managing the processing of, response to, and reporting on PIA requests under the new Participant Information Access (PIA) scheme.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Snapshot of FOI

The NDIA must adhere to the legislative requirements for processing FOI requests under the FOI Act, which includes:

- Notifying the applicant of a decision within 30 days of receipt of a valid request - s15(2)
- Ensuring the request is valid – s15(2)
- Ensuring the application is not an unreasonable resource burden - s24AA
- Consultation with the applicant and/or legal team as necessary on validity/scope/exemptions – for example under s15(3), s24AB
- Undertaking internal reviews where an applicant requests reconsideration of an FOI decision – s53
- Working with OAIC on FOI complaints from NDIA participants – s54F

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

NDIA Approach to FOI

The NDIA centralised the decision-making within the FOI team.

This approach enables decision makers to develop expertise in FOI decision making and has dedicated staff to ensure FOI decisions are made within the legislative framework and deadlines.

A decentralised approach hands over the responsibility of processing requests to business areas.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Introduction of Participant Information Access (PIA)

The intent of the Participant Information Access (PIA) scheme is to provide NDIS participants and prospective participants with access to a range of documents held in their NDIA file in CRM.

A full launch of PIA commenced on 1 July 2020.

PIA was introduced to:

- Allow participants easier and quicker access to their personal NDIS information
- Promote efficiencies in the document release process and potentially reduce the number of FOI requests

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Snapshot of PIA

Under the PIA scheme, NDIS participants and prospective participants can request information:

- using an online form
- from a pre-defined list of documents (by ticking certain boxes)

In processing PIA requests, the FOI team:

- Verifies the identity and authority of the person making the request
- Identifies, searches and bundles the information requested
- Provides the documents within the time limit of 28 days outlined in the Service Improvement Plan (but works to an internal deadline of 14 days)

Unlike requests made under the FOI Act, with PIA:

- Documents are provided without a formal decision letter and statement of reasons
- There are no internal or external review rights

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Sections of PIA webpage

What information are you requesting access to? *

- ☐ **Access to the NDIS**
  Information about your access to the NDIS, including the information you provided to support your access request and the reasons for the access decision.
- ☐ **NDIS plan**
  Information about your current NDIS plan, including the information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision.
- ☐ **NDIS plan review**
  Information about your recent NDIS plan review, including the information relied on to make the decision and the reasons for the decision.
- ☐ **Medical and other documents**
  Medical and other documents that you have provided to the NDIA.

(Choose one or more options)

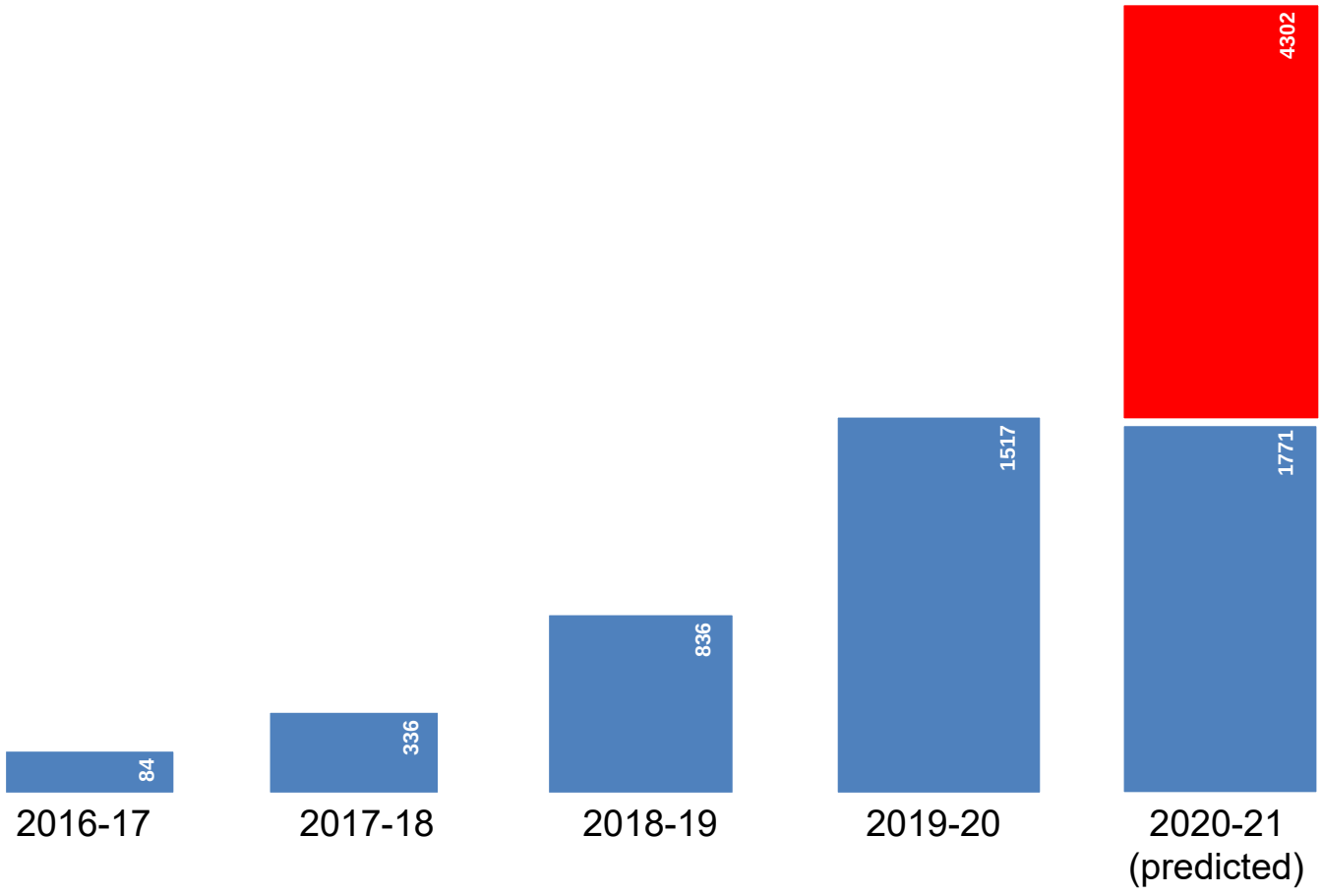
Is the information you are seeking about you or someone else? *

- ○ About you
- ○ About someone else

(Choose one option)

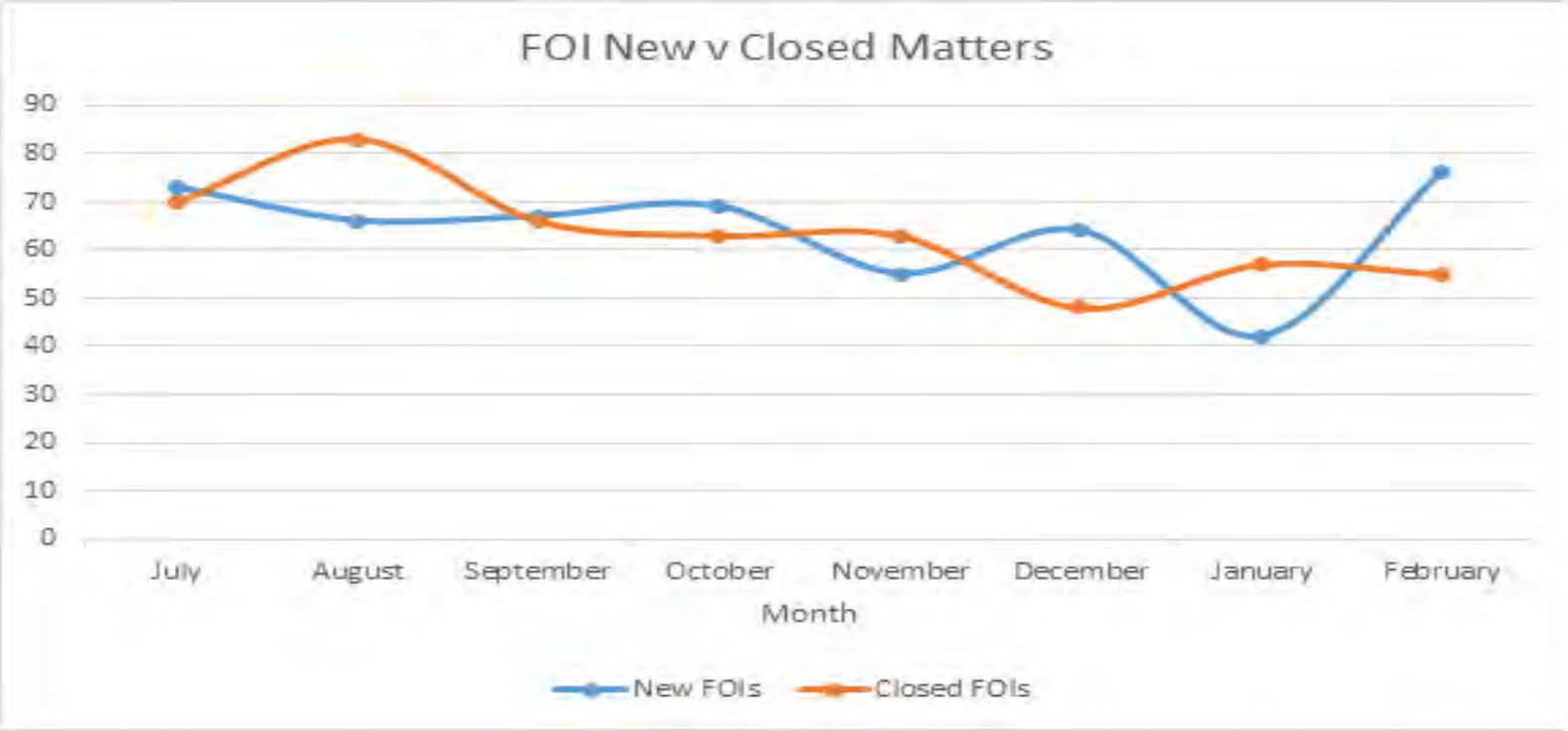
This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Volume of FOI and PIA requests



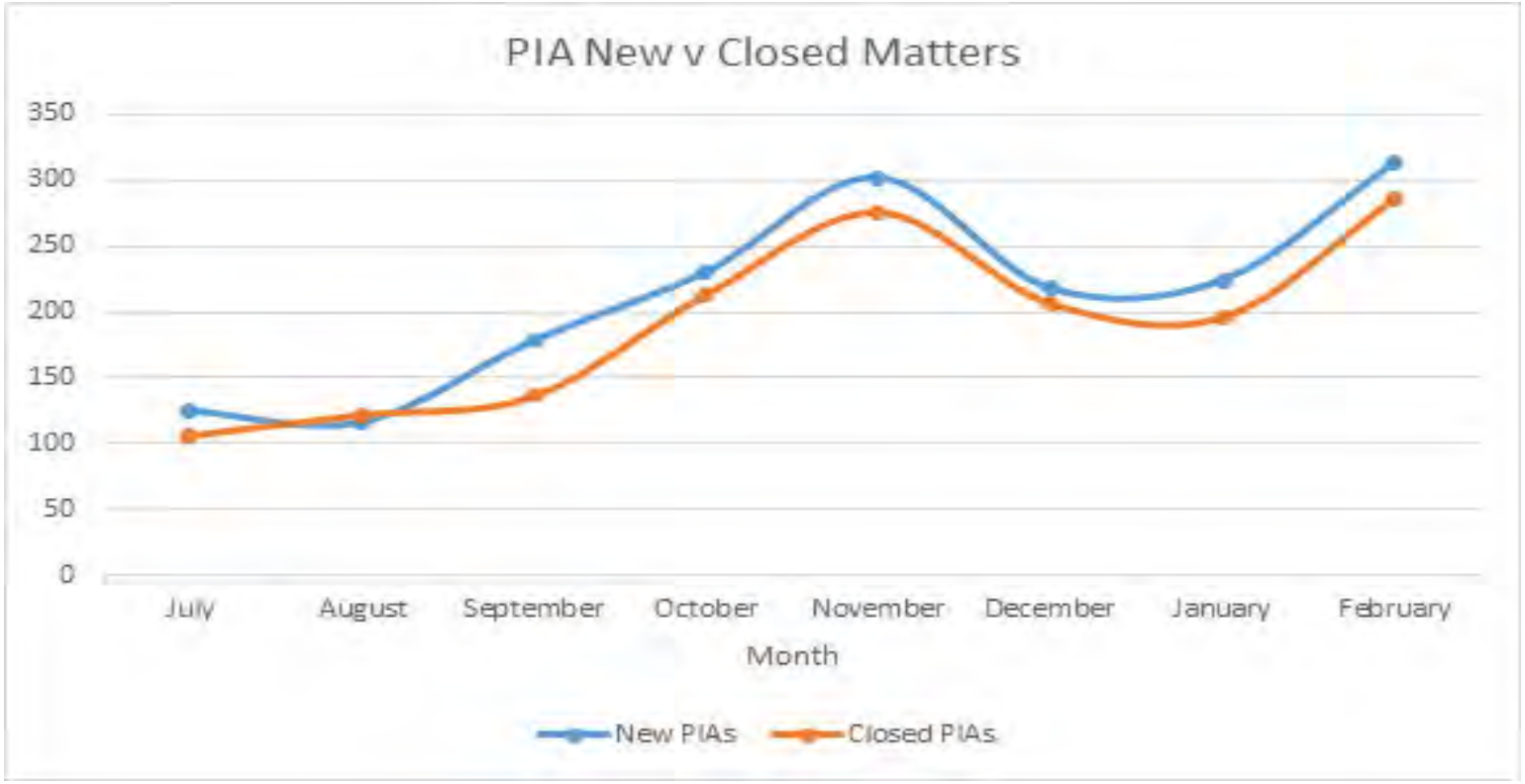
This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Workload FOIs



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Workload PIAs



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Has PIA been a success?

Client Perspective

- The huge increase in PIA requests since the inception of the PIA scheme suggests that applicants are happy to make an administrative request rather than a legislative one under the FOI Act.
- A very small percentage of PIA applicants go on to make FOI requests, which suggests that from an applicant perspective PIA has been successful.

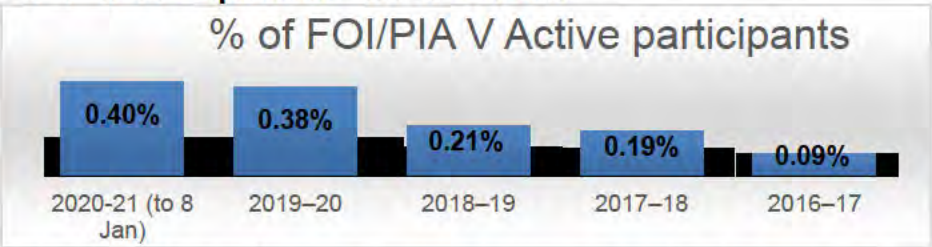
Branch Perspective

- The intent of PIA was to reduce workload and subsequently lead to a reduction of staff. Although the workload has more than doubled, the staff are continuing to process requests within set timeframes, which demonstrates that PIA has driven efficiencies.
- If the NDIA had not commenced the PIA scheme, all requests would have been FOI requests - requiring almost double the processing time of the PIA requests.
- Without an increase in resourcing we would not have met legislative and Service Improvement Plan timeframes.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Challenges

- As the number of participants increase so does the number of FOI and PIA requests.
- We are also seeing the proportion of participants making FOI or PIA requests increase.



- This is leading to an exponential increase in workload.
- Despite the increase in total requests, some efficiencies have been realised through the use of ICT in the form of an automation tool.
- As the FOI team mainly consist of labour hire staff, the turnover rate is higher than with APS staff – which leads to an ongoing need to recruit, onboard and train new staff.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

General Governance and Management Risks

NDIA does not utilise an over arching end-to-end system to manage the entire life cycle of the FOI request.

Don’t have our own FOI/PIA case management system.

Rely on someone doing data entry and saving documents to the R drive.

The allocation of work is completed manually through use of a spreadsheet.

Tracking registrations and requests is not automated and it is questionable whether it is compliant in terms of record keeping.

There are a number of IT systems that have to be searched in order to process requests (CRM/Lex/PDMS/ACE) which is inefficient and time consuming.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Automation

Current Situation

- Automation tool introduced to help reduce the time taken for PIA searches.
- The process still requires manual checks to determine:
  - if the request is valid and the person has authority to make the request
  - If the documents bundled contain any information that needs to be redacted due to privacy reasons (or medical reasons for certain participants).
- In November 2020, the automation tool broke – the FOI team has been manually processing PIA requests since that time. Literally involving cutting and pasting every single page.

Future state

- Ideally clients will self serve through full ‘look up’ ability across all of their personal information held by NDIA.
- This requires new systems functionality and solutions for:
  - determining validity and authority to access the documents (potential solution through MyPortal)
  - Ensuring accessibility of all documents
  - Ensuring privacy of third parties
  - Ensuring sensitive medical documents are not made available to vulnerable participants

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Outreach

The FOI team is currently undertaking a number of outreach projects including working with:

- Legal Services to complete an FOI/Legal protocol for FOI complex and sensitive cases
- MO and Media to ensure awareness of FOI complex and sensitive cases
- ACE business managers to ensure the ACE system is compatible with, and drives efficiencies in, processing FOI and PIA requests and eventual participant direct access to their records
- OAIC on IC reviews

Future outreach projects are focussing on reducing NDIA's reputational risk through:

- proactive internal stakeholder engagement to ensure staff understand FOI and their responsibilities under FOI
- educating partners and staff on records keeping noting the intended audience and legislative requirements

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Opportunities

With a centralised approach, the FOI team are able to focus solely on managing FOIs and PIAs.

The challenge is to drive efficiencies in the context of ever increasing demand.

Opportunities for efficiencies include:

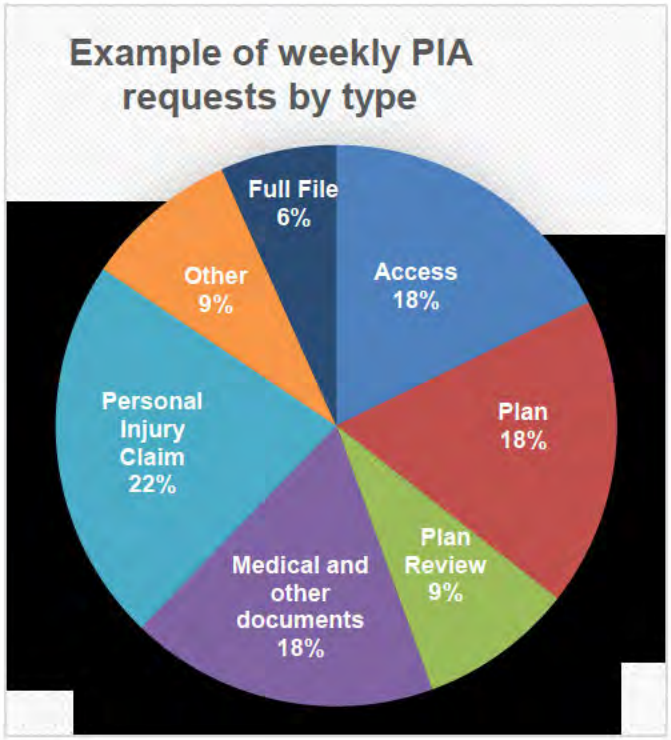
Reviewing business strategy and conducting business process redisgn.

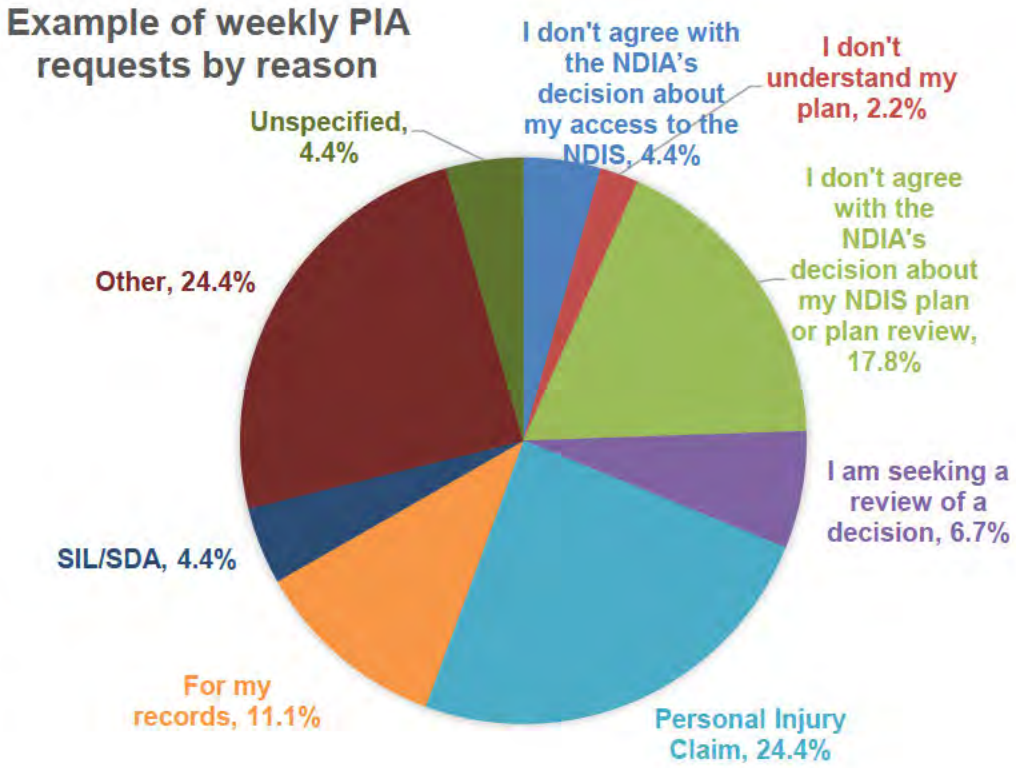
Introducing a more robust program management approach across FOI and PIA to include:

- Triage
- Executive dashboard
- Traffic light system highlighting risks
- Placing high value resources against high value risk
- Analysis of cost drivers and outputs

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Hot Spots in PIA





This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

QUESTIONS?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Participant Information Access (PIA)

Actioning Officer (AO) Processing Checklist

This step: To be completed by the AO throughout the carriage of all PIA matters and saved onto the relevant SharePoint matter folder.

PAI templates location.

Complete Matter Assessment

1. Check POI/Consent

A. Complete Proof Of Identity (POI) check: • Name ✓ • DOB ✓ • Address ✓ • NDIS Ref ✓ At least 3 of 4 have to be provided and match NDIS records in order to confirm participant's identity.	☐ Yes	☐ No
B. Complete Authority and Consent check: A letter of authority or consent form has been provided and signed by participant or an authorised representative; within the last 12 months.	☐ Yes	☐ No
C. Does the requesting email address cause suspicion or concern? Is the email address offensive or seem like it is spam? Seek advice from DM	☐ Yes	☐ No
D. If necessary, prepare and send the cleared follow up emails seeking POI, consent/ authority, with a privacy check.	☐ Complete	☐ NA
E. POI/Consent was not correct? Do not proceed and follow step **1.D**. Await for response from applicant. If response not provided within 7 days- send close email after discussion (found in PIA Email Templates) and proceed to step **6 – Close matter.**		
F. Scope of documents Provide a detailed list of documents and their relevant document folders falling in scope as part of your assessment, noting only the documents found in **Appendix 1** can be released through PIA	☐ Complete	
G. Payment Summary If a request seeks access to a payment summary, prepare and send a consultation email to Scheme Finance and attach the Request for Payment Information, using the correct template (found in PIA Templates).	☐ Complete	

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

2. Process documents

Prepare email to Mentor with bundled documents.

A. Extract documents Download documents into relevant **Original Documents** of the SharePoint matter folder Please ensure you number documents when saving; and add a document description: For example: '*1. ARF 2021'*	☐ Complete
B. Combine the documents Combine documents in scope for review, using Adobe Acrobat DC.	☐ Complete
C. Save documents Save the combined documents onto **Working Versions** folder within matter folder in SharePoint and name file: 'PIA 21/22-XXXX - Documents AO'.	☐ Complete
D. Document layout in Adobe Add headers and footers to the document bundle, using Arial Font, red and size 12, and the security marking: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE. Your header and footer should be centred and look as follows: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE FOI 21/22-0001 Page 1 of 100 OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE	☐ Complete
E. Numbering document Number individual documents using **CAPITILISED BOLD ARIAL** Font, **red** and **size 12** and place it on the right hand side of first page of each document, aligned with header. For example, '**DOCUMENT 1**' ***Tip:** Individual documents are bookmarked in Adobe, so you can easily access documents without the need to scroll through.	☐ Complete
F. Redactions and sensitivities Read documents and mark up document sensitivities, ensuring they are blank boxes (matching colour of document background), and adding comments where necessary for clarity. Common sensitivities: staff names, streaming questions and justifications, internal email addresses and third party information.	☐ Complete
G. Payment Summary Bundle Payment Summary from Scheme finance if required in same documents	☐ Complete

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

3. Send prepared document bundle for Mentor review

The next step is to attach the prepared document bundle and submit for Mentor review, alongside the drafted release email.

A. POI/Consent Ensure POI and/or authority requirements have now been met, if not initially.	☐ Yes	☐ No
B. For Mentor review Begin preparing the 'For Mentor Review' email, using the correct template (found in PIA Email Templates). Please ensure you adequately describe any sensitivities that have been marked up. For example, 'streaming justification marked up for redaction'.	☐ Complete	
C. Release of information Draft and attach 'Release of Information' email using the correct template (found in PIA Email Templates).	☐ Complete	

4. Prepare documents for release after delegate review complete

Once Mentor has reviewed documents for release, they will issue a 'Delegate Review' email and await instructions on release from Delegate.

Save delegate instructions in SharePoint's matter folder named Internal Correspondence as soon as received.	☐ Complete	
A. Make DM changes Upon receiving 'Delegate Review Complete' email from Delegate, carefully review any changes and ensure you communicate with Delegate in instances where you need clarity about changes.	☐ Complete	
B. Save documents Open up the version of documents reviewed by the delegate, and save onto working versions of SharePoint's matter folder as 'PIA 21/22-XXX – Documents DM'.	☐ Complete	
C. Redactions Apply redactions (where necessary)	☐ Complete	☐ NA
D. Remove hidden information	☐ Complete	
E. Sanitise documents	☐ Complete	

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

F. Save as 'PIA 21/22-XXXX – Documents' onto Final Bundle folder of SharePoint's matter folder	☐ Complete	
G. Split final document bundle into 9MB size files (where necessary)	☐ Complete	☐ NA

5. Prepare release email

Once final bundle is ready for release, prepare and send documents to the applicant.

A. Prepare release email Using the 'Release of Information' email cleared by the Delegate, prepare email for release and attach the final bundle/s.	☐ Complete
B. Place email in 'Info.Access' Drafts folder and ask another member of the team to conduct a privacy check.	☐ Complete
C. Once privacy check has been completed, send email to applicant. Save sent email/s in SharePoint's matter folder named Communication with Applicant as soon as sent.	☐ Complete

6. Close matter

After the release of documents to applicant, please close matter off on all platforms.

A. Open LEX and search for the released matter, click on 'Main Details' and update the matter information: 1. Change status to 'Closed' 2. Add closure date, and 3. Relevant details in Matter Summary	☐ Complete
B. Update the PIA Database to reflect the date of closure, documents released and any relevant comments, as required.	☐ Complete
C. Open participant's CRM file and close off the interaction added by the registration team when request was received.	☐ Complete
D. Ensure you have saved all relevant correspondence and documents onto SharePoint's relevant matter folders.	☐ Complete
E. Notify the Delegate that matter is now closed, using the 'Matter Closed' template found in PIA Email Templates.	☐ Complete
F. Move relevant PIA folder from active to closed folder in sharepoint/one drive.	

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Document Locations in CRM

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Access to the NDIS	
Access request form (The Access Request Form (ARF) is the form participant completes to apply for the NDIS)	Copy of access request form. • CRM - Documents - Inbound Documents (usually found at the bottom of the Inbound folder, may not be available when the participant is **defined** in the program, how to find out defined or no: CRM - Internal use - State and Territory Load data)
Access decision letter (When NDIA decide if participant is eligible for the NDIS, it's called an 'access decision'. NDIA sends participant a letter to tell if they are eligible, to explain the reasons for the access decision and their next steps)	Copy of access decision letter. • CRM - Documents - Usually on Outbound Documents– Access Met – DIS or Access Met - EI (sometimes can be found in Inbound Documents folder)
Determine the access decision	• CRM – Pathway - Review Application (relevant NDIS plan) – Implement - FOI Requests - Create FOI Request- pre-planning and planning data (only first three pages of that document) • CRM – Pathway Tab – Screenshot/s of access decision (when automation tool does not work can do screenshot option)
NDIS plan*	
Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan	Information collected at a planning meeting and includes participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation. • CRM – Pathway - Review Application (relevant NDIS plan) – Implement - FOI Requests - Create FOI Request- pre-planning and planning data
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan	Planner justifications include the draft and final NDIS plan. • CRM – Pathway - Review Application (relevant NDIS plan) – Implement - FOI Requests - Create FOI Request- pre-planning and planning data
Current NDIS plan	Copy of letter outlining current NDIS plan. • CRM - Documents – Outbound Documents - Immediate Plan Approval/ Plan Approval / Plan Only Cover letter folder
NDIS plan review	
Outcome of NDIS plan review	Copy of outcome of plan review letter. • CRM – Documents – Inbound Documents – s100 letter is for Internal Review Outcome • S100 request means: Internal Review Request • S48 request: Request for a plan review • S26 request: Review of Reviewable Decision

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

Medical and other documents	
Evidence of disability (Evidence of disability (EOD) is provided to help NDIA make a decision about the applicant's (participant's) eligibility for the NDIS)	Copies of any evidence of disability (EOD). • CRM - Documents- Inbound Documents (usually found at the bottom of the Inbound folder with ARF or separately as EOD or as separate document from health professionals, e.g.: OT Report, GP support letter, Specialist report/ letter, psychologist report, physio report, PEDI CAT)
Medical documents / assessment reports	Copies of medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions. • CRM - Documents- Inbound Documents- for Access it can be available in EOD tab or can be uploaded separately; for planning decisions those can be available in Plan review documents/ review documents tab or can be uploaded separately.
Supporting evidence form (Supporting evidence form (SEF) can be completed to provide evidence to support applicant's (participant's) application)	Copy of supporting evidence form. • CRM - Documents- Inbound Documents- SEF/ ARF/ Supporting Evidence
Recognised disabilities tab	Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities. • CRM – Disabilities- Primary/Secondary.
Roster of care	Copy of Roster of Care (ROC). • CRM- Documents- Inbound Documents- can be found usually with Homes and Living Documents / Plan review documents/ Internal Review documents
Payment summary	Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports. • Fill out payment request template and send email to s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies, usually take one week to get payment summary. • **To fill out form: Good to know below info** **Requestor will be :** AO **Support Start Date:** 1st day of 1st Plan (can be found on CRM- Pathway- Review application for 1st plan/ or CRM- Documents- Outbound Documents- Plan approval from 1st NDIS plan) **Support End Date:** Date of Request (available on Carriage email) **Siebel Data**: will be yes **only** when 1st plan approval prior to the 1 July 2016

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

APPENDIX 1

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE THROUGH PIA

Access to the NDIS	
Access request form	Copy of access request form.
Access decision letter	Copy of access decision letter.
NDIS plan*	
Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan	Information collected at a planning meeting and includes participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation.
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan	Planner justifications include the draft and final NDIS plan.
Current NDIS plan	Copy of letter outlining current NDIS plan.
NDIS plan review	
Outcome of NDIS plan review	Copy of outcome of plan review letter.
Medical and other documents	
Evidence of disability	Copies of any evidence of disability (EOD).
Medical documents / assessment reports	Copies of medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions.
Supporting evidence form	Copy of supporting evidence form.
Recognised disabilities tab	Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities in CRM.
Roster of care	Copy of Roster of Care (ROC). The spreadsheet includes information relating to participants not in PIA request. Need to ensure we only provide information relating to said participant.
Payment summary	Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

DOCUMENTS NOT TO BE RELEASED – (If requested, needs to be referred to FOI)

ECEI Early Childhood Early Intervention	Internal document to assess Eligibility under the ECEI
FSSI Family Services & Support Information	Now known as the ECEI.
CBSN Capacity Support Building Need tool.	Capacity Support Building Need tool.
TAB/TAT	Evidence used internally for assessing decision
ROC Roster of Care	The spreadsheet includes information relating to participants not in PIA request. Need to ensure we only provide information relating to said participant.
Transcripts	Only available through FOI.
Checklists/Calculations	Internal processing tool.
Emails	Cannot include any emails however can use attachments to email if it is a medical document/ report.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency

DOCUMENT 19
OFFICIAL
FOI 25/27-0866

ndis

Determining Suitability: PIA vs FOI

Quick Reference Guide (QRG)

ndis.gov.au | 06 January 2026

Created by: s47F - personal privacy

Last updated: 06/01/2026

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL
FOI 26/27-0866

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past present and emerging.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

OFFICIAL
Page 238 of 334

QRG Background & Details

Created by: s47F - personal privacy

Version Control: Last Updated **06-01-2026**

Purpose: A quick guide to assess whether a matter is a Personal Information Access (PIA) request or more suitable under the Freedom of Information (FOI) process.

Organisations need to correctly identify whether a matter falls under Personal Information Access (PIA) or Freedom of Information (FOI) to ensure compliance with legislation and internal policy.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Understanding PIA and FOI

- **Personal Information Access (PIA):** PIA allows individuals to access their own personal data with privacy safeguards and identity verification before release.
- **Freedom of Information (FOI):** FOI is a legislative process granting public access to government information, subject to exemptions and public interest.

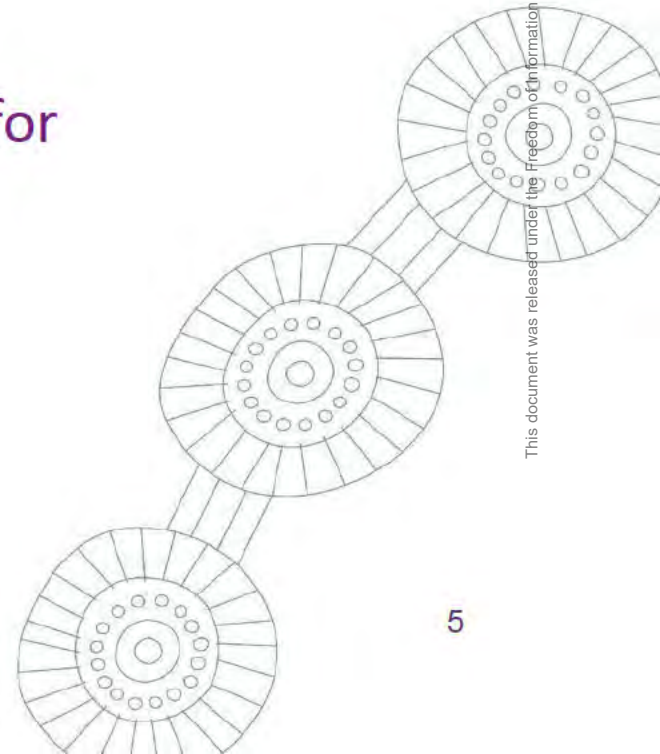
Importance of Correct Classification: Correctly distinguishing PIA from FOI prevents legal breaches, delays, and reputational risks for organisations.

Ensuring Compliance and Transparency: Applying clear guidelines supports timely responses and upholds privacy and transparency obligations.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Decision Process

1. Does the request relate to an individual's own personal information?
2. Is the request broader than their own records?
3. Has the request been made under FOI Act?
4. Does the information include personal details of others?
5. If the request is under PIA, have we checked the documents for sensitive information?



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

What to Do if Matter is FOI

If you determine the matter is more suitable for FOI, follow these steps:

- Stop current handling under PIA or other processes.
- Forward the request to the FOI team: Email the FOI Team immediately to foi@ndis.gov.au and Include all relevant details.
- Document the decision: Record why the matter was classified as FOI on LEX.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Questions and/or feedback?

Please email me via s47F - personal privacy@ndis.gov.au

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

DOCUMENT 20
OFFICIAL
FOI 25/27-0866

ndis

Decision points: Participant Information Access (PIA)

Overview of key decision points in the PIA process, from receipt to release.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Page 74 of 334
OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

FOI 26/27-0866

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Decision points

1. Email categories: New request, follow-up correspondence or NFA
2. Basic streaming: POI, FOI, APP12 or R&R?
3. Changing streams
4. PIA validity: POI
5. PIA validity: Consent
6. Interpreting the scope of PIA requests: General rules
7. When documents don't exist
8. Sensitive documents and complex PIAs
9. Conducting a privacy check (PC)
10. More resources

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Decision point: Email category

1. **New request** for documents or a response
   - Assess stream
   - Assess validity
   - Register on LEX FOI and allocate to best work stream. Assign a task with a timeframe
2. **Follow-up correspondence**
   - Check records to identify the responsible person
   - Forward to this person or escalate to a senior person
   - If appropriate, summarise the key facts, decision to be made and timeframe
3. **Email requiring no further action (NFA)**
   - Archive

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Streaming: New requests for documents

Participant Information Access (PIA)

- Only seeking documents listed on the **PIA webform**
- Applicant is **NDIS participant**, prospective participant or their representative
- Applicant must have evidence of informed, recent **consent**
- Participant is **living**
- **No domestic violence or custody concerns**

Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP 12)

- Only seeking **personal** information – this includes the information of participants, nominees, staff, etc.
- Applicant must have evidence of informed, recent **consent**
- Participant is **living**
- Suitable when applicant does not agree to go via FOI or would be disadvantaged by the FOI process

Freedom of Information (FOI)

- Can seek **any kind of document:** personal and non-personal
- Applicant can be **anyone**. They do not have to give their name.
- Consent is helpful but **not mandatory**
- Participant can be **living or deceased**
- Applicant can do anything they want with the documents shared

Somewhere else

- Law firm has issued a **subpoena:** Release & Resolutions
- Court has issued a **coercive notice** compelling the NDIA to provide evidence: Release & Resolutions
- Police officer is investigating a **deceased** participant or participant **accused** of a crime: Release & Resolutions
- R&R team an impose limitations on what the applicant can do with the documents shared

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Changing streams: Release & Resolutions

- If a request suitable for the **Release & Resolutions (R&R)** team has been sent to Information.Access@ndis.gov.au, we forward it to Information.Requests@ndis.gov.au and ask if the R&R team will take carriage of it. We summarise the key aspects of the matter and justify why it is more suitable for R&R. This helps R&R triage the matter.

- The R&R team may contact the applicant and, if appropriate, direct them to withdraw their subpoena or other coercive notice. The R&R team may advise the applicant that if they get evidence of consent, their request can be processed by our team. Therefore, expect for some of these requests to return!

- The R&R team commonly forward us requests for documents where the applicant has evidence of consent to receive the requested information. In general, R&R does not process any requests where the applicant has evidence of consent. However, they are not experts on the differences between PIA and FOI. Therefore, it's up to us to assess which stream is the most appropriate. In particular, pay attention to law firm requests: is the law firm is representing the participant or the party opposing the participant?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Changing streams: Australian Privacy Principle 12

- If a request suitable for **Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP12)** has been sent to Information.Access@ndis.gov.au, we can choose to register and process it as an APP12 request without informing the applicant. This is because there is no requirement for applicants to formally state that their request is intended to be processed via APP12. We can choose to divert requests to this stream.

- Staff in the Information Access team process requests made via APP12.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Changing streams: Australian Privacy Principle 12

- If a request suitable for **Freedom of Information (FOI) has been** sent to Information.Access@ndis.gov.au, we forward the request to FOI@ndis.gov.au with a summary of why the request is more suitable for processing via FOI. The FOI triage staff will contact the applicant to make their FOI request valid, if required.

- If a request is suitable for processing via the **Participant Information Access (PIA**) scheme but has been formally requested via the FOI Act, we must treat it as a valid FOI request unless it is withdrawn. Forward it to FOI@ndis.gov.au with notes indicating that this is a valid FOI request but, if it was withdrawn, it would be suitable for processing via PIA.

- The FOI triage staff will contact the applicant to seek their written withdrawal. If they are successful, they will send the request back to the PIA stream. If they are unsuccessful, they will register and process their request via FOI.

- If a request suitable for via PIA has been sent to FOI@ndis.gov.au but not formally requested via the FOI Act, the FOI triage staff will forward it to Information.Access@ndis.gov.au for processing. Always verify that it is suitable for processing via PIA: is the applicant living? Is the applicant representing the participant? Are they only seeking documents listed on the PIA webform? Have you confirmed there are no domestic violence or custody concerns? If you identify any issues, please speak to your Team Leader.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Have POI and Consent Been Met?

In order for a PIA request to be valid, the applicant must provide sufficient points of identity (POI) and evidence of their authority to receive the information.

We call these 2 elements **POI** and **consent.**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has POI Been Met?

Points of identity (POI)

- POI is how we determine that a person is who they say they are. We don't want to mix up the records of 2 participants with similar names or share information with an applicant committing identity fraud!
- The NDIA asks individuals to provide at least 3 out of 4 of these details:
  - Full name
  - Date of birth
  - Address (including former address)
  - NDIS reference number

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has POI Been Met?

Points of identity (POI)

- In some cases, an applicant cannot provide 3 out of 4 standard POI details. In these cases, it is permissible to use other identifying details to confirm a person's identity, if you have escalated to a team leader.
- For example, a lawyer from Legal Aid is representing a participant accused of a crime. The participant has a cognitive disability and does not know their NDIS number. The participant has no fixed address. Legal Aid knows their name, date of birth, phone number and email address.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has POI Been Met?

Points of identity (POI)

- In some cases, an applicant may technically meet POI requirements but you still have concerns. In these cases, it's appropriate to seek additional information to ensure you are releasing information about the right person.

- For example, a lawyer representing a participant in a compensation case provides their name ("Peter Parker"), their date of birth, a former address that they lived at 5 years ago but no NDIS number. This name is fairly common and it is possible there are multiple people with the same birthdate with this name or something similar. It's unlikely but possible they could have lived at the same address 5 years apart. Law firms often submit requests about people who do not exist on NDIS records. You may wish to ask for the participant's mobile number and/or email address to verify the participant's identity.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has POI Been Met?

Points of identity (POI)

- If we don't have POI, register the PIA using the prefix **INV** for invalid on LEX FOI using the matter type is **Participant Information Access (PIA).** Invalid PIA matters are assigned to the Triage staff for action.

- We contact the applicant twice to seek additional identifying details. We give the applicant about 5 business days between each email. If the applicant cannot provide POI, we send the applicant a courtesy email telling them we have closed their matter.

- If an applicant provides sufficient POI (and consent), the matter is registered and processed by the case management team.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has Consent Been Provided?

Consent

- Consent is evidence that a person has the authority to act on another person's behalf.
- Consent can be limited to one specific instance, or it can be general and enduring.
- Consent can be verbal or in writing.
- A person doesn't need consent to access their own information.
- If an applicant is listed as a participant's authorised representative, that demonstrates their authority to access that participant's personal information. But it's important to remember just because a person is listed as a family member on a participant's record, that doesn't mean they are automatically an authorised representative!

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has Consent Been Provided?

Consent

- Written consent can exist in many forms. This includes the standard NDIA consent form, but it also includes a letter written and signed by a participant.
- Verbal consent can be accepted. This means calling the participant and asking them to verify over the phone whether they give their consent to the applicant to access specific documents. If you obtain verbal consent, you must document it via a file note on the LEX FOI record.
- Consent must be **current.** In general, we accept consent forms signed up to 2 years ago however this is just a guideline and not a strict rule. It matters if the participant's circumstances have changed significantly during those 2 years. It also depends on the applicant.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has Consent Been Provided?

Consent

- Example of when “recent consent” is not acceptable: a support coordinator lodges a PIA request with a consent form that was signed 3 months ago. Except, the participant’s records show they switched to a new support coordination company 2 months ago.

- Example of when “old consent” may still be valid: a law firm representative a participant in a long-running compensation case lodges a PIA with a letter signed 2.5 years ago. Alerts on the participant’s file show the compensation case is still active.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has Consent Been Provided?

Consent

- Consent must be informed and specific. This means we have enough information to demonstrate the person who signed the consent form knew what permissions they were granting and new what the consequences would be.

- Consent must be voluntary and the person must have capacity to give consent. If a participant has a legal guardian, this means they cannot sign a consent form to grant another party access to their personal information. Instead, the legal guardian must sign.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has Consent Been Provided?

Consent – Things to Think About

- Is the consent form signed? Is it a signature or it is a typed name?
- Does the person who signed have the authority and capacity to grant consent? If a person has consent, they can't grant that consent to other professionals. Only the participant or authorised representative gave grant others consent.
- Is the signature dated? Has the person accidentally added their date of birth instead of the date they signed?
- Is it a general consent form that gives access to everything, or does it only given access to specific documents?
- Do the documents requested through PIA match those listed on the consent firm?
- Do the documents requested through PIA match the reasons given on the consent or the applicant's professional role?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Determining PIA validity: Has Consent Been Provided?

Consent

- If we don't have evidence of consent, register the PIA using the prefix **INV** for invalid on LEX FOI using the matter type is **Participant Information Access (PIA).** Invalid PIA matters are assigned to the Triage staff for action.
- We contact the applicant twice to seek evidence of consent. We give the applicant about 5 business days between each email. If the applicant cannot provide evidence of consent, we send the applicant a courtesy email telling them we have closed their matter.
- If an applicant provides evidence of consent (and POI), the matter is registered and processed by the case management team.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Interpreting Scope: Rules of thumb when extracting PIA documents

You may encounter multiple versions of the same documents on the participant's file. Use these rules of thumbs when determined what documents to provide.

- Provide only the most recent access request form – unless the applicant specifically requests an older one.
- Provide only the most recent NDIS plan and associated planner justifications, unless they specifically request older ones.
- Provide all medical documents which are relevant to the most recent plan and were submitted in the **6 months** prior to the plan being finalised. If the applicant is specifically seeking some of other medical document, they must specifically ask for it via email.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Multiple PIA requests

If an applicant places multiple PIA requests, follow these rules of thumb:

- Combine multiple simultaneous PIA requests, if all the matters are currently active and the applicant AND participant are identical. We treat subsequent PIA requests as “additions” to the primary request. The applicant does not need to provide POI and consent every single time – we can use their already provided POI and evidence of consent.
- If the participant is the same but the applicant is different, treat them as separate PIA requests. This is because we need to assess POI and consent separately for each request.
- If an applicant has lodged a series of PIA requests over a longer period, only extract documents that have been created since they were last sent documents. This is especially important for support coordinator requests, who may lodge multiple PIAs about the same participant each year.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complexities: When Documents Don't Exist

- **Access request forms** may not exist if the individual has never applied to the NDIS, so we do not hold any records about them. The participant may believe that a professional applied on their behalf years ago. Or the applicant may be a law firm that is seeking documents "just in case" they person applied for the NDIS at some point in the past.

- If a person is **defined** in the program, no **access request form** will exist. There may not be medical evidence showing their diagnoses. This is because the participant was transferred automatically from a state-based program.

- A participant may have completed a **Verbal Access Request** (VAR) form only. In this case, no written access request form will exist. These are not released via PIA.

- Many forms are not mandatory. For example, **supporting evidence form** is **not** a mandatory form.

- **Payment summaries** will only exist if the person met access to the NDIS and has claimed NDIS services via their plan.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complexities: When Documents Don't Exist

- If a person applied to the NDIS but was **declined**, they will not have documents like NDIS plan and planner justifications. These documents will only exist for people who met access.
- If a person's **NDIS plan** is still in draft stage, their final NDIS plan will not yet exist.
- **Outcome of internal review** letters only exist if the participant has applied for an internal review and it has been finalised.
- **Home & Living supports decisions** may not exist. This may be because the participant has never lodged a request for home and living supports – or their request has not yet been finalised. E.g. children who live at home with their parents will not have a H&L decision. It may also be because the participant received a decision in June 2022 or earlier. In these cases, the decision will be incorporated into their NDIS plan.
- **Roster of Care** may not exist. A roster of care only exists if a participant is living in Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Sensitive document content or circumstances not suitable for PIA

- Some medical reports are **highly sensitive** and are not suitable for release via PIA. For example, a confidential psychologist report that was never supplied to the child representative which contains accusations that the child representative is abusing the child. Or a psychologist report that was written while the participant was incarcerated and reveals their offending history.

- Many PIA documents contain the **personal information of third parties** and are not suitable for release in full to all applicants. Some planner justifications contain the full names of NDIA staff members. Some medical reports contain information about the parent's status as a person with disability.

- Identifying **domestic violence or custody concerns** during document processing.

- Planner justifications containing internal concerns not suitable for release via PIA, for example, free-text notes describing **allegations of fraud.**

- Rare circumstances in which the **participant dies** during the PIA processing period.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Complex PIAs

- **Possible sharp practices.** For example, support coordinators (SC) charging participants to lodge PIA requests on their behalf. SCs may lodge 50 requests for different participants in a single day. They may lodge a PIA request for each participant every 3 months. These matters should be escalated for action.

- No evidence of **informed consent.** For example, support coordinators sending us unsigned consent forms or multiple consent forms with the same copy-pasted signature. Support coordinators seeking access to documents beyond the scope of their role as SC, such as evidence of a participant's compensation reduction amount. These cases should be escalated. In rare circumstances, the payment integrity team may alert us to an active investigation into a provider's practices.

- **Complex consent issues**, for example financial trustees seeking information about an NDIS participant's medical conditions. Seek team leader support to assess complex consent issues.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Conducting a Privacy Check (PC)

Start with the release email:

Check the To, CC and BCC fields, verify every email address included.

Check the whole email chain – remove any internal emails/staff surnames.

Check the names of any attached files – is the reference number consistent/correct? Are the names clear/appropriate?

Then the attachments:

Open each attachment – do the contents match the document name?

Are the documents for the correct participant? **Check every page**.

Are there any highly sensitive documents marked **not for further distribution?**

Is there anyone else's **personal information** included?

Are the headers/footers correct/legible and document labels consistent?

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

More resources

- FOI decision points – a companion training series that covers key decision points in freedom of information (FOI) processing, from receipt to release.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

FOI 26/27-0866

Questions?

My contact details: s47F - personal privacy@ndis.gov.au

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

PIA DOCUMENTS

Access to the NDIS	CRM - Inbound
Access request form (ARF)	Documents - Inbound Documents (usually at bottom of the Inbound folder, not available when the participant is **defined**, how to find out if defined: Internal use - State and Territory Load data)
Access decision letter	Documents - Usually in Outbound Documents– Access Met – DIS or Access Met - EI (sometimes can be found in Inbound Documents folder)
Determine the access decision	• Pathway - Review Application (relevant NDIS plan) – Implement - FOI Requests - Create FOI Request- pre-planning and planning data (only first three pages of that document) • Pathway Tab – Screenshot/s of access decision (when automation tool does not work can do screenshot option)
Evidence of disability documents	**CRM - Inbound**
Evidence of disability (EOD)	Documents - Inbound Documents (usually found at the bottom of the Inbound folder with ARF or separately as EOD or as separate document from health professionals, e.g.: OT Report, GP support letter, Specialist report/ letter, psychologist report, physio report, PEDI CAT)
Medical documents / assessment reports	Documents- Inbound Documents - for Access it can be available in EOD tab or can be uploaded separately; for planning decisions those can be available in Plan review documents/ review documents tab or can be uploaded separately.
Supporting evidence form (SEF)	Documents- Inbound Documents- SEF/ ARF/ Supporting Evidence
Recognised disabilities tab Screenshot of primary and secondary disabilities	. Disabilities- Primary/Secondary.
NDIS plan*	**CRM - Pathway**
Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan	Pathway - Review Application (relevant NDIS plan) – Implement - FOI Requests - Create FOI Request- pre-planning and planning data **Delete** Page 1 of Subsection 3.3 – *Record additional streaming factors* **Delete** all sections of Subsection 3.11 – ***'Draft Plan'*** **Delete** Subsection 3.12 from Subsection 3.12 Final Plan (Rename section as Final Plan)
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan Planner justifications include the draft and final NDIS plan	CRM – Pathway - Review Application (relevant NDIS plan) – Implement - FOI Requests - Create FOI Request- pre-planning and planning data **Delete** Staff names and log-on PIA IDs (only where identified as log-on IDs otherwise leave in)

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

NDIS plan*	CRM - Outbound
Current NDIS plan Copy of letter	Documents – Outbound Documents - Immediate Plan Approval/ Plan Approval / Plan Only Cover letter folder
Previous NDIS plan/s	
NDIS plan review	**CRM – Outbound / Inbound**
Outcome of NDIS plan review Copy of outcome of plan review letter.	• CRM – Documents – Inbound Documents – s100 letter is for Internal Review Outcome • S100 request means: Internal Review Request • S48 request: Request for a plan review • S26 request: Review of Reviewable Decision
Other documents	**CRM - Inbound**
Roster of care (ROC)	Documents - Inbound Documents - can be found usually with Homes and Living Documents / Plan review documents/ nternal Review documents **Delete** other residents' personal information
Payment summary Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports	Email: s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies@ndis.gov.au. • Fill out payment request template and send email to s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies, usually takes one week to get payment summary. • **To fill out form: Requestor will be :** AO **Support Start Date:** 1st day of 1st Plan CRM- Pathway-Review application for 1st plan/ or Documents-Outbound Documents- Plan approval from 1st NDIS plan) **Support End Date:** Date of Request (available on Carriage email) • **Siebel Data**: **only** when 1st plan approval prior to the 1 July 2016

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL.

Registering Participant Information Access (PIA) Matters on LEX FOI

This standard operating procedure (SOP) describes the steps to register a new Participant Information Access (PIA) matter on the LEX FOI case management system. It is designed for use by the Triage & Early Registration (TER) and Personal team of the Information Access section.

1. Recent updates

Date	What's changed
August 2025	Addition of NCC and update to Matter number spreadsheet (Page 18 Step 10)
August 2025	Added step 8 to page 16 to reflect adding a copy of the **original email** to the **original request** folder in SharePoint. The purpose of this is to enable NCC staff to continue to assist with processing PIA requests without having access to LEX FOI.
January 2026	Added additional step **4.11 Closing PACE enquiry case** to ensure staff are closing the cases once registration process is complete. This step is critical to maintaining the efficiency of the PACE system and preventing a backlog of open cases.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

2. Checklist

Topic	Checklist
Pre-requisites	❑ Access to LEX FOI. ❑ Access to the Information.Access@ndis.gov.au shared mailbox ❑ Access to the PIA matter number spreadsheet and the Freedom of Information (FOI) SharePoint site. ❑ Access to PACE (including the ability to create new cases on PACE).

3. Background

Registration is an administrative process which records PIA requests on the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) case management systems.

- The **PIA triage officer** reviews each request to confirm it is suitable for PIA processing. This includes confirming that:
    - Specific documents have been requested,
    - The requested documents have been approved for release through PIA as listed on the NDIA's webform,
    - The participant is alive,
    - The applicant is the participant or their representative, and;
        1. The request is not intended to be processed under a different information release mechanism, such as via subpoena, court order, direction to produce, or via the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). If the request was originally made via a mechanism, but has since been withdrawn, it may be appropriate to process via PIA - provided it meets all other criteria.

For more information, use this resource: Guide - FOI - PIA vs APP12 vs FOI comparison.docx

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- Requests which **cannot** be processed via PIA:
    - Law firms who are **opposing** the participant in legal proceedings. These law firms may represent hospitals, insurers or transport accident commissions.
    - Parents seeking information about children when there is a domestic violence (DV) alert on their participant record,
    - Applicants seeking information about deceased persons,
    - Any applicants not representing participants for example, police officers investigating participants.
- The PIA triage officer confirms the applicant has provided sufficient points of identity (POI) and evidence of consent to receive the request information. They tag the email to show these tasks have been completed.
- The PIA triage officer moves the email to the **unregistered requests** mailbox subfolder for registration.

4. Procedure

4.1 Initial steps/review

1. In the Information.Access@ndis.gov.au mailbox, select the **unregistered requests** folder.
2. Sort the folder by date. Start with the oldest matter.
3. Mark the email as read. Tag the email with your name using the coloured labels.
4. Confirm that the request is suitable PIA (see further guidance in **background** section above). Check the subject line, body of the email and all attachments.
5. If request cannot be processed through PIA, alert team leader or PIA triage officer.
6. **Important: If the email request contains multiple participants, you must register each PIA matter separately for privacy reasons.**

4.2 Basic Assessment

1. Look up the participant on PACE or CRM using the identity information provided.

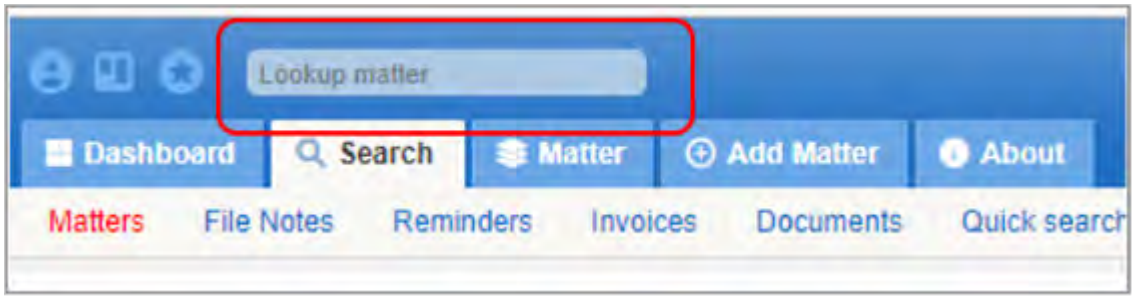
This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

2. If the participant information contains mistakes, use your judgement to decide if these are acceptable or significant errors.
    - Acceptable errors include small typos in name or NDIS number, or the reversal of the applicant and participant's name in the webform. Continue processing the matter if there is a small, acceptable error. However, add a note to the LEX FOI record.
    - Significant errors include an attached consent form that refers to a totally different participant. Matters with significant errors cannot be processed until the significant error is remediated by the applicant. Alert the team leader or PIA triage officer.

4.3 Assign a unique reference name

PIA matters are identified by **reference number** and **reference name.** Both number and name must be unique. This is to ensure each request can be distinguished from all others. Reference numbers are allocated sequentially. Reference names are assigned based on the participant's surname.

1. Check the PIA Matter Numbers spreadsheet for the next available number.
2. In the registration officer column, mark the next empty row with your initials to indicate that you have claimed the number.
3. Log into **LEX FOI.** Search for these terms in the **lookup matter** field: PIA + 26 + participant's **surname** only. Separated each term with spaces. Drop-down search results will appear, showing all **PIA** matters registered in the 25/**26** financial year with that **name**.



This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

4. Determine if the surname has already been assigned to a PIA matter in the current financial year.
5. If the surname has **not** been assigned to any other PIA matter in this financial year, use the surname as the reference name by pasting it into the **matter name** column of the **PIA matter numbers** spreadsheet. For example, **Bloggs.**
6. If the surname has already been used this financial year, click on the matter to open it. Determine if the previous matter relates to the **same participant** by checking full participant name and NDIS reference number.
7. If the previous requests relates to the **same participant**, add a number after the surname to indicate that this is the second request about this participant. For example, **Bloggs 2.** This helps staff to identify matters that can be processed more quickly, as identical documents may have already been extracted and processed.
8. If the surname has been used by a **different** participant in the current financial year, add the participants first initial to the name and search again using the lookup matter field. For example, **J Bloggs**. This helps to distinguish matters about multiple members of the same family.
9. If this name has already been allocated to a different participant, add as many additional letters as you need to until you find a unique name. For example, **Jo Bloggs, Jos Bloggs, Jose Bloggs**, etc.
10. These two rules can be combined, for example, **Jo Bloggs 2** is a valid reference name.

4.4 LEX FOI main details

1. Select **Add Matter**
2. In the **title** field, paste in the PIA reference number which you selected in the **PIA matter numbers spreadsheet.** E.g.- PIA 25.260000 (Surname)
3. In the **snapshot** field, summarise the nature of the request in a succinct and consistent way. This helps staff to understand the size of the request and it's importance at a glance. For example:
    - Personal injury bundle: Medical docs, NDIS plans, payment summary

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- Access decision letter only
- Payment summary only
- Listed disability only
- Access docs + planning docs
- File not found (Participant does not exist)

4. In the **key sensitivities/risks** field, add text that describes the sensitivity of the requested information, for example:
5. Personal Privacy (Participant Information)
6. Personal Privacy (Restricted Access Participant)
   - Personal Privacy (Complex Supports Needs (CSN) participant)
   - Personal Privacy (Staff conflict of interest)
   - Applicant has made complaint about PIA delays
   - Media coverage/Media threat
   - URGENT MATTER (Insert reason here, e.g. Participant Critical Incident (PCI) lodged)
   - Repeat request/bulk requests from Support Coordinator (Sharp practice alert)
7. If you have identified an active complaint related to the PIA, current media coverage/threat, or another reason for urgency, alert your team leader to confirm whether the matter meets the criteria for prioritisation. If it does, this matter should be allocated for processing immediately. Record this action via a file note using the type: **02. Prelim Assessment: Significance/Risk/Priority**.
8. If you have identified potential integrity concerns, alert your team leader immediately. Record this action via a file note using the type: **02. Prelim Assessment: Integrity concerns.** Your team leader may choose to seek advice from the Payment Integrity team. It is not the role of PIA officers to investigate any integrity concerns. We will continue to process the matter through PIA.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

9. If you have identified bulk requests from a single support coordinator (15 or more requests from the same support coordination company in the same week), add a **01. Matter received: Campaign/trending topic** file note. Select the name of the support coordination company from the list (click k and the backtick symbol [`] to see the list). If the company's name is not in the list, alert your team leader so it can be added.
10. If you identify higher level sensitivities like those listed below, this is a sign that the matter is likely **not** suitable for PIA. Alert your team leader. Record this action via a file note using the type: **02. Prelim Assessment: Significance/Risk/Priority**. Examples of higher sensitivities:
    - Personal Privacy (Deceased Participant)
    - Personal Privacy (Custody, Separation or Family Violence)
    - Personal Privacy (Sensitive Document not for Further Distribution)
    - Personal Privacy – Third Parties (Third party law firm applicant)
    - Informed Consent Alert (Support coordinator seeking compensation documents)
11. In the **staff member/action officer** field, select Work pool – PIA case management.
12. In the **primary business area** field, select **consult not required > CRM & PACE documents only.**
13. In the **matter type** field, select **Participant Information Access (PIA) > Personal > *Outcome pending***
14. In the **status** field, select **Active > 01. Initial Assessment**
15. Leave the **significance** field blank or select **not significant.** A PIA matter can only be assigned significant by an Executive Level 1 staff member. If you think a matter is significant (for example, if the participant is involved in media coverage), notify your team leader immediately**.**
16. Leave the **under OAIC review** field blank or select **no**. PIA matters cannot be reviewed by OAIC**.**
17. Enter the **tier.** PIA requests without medical documents are **tier 1A**. PIA requests including medical documents are **tier 1B.**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

18. Leave the **team** field blank.
19. Leave the **decision maker** field blank.
20. Leave the **review officer** field blank.
21. In the **applicant type**, select an option that describes the applicant. Most applicant types are **not** applicable to PIA matters. Choose one of the following applicant types. If another applicant type applies, consider if this request is suitable for PIA and alert your team leader or the PIA triage officer.
    - Advocate
    - Law firm - Representing participant
    - Nominee
    - Other authorised representative for participant
    - Parent/Child representative
    - Participant
    - Prospective participant
    - Support coordinator
22. Leave **charges notified** field blank. We cannot collect charges for PIA requests.
23. Leave **charges collected** field blank. We cannot collect charges for PIA requests.
24. In the **date of valid request** field, enter the date the request was received.
25. Leave the **date allocated** field blank.
26. Leave the **date finalised** field blank.
27. Leave the access level as **unrestricted.** Only an Executive Level 1 staff member can decide to restrict access to a PIA matter. This may be to prevent conflict of interest, for example, if a current staff member within the Information Access section has sought access to their child's records via PIA. If you have identified a potential conflict of interest, notify your team leader immediately.

4.5 Matter summary large text box

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

The large text box should pre-populate using standard template text.

If it does not pre-populate, paste the template text (included below) into the field and click “update my defaults.” This means that every time you create a new matter, the template text will appear.

1. Enter the **applicant’s name.**
2. If the applicant is a professional, add their **organisation/role**. For example: Prestige Support Solutions/Support Coordinator. If the applicant is not a professional, write N/A.
3. Enter the **participant’s name.** Add a note in brackets if you previously identified a typo or other error, for example (provided incorrectly – typo). If the applicant and the participant are the same person, write ibid after participant’s name. Ibid is a Latin term that means “as above.”
4. Enter the participant’s **NDIS number.** Add a note in brackets if you previously identified a typo or other error.
    - (Not provided) – Applicant did not supply NDIS number
    - (Provided Incorrectly) – Applicant provided incorrect NDIS number
    - (Provided Incorrectly – typo) – Small error
    - (External number provided) – Applicant provides a previous NDIS number which is listed on CRM or PACE
    - (File not found) – Participant’s CRM or PACE record cannot be located
    - (Restricted file) – if CRM or PACE record is restricted.
5. Leave the **PACE enquiry case reference** number blank for now. You will come back to this field in a later step.
6. Copy and paste the text you have included in snapshot after **scope summary.** (Note: the scope summary section is primarily designed for complex matters in other streams in cases where the snapshot summary is too brief to accurately capture the size of a large of complex request..)

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

7. In **expected release date,** add the standard date for all PIA matters: 28 days since receipt of the request. Use your calendar to count forward 4 weeks. This gives you the due date. You can also use an online date calculator.
8. If the applicant has made multiple requests, add a note after **previous requests from same party.** For example, if the applicant is a support coordinator that has made 50 requests in the same week, this is where you will note this. Otherwise, write nil.
9. If there are multiple requests about the same participant, add a note after **previous requests on same topic.** For example, if different support coordinators have requested PIA documents every 3 months for the past year, you will note that here. Otherwise, write nil.
10. After **media alert,** write no. Only an Executive Level 1 staff member can decide to alert the media about a PIA matter. This may be because the participant has appeared in news coverage and the NDIA's media team may have shared talking points with a journalist. If you have identified a matter that may be of interest to the media team, notify your team leader immediately.
11. After **last matter update,** write initial assessment. Note: this field is designed for complex matters that take weeks to progress. Most PIA matters can be processed in a short window of time. This means it is not necessary to add matter updates. The exception is if a PIA matter remains open for a long time due to unexpected complexities. If this happens, notify your team leader immediately and seek further instruction.
12. Click the **save** button.
13. LEX FOI will show a pop-up notification that asks you if you would like to work on the turnaround clock. Click **no**.
14. **Note:** The turnaround clock is not used for PIA matters because we do not "extend" the processing timeframe. It remains at 28 days. The turnaround clock is only used for matters with a legislative due date that can be extended (e.g. freedom of information access matters).

4.6 File notes

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

1. Click the **file notes** tab.
2. In the **add file note** section, select type: **01. Matter received > 02. Verbatim scope.** Paste the original scope of the PIA request into the large text box. Click **save.**
3. In the **add file note** section, select type: **01. Matter received > 03. Document type.** Read and then delete the instructions that appear. Click in the large text box and type k and the backtick symbol (`). Click **document type**. From the checklist that appears, click the documents that have been requested. Click **OK**. Click **save.**
4. In the **add file note** section, select type: **01. Matter received > 04. Underlying theme.** Read and then delete the instructions that appear. Click in the large text box and type **k** and the **backtick symbol (`).** Click **underlying**. From the checklist that appears, click`~ the underlying reason that the PIA request has been made. Click **OK**. Click **save.** If you cannot discern the underlying theme, skip this file note.
5. In the **add file note** section, select type: **01. Matter received > 05. Related files on old LEX.** Paste the reference numbers of any previous matters recorded on the old LEX Legal system in the large text box. Click **save.** If there are not related matters, skip this file note.
6. If the applicant has a restricted access file, in the **add file note** section, select type: **Alert > Restricted access participant**. There is no need to add any text to the large text box. Click **save.**
7. If the matter involves a staff conflict of interest, in the **add file note** section, select type: **Alert > Staff conflict of interest.** In the large text box, add a note that indicates which staff have declared a conflict of interest with this participant. Click **save.** If you have not done so already, alert your team leader immediately.
8. If there are communication alerts on the participant's PACE or CRM file, in the **add file note** section, select type: **Alert > Communication protocols in place.** In the large text box, add a note that describes these communication protocols. Click **save.**
9. If the applicant has previously engaged in vexatious or unreasonable behaviour, in the **add file note** section, select type: **Alert > Vexatious/unreasonable behaviour.** There is no need to add text to the large text box. Click **save.**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

10. If the participant's PACE or CRM file notes that are a complex supports need participant, in the **add file note** section, select type: **Alert > Complex Supports Needs (CSN) participant).** There is no need to add text to the large text box. Click **save.**
11. Check the file notes in **content warning**. The participant's PACE or CRM file may alerts that indicate a content warning applies. In this case, add a file note that describes the situation. Alert your team leader immediately. PIA may not be the right mechanism to seek documents that require a content warning, as these documents are highly sensitive. However, it is also possible that the PIA matter only relates to non-sensitive documents stored on the participant's file. Your team leader will provide advice.

4.7 Documents

1. Click on the **documents** tab.
2. Drag and drop the **original email** into the documents tab.
3. Click on the email. This opens up the edit document tab. In the edit document tab, select type: **original request.** Optional: If the document has a confusing name, click **rename file** and enter a meaningful name.
4. Click **save**.
5. If the applicant or staff have sent follow-up correspondence, drag those emails into the document tab. Recategorise them as **communication with applicant.** Examples of follow-up emails include:
    - The applicant asking when the matter will be finalised
    - Staff apologising about the delay
    - Staff requesting addition POI or evidence of consent
    - The applicant providing additional POI or evidence of consent
    - The applicant modifying the scope of their request to seek additional documents
    - The applicant sending in another PIA webform with duplicate scope

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6. If staff have sent any internal correspondence about the matter, drag those emails into the document tab. Recategorise them as **Internal NDIA correspondence.** Examples of internal NDIA correspondence include:
    - Triage Officer seeking advice from Team Leader about whether this matter meets escalation criteria and should be processed urgently
    - Triage Officer notifying Team Leader about 20 or more requests from the same support coordinator on the same day
    - Triage Officer notifying Team Leader that the PIA applicant has lodged a complaint
    - Communication from the Complaints team regarding the processing of the PIA matter
    - Triage Officer notifying Team Leader they have lodge a participant critical incident (PCI) based on information contained in a PIA email
7. For more information about automatically uploading emails to the LEX FOI documents tab via the drop-box, see this guide: Procedure - Automatically uploading emails to LEX FOI via the Drop-Box.docx

4.8 SharePoint link

1. Open the Freedom of Information SharePoint site.
2. Navigate to the master folder named **PIA 25.26-XXXX (Name)**
3. Click on the ellipsis (…) and select **copy to**
4. Copy the folder to **Documents > 3. Participant Information Access > a. Matters > vii. FY 2025-2026.**
5. Scroll until you can see the new folder OR search for the folder name in teh search bar.
6. Click on the ellipsis and select **rename.**
7. Rename the folder to include the reference and name allocated to the request. Use the full name from LEX FOI including the LEX ID number.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

2. Click on the ellipsis of the newly renamed folder and select **copy link**

8. Return to the LEX FOI documents tab.
9. Click the **add** button.
10. Select **type**: SharePoint link.
11. Select **category**: URL.

3. In URL, paste the link to the SharePoint folder.

12. Click **save**.
13. Go back to the LEX Document Tab and drag and drop the **Original Email** into the SharePoint **Original request** folder.

4. Double click on the URL with the list to ensure it works.

14. Go back to the PIA Matter Numbers spreadsheet and paste the link to the Sharepoint folder in column G. This will allow the matter to have NCC assistance.

4.9 Related files

1. Click on the **search** tab. Ensure the search style is set to **single style matters** search.
2. Enter the participant's NDIS number in the first search field: **LEX ID / Matter text fields**. Leave all other fields blank.
3. Click the **search** button. This will bring up all matters containing that participant number. This includes requests from **all** information access streams, including FOIs.
4. Click on each one to open it up and ensure it relates to the same participant.
5. If there are **any** matters in **any** stream about the same participant on the LEX FOI system, click **link to existing matter.**
6. Enter the name of the related matter and click **OK.**
7. Select the related matter from the list that appears. Click **save.**

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

8. If there are any **active** matters about the same participant, add a file note to those records alerting the staff to the new PIA matter. If related matters are already assigned to staff members, contact them via email to advise them there is a PIA matter about the same participant.

4.10 Add PACE case

1. Click on **cases** in the Particpants PACE file.
2. Click on **new.**
3. Select **enquiry.**
4. Go to the **Enquiry Description** section. In the **subject** field, write **Participant Information Access (PIA) Request – PIA-24/25-XXXX.**
5. In **description** box paste:

   A request for documents has been received by the PIA Team on xx.xx.2025

   For more information, please contact: information.access@ndis.gov.au

   Request received from:
6. In the **categorisation** section:
7. Type: OTHER
8. Category: GENERAL
9. Sub Category: INFORMATION ABOUT THE NDIS
10. Click **save.**
11. Click **enquiry** tab.
12. Requested by: SELECT APPROPRIATE OPTION
13. Case Origin: SELECT WEB OR EMAIL
14. Acknowledge POI statement and click **next.**
15. Click **next** again.
16. Click **NO** at Risk Matrix and click **next.**
17. Enquiry notes: Add PIA received DATE.
18. Enquiry outcome: Close case. (A new case will be created once matter is finalised).

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

19. Review and Submit.
20. Go back to the LEX FOI record. Edit the record to add the **PACE enquiry case reference** number to the matter summary large text box. Save the LEX FOI record.

4.11 Closing PACE enquiry case

This is to be completed as soon as the registration process has been finalised.

1. Once registration has been completed on LEX, return to PACE and click on the case number you want to close from your Pace home screen.
2. Click on the **Enquiry** button on the tab under new. Between Details and documents.
3. Use the drop-down option **Requested by** and choose **General Enquiry only**, then click on the **Next** button underneath.
4. This will take you to the **Enquiry details** screen. Click **Next twice**.
5. From the Risk Matrix screen click in the **No** option and then click the **Next** button.
6. This will take you to the **Notes and next steps screen**. In the **Enquiry Notes** box, type **PIA Registration**, under **Enquiry Outcome**, click in the **Close enquiry (Completed)**. A drop-down option will appear asking you to choose closure reason. Select **Completed** and type **PIA registration** in reason box. Then click **Next**.
7. This will take you to the **Review and Submit screen** which is the final step, Review the details and click **Submit**.

   Tip: After closing a matter, return to the Home tab and refresh your Pace dashboard. Otherwise, the cases may still appear as open on your main screen.

4.12 Duplicates

Do not register a new request if it is about the **same participant** and from the **same applicant** as an active, unprocessed PIA matter. Instead, c**ombine** the new request with the previous request.

1. Click **edit** on the existing LEX FOI record.
2. In the **snapshot** and **scope summary** fields, add text such as:
   - 2 PIA requests combined (See file notes)

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

3. Add a **01. Matter Received file note** that describes the additional email.
4. Drag and drop the additional email into the **documents tab.** Categorise them as **original request.**

Important note:

- If the new PIA request is about the same participant but from a **different applicant**, register it as a **separate** matter. This is because POI and consent need to be assessed separately.
- If the new PIA request duplicates the scope of an active FOI request, register it as a new PIA request, but also alert the FOI Triage Officer of the duplicate so the FOI case management teams have visibility.

4.13 Move original email to actioned.

1. In Outlook, mark original email as read.
2. Right click and mark as complete.
3. Drag to **Actioned** subfolder.

5. Appendices

5.1 Matter summary large text box

Applicant name:
Applicant organisation/role:
Participant name:
NDIS number:
PACE enquiry case reference:
Scope summary:
Expected release date:
Media alert:
Key contacts:
Last matter update:

6. Version control

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	s47F - personal privacy	Initial Version	DRAFT	2025.06.06
1.1	s47F - personal privacy	Updated with link to PACE KA on adding a case	APPROVED	2025.06.13
1.2	s47F - personal privacy	Added link to new FY spreadsheet. Added steps regarding sharp practices/integrity concerns, and escalating priority matters.	Approved	2025.07.01
1.3	s47F - personal privacy	Added note about pre-populated matter summary box and clarified use of turnaround clock in PIA matters	Approved	2025.07.11
1.4	s47F - personal privacy	Added more detail about creating PACE cases. Add note about updating the PACE enquiry case reference number on LEX FOI after it is created	Approved	2025.07.14
1.5	s47F - personal privacy	Added step about uploading documents to PACE case including document subcategories	Approved	2025.07.15
1.6	s47F - personal privacy	Added Step 10 on page 18. Link to Sharepoint to be added to PIA Matter Numbers	Approved	2025.08.11
1.7	s47F - personal privacy	Added additional step about adding Original email to original request folder in SharePoint to enable NCC to continue to assist with processing PIA Requests without the need to access LEX.	Approved	2025.08.14
1.7	s47F - personal privacy	SOP under review	Draft	2025.11.04

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.8	s47F - personal privacy	Formatting only as requested by s47F - personal privac		2025.11.21
1.9	s47F - personal privacy	Added additional step about Closing PACE enquiry case to ensure staff are closing the cases once registration process is completed	Approved	2026.01.07

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Release Mechanism Checklist (FOI, APP12 & PIA

1. Participant Information Access Scheme (PIA))

Check	Yes/No	Next Steps
Request made by Participant or CRM listed Authorised/Child Rep?		**If no** – refer matter to APP12 or FOI for processing.
Has sufficient POI been provided?		**If no** – contact Applicant in order to verify four points of ID. If not provided with **2 days** refer matter to FOI or APP for processing.
Internal/External Consults are needed to be conducted?		**If yes** – refer matter to APP12 or FOI for processing.
Requested under FOI?		**If yes** – – refer matter to FOI for processing or engage Applicant to withdraw if appropriate for release under PIA.
Is request is purely personal in nature?		**If no** - – refer matter to FOI for processing.
Return address to deliver documents provided?		**If no** – see if receipt to deliver can be quickly clarified. **If still no** – refer matter to APP12 or FOI for processing.

2. APP12

Check	Yes/No	Next Steps
Has sufficient authority been provided?		**If no** - contact Applicant in order to gain authority
Has sufficient POI been provided?		**If no** – contact Applicant in order to verify four points of ID
Request made for personal documents held by the Agency		**If no** – – refer matter to FOI for processing
Internal Consultations may need to be conducted?		**If yes** – – advise AO/DM to complete within first few days
Is the scope clear?		**If no** – contact Applicant to clarify

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Are the requested documents sensitive (May exemptions be needed)?		**If yes** – either consider request for FOI or advise AO/DM of potential sensitivities (depending on the nature of the request)
Was the request in written form?		**If no** – contact applicant to get scope in written form
Was the request made under the FOI Act?		**If yes** – refer matter to FOI

3. **FOI**

Check	Yes/No	Next Steps
Was the request made in accordance with section 15(2)? (a) in writing; (aa) state that request is for the purposes of the FOI Act; (b) provide such information as is reasonably necessary to identify the document(s); and (c) give notice of how notices can be sent to the applicant.		**If no** – contact applicant to assist in lodging valid FOI request or direct to APP/PIA where appropriate
Does the applicant have the correct authority?		**If no** - contact applicant to gain authority
Has sufficient POI been provided?		**If no** – contact Applicant in order to verify four points of ID.
Is the scope of the request clear?		**If no** – contact Applicant to clarify
Internal Consultations may need to be conducted?		**If yes** – advise AO/DM to complete within first few days
External Consultations may need to be conducted?		**If yes** – advise AO/DM to complete as soon as possible
Request is mostly personal?		**If no** – consider registration as tier 2-3

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Request is mostly non-personal?		**If yes –** provide advice to AO/DM regarding what area within the agency the request relates too and register as Tier 2 or 3
Request is tier 3 (Media)		I**f yes –** send Media alert and inform director

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL.

CRM document locations for PIA requested information

This Standard Operating Procedure is designed to support Participant Information Access (PIA) staff to navigate CRM to locate the documents they require to process an Information Access request.

1. Contents

Documents provided under PIA and locations in CRM 1
1. Contents 1
2. Access to the NDIS 2
Access request form 2
Access decision letter 2
Supporting evidence form 3
3. NDIS plan 3
Planning information (Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan) 3
Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan 3
A copy of your NDIS plan (Current NDIS plan) 4
4. NDIS plan review 4
Outcome of NDIS plan review 4
5. Medical and other documents 5
Evidence of disability 5
Medical documents / assessment reports 5
Disability tab 5
Roster of care 6
Home and Living Support decisions 6
Payment summary 7
6. Version Control 7

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

2. Access to the NDIS

Access request form

The Access Request Form (ARF) is the form a participant completes to apply for the NDIS.

You can find a copy of access request form under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents.

The ARF is usually found at the bottom of the Inbound folder. It may not be available when the participant is **defined**[1] in the program.

You can find out if a participant is defined through searching:

- Internal Use Tab
- State and Territory Load Data.

If there is no ARF and the participant was not t Defined, check Interactions for a Verbal Access Request (VAR).

Note: VAR transcripts can only be provided under FOI.

Access decision letter

When the NDIA decides if a participant is eligible for the NDIS, it's called an **access decision**. The NDIA sends participant(s) a letter to communicate if they are eligible, and the letter explains the reasons for the access decision and their next steps.

A copy of the access decision letter can be found under:

- Documents
- Outboard Documents (usually)
- Shell Folder known as **Access Met** or **Access Met EI**

[1] When the NDIS began to roll out in 2013, people who were clients of existing disability programs were considered to meet the NDIS disability access requirements. These participants are referred to as defined.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Sometimes the access decision letter has been uploaded incorrectly and can be found in Inbound Documents.

Supporting evidence form

Supporting Evidence Form (SEF) is sometimes completed to provide evidence to support a participant's application.

The SEF can be located under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents
- SEF/ARF/Supporting Evidence

3. NDIS plan

Planning information (Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan)

This is the information collected at a participant's planning meeting and includes the participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation.

The information can be located under:

- Pathway
- Review Application (select the Review Application that relates to the relevant NDIS plan)
- Implement
- Scroll down and select FOI Requests
- On the next screen select Create FOI Request
- Type 'Pre-planning and planning data' in the text box under My FOI Request
- Select Save.

It then takes around 3-5 minutes to generate a planning information document.

Planner justifications for a current NDIS plan

These are the reasons why the NDIA made a decision about the NDIS supports.

To access the Planner justifications for supports included in the final NDIS plan:

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- Pathway
- Review Application (relevant to the NDIS plan)
- Implement
- FOI Requests
- Create FOI Request
- Type ‘Pre-planning and planning data’ in the text box under My FOI Requests
- Select Save

It then takes around 3-5 minutes to generate a planning justification document.

A copy of your NDIS plan (Current NDIS plan)

The plan includes information about the participant and their goals, what supports they need, and the funding the NDIS plan will give.

A copy of the letter outlining the current NDIS plan information:

- Documents
- Outbound Documents
- Immediate Plan Approval/Plan Approval/Plan Only Cover letter folder

4. NDIS plan review

Outcome of NDIS plan review

This is a copy of the letter the NDIA sends following the outcome of an internal review of a decision under section 100 of the NDIS legislation.

A copy of the outcome of a plan review letter can be found under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents
- S100 letter is for Internal Review Outcome
    - S100 request means - Internal Review Request
    - S48 request means – Request for a plan review
    - S26 request means – Review of Reviewable Decision

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

5. Medical and other documents

Evidence of disability

Evidence of disability (EOD) is provided to help NDIA make a decision about a participant's eligibility for the NDIS.

Copies of an EOD can be found under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents

The EOD is usually found at the bottom of the Inbound Documents folder with the ARF, separately as EOD, or as separate document(s) from a health professional e.g. OT Report, GP support letter, Specialist report/letter, Psychologist report, Physiotherapy report, PEDI CAT.

Medical documents / assessment reports

Medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions. Examples of medical documents include letters from doctors, reports from health professionals, and support provider reports.

This information can be found under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents

If provided to support a request for access, the documents can be available in the EOD tab or might have been uploaded separately.

If provided for the purpose of a planning decision, the documents can be available in Plan Review documents or might have been uploaded separately.

Disability tab

Screen shot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities. This information is provided as a screen shot of primary (and/or secondary) disability listed for the participant.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This information can be found under:

- Disabilities tab

Roster of care

A roster of care for people in Supported Independent Living arrangements lists the support ratios needed by the participant and the times and days these supports are provided.

This information can be found under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents

Can usually be found with Home and Living Documents, Plan Review documents or Internal Review documents.

Home and Living Support decisions

When a participant requests Specialised Disability Accommodation in their NDIS plan, a summary of the decision is written. This is called a home and living supports decision.

This information can be found under:

- Documents
- Inbound Documents

Can usually be located with Home and Living Decision in the form of a letter addressed to the participant or their Authorised Representative.

In some cases, letters regarding Internal Review outcomes also include information about Home and Living decisions in relation to the participant.

In some cases, information about Home and Living decisions will be available in the Pre-planning and Planning documents for a particular plan.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Payment summary

A Payment Summary list payments made by the NDIA for supports. The payment summary is generated inhouse by PIA.

Conduct a search for a payment summary using the participant NDIS number in the SharePoint Payment Summary reports folder

- Documents
- 3. Participant_Information_Access
- a. Matters
- Select the relevant year folder e.g. FY 2023 – 2024 Payments Summary reports
- Then select the relevant period e.g. Oct – Dec 2023
- Select the current month e.g. November 2023
- Search for the participant reference number by selecting Ctrl F or by typing the information into the Search in the text box at the top of the page.

If the payment summary is not available in this folder, you will need to complete a Payment Request email and send to:

- s47F - personal privacy or s47F - personal privacy
- CC information.access@ndis.gov.au and your Decision Maker

6. Version Control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	s47F - personal privac	Initial version review	Approved	2023-11-02
1.1	s47F - personal privacy	Accessibility and Style review	Approved	2023-11-15

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL.

Processing PIA scheme requests for information

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) documents the process to respond to a request for information under Participant Information Access (PIA).

This step provides steps to process a request under PIA. For next step, refer the applicant to alternative information access processes where necessary.

This resource aligns with Agency aspirations from the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and reinforces our commitment to participants as detailed in the Participant Service Charter.

Contents

Processing PIA scheme requests for information 1

1. Scope 2

Making a request 4

Acknowledgment 4

2. Framework 5

3. Definitions 6

4. Prerequisites 7

5. Process Timeframe 8

6. Procedure 10

6.1 Register a PIA request 10

6.2 Verify identity 10

6.3 Confirm authority 10

6.4 Consent 11

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6.5 Confirm address for reply 11
6.6 Registration 12
6.7 Processing 12
6.8 Extraction of information 13
6.9 Documents available under PIA 13
6.10 Preparing a bundle of documents 14
6.11 Send to Delegate 14
6.12 Review and release 15
6.13 Privacy 16
7. Complaints and escalation 16
8. Data collection and reporting 17
9. Supporting material 17
10. Version control 17

1. Scope

This SOP applies to requests for information under PIA. The release of information under PIA provides a simplified way for NDIS participants to obtain their personal information without having to exercise their statutory rights of access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) or the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act).

The PIA process was developed in line with the Participant Service Charter, which promotes a transparent and responsive NDIA and is an easier and faster way for participants and their representatives to access their personal information.

Information about NDIS participants and prospective participants is protected Agency information under the NDIS Act but may be disclosed with the consent of the person to which it relates or their authorised representative.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

The PIA allows NDIS participants and prospective participants to access their personal information held on the NDIS Business System (CRM or PACE). Consistent with the NDIS Act, a participant's child representative/s or nominee (as listed on CRM or PACE) will be able to seek access to information on behalf of participants.

Our team aims to respond to PIA requests no later than 28 days from receipt of the request, in line with the Participant Service Guarantee (external). However, 14 days is the internal KPI we aspire to.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Making a request

Applicants have 3 options available to make a request for their information:

- online via Participant Information Access Request | NDIS
- by emailing a request to information.access@ndis.gov.au
- by calling the National Contact Centre on 1800 800 110.

Acknowledgment

PIA does not formally acknowledge requests however applicants who complete the PIA request form online will receive an auto-generated confirmation message that their request has been submitted.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

2. Framework

The PIA framework displays a pyramid representing:

- **Legislation** at the top of the pyramid.

  NDIS Act – Provides the legislative authority for participant information to be disclosed.

  Relevant sections:

  Section 60 – Protection of information held by the NDIA

  Section 74 – Authority to Act on behalf of a Child

  Section 75 – Definition of Parental Responsibility

  Section 78 – Authority to Act as Plan Nominee

  Section 86 – Appointment of Plan Nominee

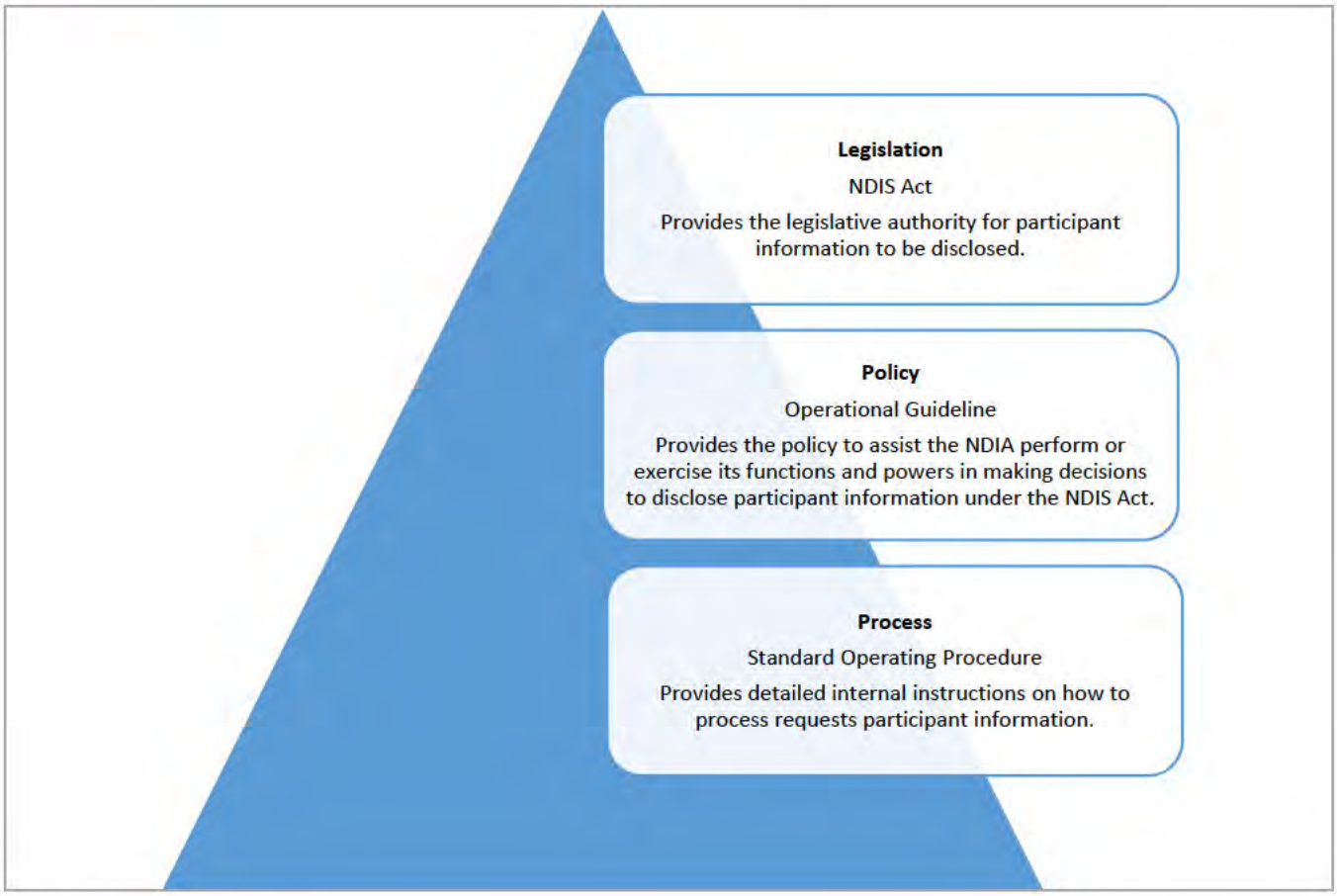
- **Policy** as the middle of the pyramid.

  Operational Guideline – Provides the policy to assist the NDIA to perform or exercise its functions and powers in making decisions to disclose participants information under the NDIS Act.

- **Process** as the bottom layer of the pyramid.

  Standard Operating Procedure – Provides detailed internal instructions on how to process request participant information.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.



3. Definitions

Term	Definition	Example
Personal information	Information or an opinion about a person, including a deceased person, whether the information or opinion is true or not, and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.	Any information held by the NDIA about a participant, including: • information collected or created in relation to an access decision • information collected or created in relation to a plan decision • any other information collected or recorded that relates to a participant.
Third party information	Information or an opinion about a person, business, or	In some cases, personal information about a participant

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Term	Definition	Example
	group other than the participant or prospective participant.	will be intertwined with information about another person, business or group. For example: • information about a parent or another family member • information about another participant where SIL arrangements are in place • information about professionals whose personal information is not already known to the participant.
Unreasonable disclosure	Disclosure of information about a third-party person, business or group without their consent. This may constitute breach of their privacy.	Disclosure of information which is not: • well known • associated with the participant's request • available from public or other sources.

4. Prerequisites

- A request has been made for access to documents or information on a NDIS participant's file on CRM or PACE by the participant or their authorised representative; or
- A request has been made for access to documents or information on a prospective participant's file on the CRM or PACE by the prospective participant or the person who made a NDIS access request on their behalf
- A request has been made for access to documents or information on a participant's file on CRM or PACE by a person representing the interests of a participant and we are satisfied that the participant has consented to provide the requestor with the information.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- A participant or their nominee has requested access to information which is about them and available on CRM or PACE
- The participant or the person making the request has not made the request under the FOI Act or the Privacy Act; and
- The requested documents or information is included in the list of documents available for release under PIA scheme.

See the full list of documents available under PIA scheme

CRM and PACE also record information about children under 9 years with developmental delay or disability who are receiving Early Childhood Early Intervention Supports from Early Childhood Partners but are **not** participants in the NDIS.

Children's details are entered into CRM or PACE and all individual activity and interactions are recorded for each customer including transitions such as whether the child exits to community and mainstream or to access the NDIS. The children's nominees do not have access to the NDIS Portal, and they may exit initial supports and not request access to the NDIS at all.

The PIA is **not** available to these customers.

5. Process Timeframe

The process timeframe provides the steps required at each stage of the process:

Day 1 – Triage

- Triage – Determine whether the request is suitable for PIA.
- Verify Identity – Ensure the applicant is who they say they are.
- Confirm Authority – If applicable, confirm the applicant has authority.
- Acknowledge – Let the applicant know that the request has been received. This happens automatically. Anyone who emails information.access@ndis.gov.au gets an auto-reply. Anyone who submits a

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

request via the PIA webform is shown a screen that confirms that their request was successfully submitted.

Day 2 – Registration

- Register – Make a record that the request has been received. Registrations are completed by APS4 and APS5 Action Officers in the case management teams.

Day 3-8 – Allocation

- Allocate – Assign the matter to a team for action. The PIA Triage Officer does bulk allocations to case management teams. Once allocated to a team, the Assistant Director will assign it to an individual staff member. Bulk allocations take place once a week, on Thursdays. Therefore, PIA matters should be no more than 8 days old when allocated for action.

Day 9-13 - Processing

- Collate Information – Gather and collate the requested information.
- Authorise release – Ensure the information is correct and is appropriate for release.

Day 14

- Release – Ensure a privacy check is completed and release the information to the applicant.
- Finalise – Make a record that the request has been finalised.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6. Procedure

6.1 Register a PIA request

Upon receipt of a request, the Allocations & Registrations (A&R) team will triage the request. If the request can be managed under PIA, the request will be registered and allocated the request to either an Action Officer, a Decision Maker or an Action Officer/Decision Maker pairing.

6.2 Verify identity

To comply with Australian Privacy laws, we must complete a security check to confirm the identity of the applicant if they are also a participant.
A security check is completed by confirming 3 pieces of personal information which can be checked against information available in CRM or PACE.

For more information about how to complete a security check refer to SOP_CompleteSecurityCheck.docx (ndia.gov.au)

All applicants are required to verify their identity.

6.3 Confirm authority

When the applicant is not the participant, the applicant must have express consent to receive information about the participant. Where express consent has been given, it will often appear in CRM or PACE. A security check must be completed with the applicant before providing any details from the record.

Appropriate authorities include:

- The applicant is listed as a Plan Nominee for the participant
- The applicant is a Child Representative for the participant
- The applicant is a prospective participant or is the person who acted for them in making a request for access to the NDIS.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6.4 Consent

Sometimes a request for a participant's information will be made by someone other than a participant, their nominee or child representative. For example, a request might be made by a law firm, or an insurance company involved in a legal case with the participant, or by a support coordinator. In these cases, you should only provide the participant's information if you are satisfied that the participant has consented to us sharing their information with the requestor.

For consent to be valid:

- The participant must have been adequately informed before giving consent. They must have been informed why their consent was being requested.
- The participant must have given their consent voluntarily.
- The consent must be current and specific. Generally, the PIA will not accept consent if it was given more than 12 months ago. The consent must be directed to the NDIA.
- The participant must have the capacity to understand and communicate their consent.

Where an applicant is not the participant, their nominee, a child representative and has not provided valid consent, the request should be denied.

You should respond to the applicant outlining the reasons the request was denied, including alternative options for accessing the information they are seeking.

6.5 Confirm address for reply

Where the applicant is a participant, a nominee or child representative, the email address provided by the applicant should be checked against email addresses on the participants CRM or PACE record.

If the email address is different, or no email address has been recorded in CRM or PACE, then it should be confirmed with the applicant before the information is released.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6.6 Registration

When a request is registered, the following steps will be taken:

- a reference number will be assigned to the request.
- depending on its complexity, the request will be registered as a PIA-A matter or a PIA-B matter.
- an individual folder in LEX will be created in which all key documents relating to the matter will be saved.
- an interaction record will be created on CRM, or a case created in PACE to record that a request for information has been received and what documents have been released.
- Once the information is released to the applicant, the interaction record or case will be closed.

6.7 Processing

Responsibility for processing requests under PIA is usually completed in its entirety by an APS4 or APS5 **Action Officer** who is responsible for assessing the request, gathering and collating documents and preparing them for release.

However, if the contents of the documents are sensitive or if there are complex consent issues, an APS4 or APS5 Action Officer can escalate the matter to an APS6 staff member. In this case, the APS6's role is to review the AO's work and provide guidance as **Delegate** or **Decision Maker.**

To support quick and efficient access for participants, requests under the PIA should be processed within 28 days of receiving the request.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6.8 Extraction of information

Upon being allocated a PIA request, the Action Officer will need to determine if the requested documents are stored on CRM or on PACE and then extract the requested documents.

Please refer to the Guide_FOI_CRM Training Guide.docx (sharepoint.com) on how to extract and save documents from CRM.

6.9 Documents available under PIA

Applicants may select which documents they are seeking using the online web form or via email.

Depending on the option(s) selected, the following documents will be available for release:

Access to the NDIS

Access Request Form (ARF) – Copy of the ARF

Access decision – Copy of the access decision letter

Reasons for the access decision – Information available in CRM:

- Pathway tab
- Download using the automation tool

NDIS plan

Pre-planning for a current NDIS plan – Information collected at a planning meeting and includes participant statement, goals, support needs and the planning conversation.

Current NDIS plan – Copy of letter outlining current NDIS plan.

NDIS plan review

Outcome of NDIS plan review – Copy of outcome of plan review letter.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Medical and other documents

Evidence of disability (EOD) – Copies of any evidence of disability

Medical documents/assessment reports - Copies of medical documents provided to the NDIA as supporting evidence for access or planning decisions.

Supporting evidence form - Copy of supporting evidence form.

Recognised disabilities tab - Screenshot of recognised primary and secondary disabilities in CRM.

Roster of care (ROC) - Copy of Roster of Care

Home and Living Supports decision - Copy of Home and Living Supports decision

Payment summary - Finance generated payment summary listing payments made by the NDIA for supports.

Note: Documents related to previous NDIS plans also available upon request

6.10 Preparing a bundle of documents

The relevant extracted documents will be provided to the Delegate (with appropriate deletions/edits, where required).

The PIA reference number will be added to the header and page numbers added to the footer.

6.11 Send to Delegate

An Action Officer will send the following to the Decision Maker for review:

- the request
- the bundle of documents; and
- draft covering email to applicant using PIA email templates.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

6.12 Review and release

Review and authorise release

The Decision Maker will review the request and the participant's CRM or PACE file to ensure the correct documents have been extracted and are appropriate for release through the PIA.

The Decision Maker must be satisfied that:

- the applicant is requesting their own information; or
- the applicant is the participant's child representative or nominee, or the participant has provided valid consent allowing the NDIA to share information with the applicant
- there are no legal processes or other such interventions that may affect an applicant's authority, for example Family Court orders, family violence or guardianship processes; and
- the documents do not contain personal information about a third party.

If the Decision Maker is concerned that disclosure to the participant might be detrimental to the participant's health or well-being, then they may consider giving access through a mutually agreed intermediary in line with Australian Privacy Principle 12.

6.12.1 To applicant

Once the Decision Maker is satisfied and has authorised the release of the documents, the Action Officer will:

- make any final edits/deletions and convert the documents to PDF
- perform an accessibility check
- release the documents to the applicant ensuring that a privacy check has been completed by another member of the team; and
- close the matter on LEX

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- close the interaction on CRM or the case on PACE
- notify A&R that the request has been closed on all platforms.

6.13 Privacy

The NDIA is committed to safeguarding the privacy of NDIS participants. Occasionally, when processing a PIA request, you may find that information about one participant has been incorrectly recorded on the CRM or PACE record of another participant. In these cases, you must inform the Assistant Director, PIA and make a report to the Privacy Service Desk.

7. Complaints and escalation

We aim to continually improve our service by listening to feedback and we encourage people to share their concerns, compliments and suggestions with us.

Applicants may share their concerns, compliments and suggestions with us at Information.Access@ndis.gov.au

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to refer them to the complaints team (feedback@ndis.gov.au).

If an applicant is unhappy with the documents released under the PIA, they may submit a request under the FOI Act.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

8. Data collection and reporting

The Quality and Assurance team provides monthly and weekly reports about the volume of request received and process by the PIA team. These include:

Report	Purpose	Distribution
Weekly FOI/PIA Operational report	To provide an update on the number of FOI and PA request received and finalised each week and put those in a historical context. The report also provides information about processing times, the extent of any backlogs and the nature and complexity of requests on hand.	Executive Leadership team
Monthly FOI Report – Dashboard	To give a longer-term perspective on the information provided in the weekly operational report.	Executive Leadership team
Weekly breakdown of PIAs released by staff member	Report showing PIA matters released by each PIA staff member over the previous week.	Director FOI and Assistant Director PIA

9. Supporting material

10. Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
v.1	s47F - personal privacy	Initial drafting - approved	Current	19/5/2020

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure

For Internal Use Only

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
v.2	s47F - personal privacy	Update to include suite of documents available via PIA updated webform – minor related edits.	Current	13.09.2021
v1.3	s47F - personal privac	Update to reflect persons who may make PIA requests, current thinking on consent and introduction of PACE – minor related edits.	Approved	2023-10-31
V1.4	s47F - personal privacy	Updates added to live document, Formatting changes, Added security measures, Readability	Approved	2023-11-01
V1.5	s47F - personal privacy	Accessibility and style review to correct v1.4	Approved	2023-11-16
V 1.6	s47F - personal privacy	Updated processes based on team changes: A&R staff no longer doing PIA registrations, and APS4 and APS5 staff releasing PIA matters independently. Restored references to legislation, participant charter and participant service guarantee.	APPROVED	2024-02-26

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Standard Operating Procedure <PIA Triage>

Triage of the PIA mailbox

Next Step: Registration of **PIA** Requests.

1. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to be used to triage and manage the Participant Information Access (PIA) scheme mailbox. This SOP will provide guidance in how to triage the PIA inbox and to streamline the triage process.

2. Index

1. Purpose
2. Index
3. To be used by
4. Scope
5. Prerequisites
6. Procedure
   - 6.1 Inbox
   - 6.2 ACTIONED Folder
   - 6.3 UNALLOCATED REQUESTS
   - 6.4 REGISTRATION
     - 6.4.1 TO ACTION
     - 6.4.2 REGISTERED
   - 6.5 ALLOCATED REQUESTS
   - 6.6 Drafts
7. Supporting Material
8. Release Mechanism Checklist
9. Process owner and approver
10. Feedback
11. Version control

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

3. To be used by

This SOP is intended for the following users:

- FOI Coordinator; and
- FOI Team.

4. Scope

- This SOP serves to provide an overview of how the PIA Mailbox (information.access@ndis.gov.au) is structured, as well as best practice guide to managing workflow within this mailbox. Diligent application of this SOP will ensure seamless workflow and all timeframes are adhered to.

5. Prerequisites

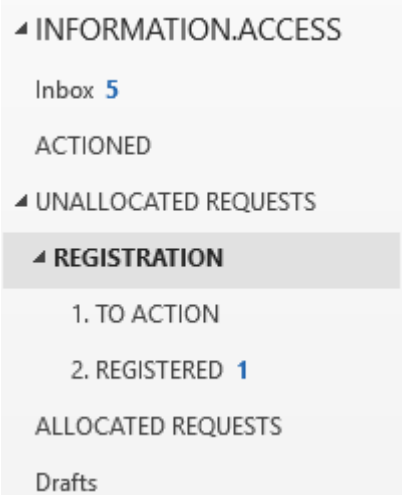
- The triage aspect of the PIA process is the first point of contact for a participant after submitting their PIA online form and for relevant stakeholder's involvement in PIA.
- Before providing contact or forwarding emails on to relevant staff, privacy must be considered in terms of email addresses for receipt and the type of information that is being provided or forwarded on;
- It is critical that timely contact is made with participants and internal/external stakeholders in a timely matter that engage the inbox.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document is uncontrolled when printed.

6. Procedure

Emails received to the information.access@ndis.gov.au mailbox should be triaged and addressed as a matter of urgency.



6.1 Inbox

This folder is the communication nexus for the processing of PIA requests, acting as the primary avenue for the receipt of PIA requests, consultations and communications with internal and external bodies. Emails should not remain in this folder, but rather should be directed to the relevant team members with carriage of a matter or work-flowed per the below.

6.2 ACTIONED Folder

This folder serves as an archive for all correspondence that has been received by or sent from the information.access@ndis.gov.au email address. Once an email has been sent to the appropriate staff member it should be moved to the Actioned Folder to denote that there is no further action required from the Triage Team

6.3 UNALLOCATED REQUESTS

This folder is the holding point for valid PIA requests which have not yet been registered by the Registration Officer. Once these matters have been registered and allocated to the appropriate staff they should be moved to the ALLOCATED REQUEST folder

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document is uncontrolled when printed.

FOI 26/27-0866

6.4 REGISTRATION

This is the working folder for the Registration Officer. For more information see Registration Officer SOP

6.4.1 TO ACTION

This sub-folder contains the Allocation Email Shell which is to be actioned by the Registration Officer in their course of their duties. Once complete these emails will be moved to the REGISTERED subfolder.

6.4.2 REGISTERED

This sub-folder contains the completed Allocation Email Shell. Once it has been filled out and registered on all platforms by the Registration Officer, the completed allocation email is reviewed and sent by the Allocations Officer. This matter has now been allocated to an AO/delegate pairing for processing.

6.5 ALLOCATED REQUESTS

This folder is used to store requests that have been allocated out to an action Officer and Delegate. The emails are moved from the UNALLOCATED Requests folder to the ALLOCATED REQUESTS folder after allocation.

6.6 Drafts

The draft folder is used to store PIA receipt emails as drafted by the Registration Officer. The Coordinator will then send the receipt emails out after allocating a request.

7. Supporting material

- NDIS Act 2013;
- Participant Information Access Webpage.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document is uncontrolled when printed.

Standard Operating Procedure <PIA Triage>

Email type	Description	Action
Request for Information	An email from an applicant seeking access to personal documentation held by the Agency. This may be in the body of the email or with a form attached.	Assess validity under the Participant Information Access Scheme (PIA) Refer to the 'release mechanism checklist' to determine the most appropriate release mechanism for the request.* If appropriate for PIA register matter an allocate to FOI Officer
General Enquiries	An email that is a general enquiry about the NDIA or its services. Also includes enquiries about plans and request for contact.	Refer email to enquiries@ndis.gov.au or the NCC on 1800 800 110
Scams	An email that appears to be a scam or fraudulent in	Mark email as "Report Suspected Spam" on Outlook
Feedback or suggestion about the NDIA	An email from a participant, on behalf of a participant (carer/support worker/provider) or member of the public that makes a suggestion for improvements, including service, products, scheme, supports covered or anything else NDIA related	Refer email to Feedback or Internal Complaints (content dependant)
Website	An issue or suggestion from someone about the website	Forward copy of email to s47E(d) - certa@ndis.gov.au and feedback@ndis.gov.au for their action/information.
s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies@humanservices.gov.au	A message that contains a suspicious attachment that has been quarantined or a message size of greater than 20 megabytes which may not be appropriate in accordance with Human Services policy on "Using ICT Facilities".	Follow procedure in email to have item released or split document and provide across a number of emails.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document is uncontrolled when printed.

8. Release Mechanism Checklist (PIA)
Participant Information Access Scheme (PIA)

Check	Yes/No	Next Steps
Request made by Participant or CRM listed Authorised/Child Rep?		**If no** – refer matter to FOI for processing.
Has sufficient POI been provided?		**If no** – contact Applicant in order to verify four points of ID. If not provided with **2 days** refer matter to FOI for processing.
Internal/External Consults are needed to be conducted?		**If yes** – refer matter to FOI for processing.
Requested under FOI?		**If yes** – – refer matter to FOI for processing or engage Applicant to withdraw if appropriate for release under PIA.
Is request is purely personal in nature?		**If no** - – refer matter to FOI for processing.
Return address to deliver documents provided?		**If no** – see if receipt to deliver can be quickly clarified. **If still no** – refer matter to FOI for processing.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document is uncontrolled when printed.

9. Process owner and approver

FOI Coordinator – FOI Team

Director/Assistant Director – FOI Team

10. Feedback

Any feedback about this Standard Operating Procedure, please email information.access@ndis.gov.au

In your email remember to include the matter that you are referring to and describe your suggestion or issue concisely.

11. Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
V0.1	s47F - personal privacy	Initial SOP approved at EL2 level	DRAFT	-
V0.2	s47F - personal privacy	Adjusted formatting to match NDIA SOP Template	DRAFT	2020-08-28
V 0.3	s47F - personal privacy	Review of SOP completed – references to APP removed, minor formatting	Draft	2021-09-24

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This document is uncontrolled when printed.

Introduction to Information Release Mechanisms at the NDIA

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) holds large volumes of documents, records and data. Many individuals and organisations want to access the information that the Agency holds. There are numerous ways individuals can access the documents we hold. Each of them is designed for a different purpose.

This is a guideline of what information can be released through what mechanism. The NDIA external Access to Information page summarises many of these methods.

Operational documents

External NDIS Websites

The NDIS website contains copies of the NDIA's operating guidelines: Our Guidelines (NDIS).

The NDIS website also contains the Would We Fund It? guides, which give specific examples of whether particular goods and services are considered NDIS supports.

The NDIS website also contains many pages, booklets and factsheets designed to help people understand NDIS supports: Understanding the NDIS | NDIS and Booklets and factsheets | NDIS are two examples.

Data and Research Websites

The NDIA publishes data and research on our website. The data website has lots of publicly available information including statistics on the number of NDIS participants, their primary disability, and the total cost of their plans (on average). This data can be sorted by regional area, age group and many other demographic factors. The participant datasets are usually updated each financial quarter.

The research website includes the "evidence for action" section which publishes research topics that have guided NDIS decisions: Evidence for action | NDIS. This information is updated when subject matter becomes topical. For example, the art and music therapy page was created in 2025 as a result of public interest in the topic.

More information: Data Requests.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Annual, quarterly and monthly reports

The NDIA publishes a lot of data in our annual, quarterly and monthly reports. This includes statistics on number of staff, number of access applications, and budget spending.

More information: Annual Report | NDIS and Quarterly Reports | NDIS and Monthly summary | NDIS

Disclosure log

Any operational document that has been released via freedom of information (FOI) is described on the NDIA's disclosure log. These documents can be re-released upon request. Instructions on how to access these documents are available here: FOI Disclosure log | NDIS

Information Publication Scheme (IPS)

The IPS publishes non-personal documents such as policies, procedures and statistics. More information: Information Publication Scheme.

Data.gov.au

Much of the NDIA's data is also published on data.gov.au. For example, statistics about how many FOI requests the NDIA receives and processes each year is published on data.gov.au at this link: Freedom of information statistics | Datasets | data.gov.au - beta

Transparency Portal

The Transparency Portal contains all publicly available information about Commonwealth agencies. This includes our annual reports, corporate plans and budget statements. For example, in the appendices of the NDIA's annual report, you can see how much all our senior executive service (SES) staff get paid.

Personal documents

Myplace Portal

Participants or authorised representatives can log into their online portal and access their current and previous plan. If they don't know how to use the portal, staff can assist them by explaining the steps in this guide: How to use the myplace portal.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Frontline staff

All frontline staff are authorised by the *NDIS Act 2013* to release personal information to a participant or their authorised representatives. This means that if a participant wants a copy of a basic document such as NDIS plan or letter, any staff should be able to release that to them. This includes planners, complaints officers and any participant-facing case manager.

National Contact Centre (NCC)

The NCC can release “already released documents” (such as letters and NDIS plans) to participants or nominees or other people with consent on file.

In addition, if any support person is **on the phone with the participant while they call**, the participant may provide verbal consent to NCC to release information to them.

The NCC can also release small pieces of information if the participant confirms POI over the phone, e.g. who is listed as nominee, what is my NDIS number, what is the address we have on file.

The NCC can also update some participant information, such as adding a different home address, updating new bank account details or uploading a new consent form. More information is held on the Contact us page.

Service Delivery

Service Delivery can write “explanation of decision” letters upon request. If a person doesn’t understand why a decision was made, this letter elaborates on the reasons.

Service Delivery staff can also call participants over the phone to talk through the reasons that a decision was made. This may include explaining in plain English which access criteria were met and which ones were not met.

To ask for an explanation of decision letter, participants can email enquiries@ndis.gov.au.

Participant Information Access (PIA)

Participants, their nominees and authorised representatives can seek 11 different document types through PIA. The available documents are listed on our webform.

These documents have been selected because they are:

- Commonly requested,
- Easy to find on PACE/CRM,

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

- Either designed for release to the participant or have already been released to them

PIA can only release finalised documents, e.g an approved NDIS plan, not a draft plan.

More info: Participant Information Access (external) and Participant Information Access (internal). This internal page contains a section on the differences between PIA and FOI.

Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP 12)

Anyone can request any document containing their own personal information via APP 12. APP 12 also permits people to seek information on another person's behalf with their consent.

This right of access is part of the *Privacy Act 1988.* It applies to all persons including participants, nominees, providers and NDIA staff members. APP 12 does not apply to deceased people.

If the privacy team receives a request for documents, they may forward it through to the Information Access team for processing.

More information is available in the NDIA's privacy policy: Privacy | NDIS

Freedom of Information (FOI)

Applicants can request **any** document the NDIA holds. This includes non-personal documents such as policies, procedure documents, internal notes and ministerial correspondence (plus much more).

FOI also permits the release of personal information with consent. This includes the personal information of deceased people. FOI can release draft documents, provided the document already exists and is held by the NDIA.

FOI cannot generate original information. That is, FOI officers cannot make a new decision, write an original statement on a topic, or answer questions. Instead, FOI is designed to give the public access to documents that already exist. The FOI Act allows many redactions to be applied to documents. In addition, the FOI Act also permits some documents to be refused in full.

More information: Freedom of Information (external) and Freedom of Information (internal). The internal page contains a list of what "document" could mean in the context of FOI.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Releases and Resolution (R&R)

The NDIA may receive requests for participant information from from state and territory government agencies who cannot get a consent form signed. The R&R team can release personal information under specific circumstances, provided the applicant has some sort of other authority that entitles them to receive information. Examples include a police officer conducting a coronial inquest, a child protection worker concerned for the safety of a child, or a medical professional providing emergency care to someone who is unable to communicate in a hospital.

However, the R&R team's preference is to try to help the applicant obtain a signed consent form so that their request can be processed via another mechanism such as PIA or FOI.

More information: Sharing participant information (external) and Releases and Resolution (internal).

Subpoenas

The NDIA may receive subpoenas from law firms representing participants in legal proceedings. However, the NDIS Act states that the NDA is not required to comply with subpoenas, unless the subpoena is for the purpose of the NDIS Act or a Royal Commission into the NDIS. The Releases & Resolution team handles these requests. They try to help the applicant obtain the information they are seeking via another mechanism, such as PIA or FOI.

More information: Subpoenas (external).

Compensation

The Compensation team can release a limited range of information related to a participant compensation matter, such as providing a "recoverable amount" from a law firm representing a participant in a personal injury claim.

More information: Compensation (internal).

NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission

The NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission is our sister agency. It manages NDIS providers. It holds information about provider complaints, provider compliance, use of Restricted Practices and many other functions. If an applicant wants these sorts of

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

documents, they may need to lodge a separate FOI request to the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission.

More information: The role of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission | NDIS

How to lodge a FOI to the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission: Lodge a Freedom of Information (FOI) request | NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Administrative Reviews Tribunal (ART)

Some NDIS participants are involved in Administrative Reviews Tribunal matters concerning their NDIS funding or access. The ART is a separate agency from the NDIA.

Some NDIS participants want copies of documents or correspondence that they sent directly to the ART regarding their matter. The NDIA may not hold these documents. It is best that the applicants lodge a FOI request directly with the ART.

How to lodge a FOI request with the ART: Freedom of information | Administrative Review Tribunal

The ART website also contains information about how applicants can request copies of hearing transcripts: Requesting information or documents | Administrative Review Tribunal

As part of the ART process, the NDIA provides a bundle of documents with both the Tribunal and the ART applicant. These are called tribunal documents or T-docs. These documents contain all the evidence that the NDIA used to make the decision being disputed. Some applicants also request a **copy** of these same documents directly from the NDIA by lodging a FOI request. In this case, the NDIA does hold a copy of the requested documents, however there is no value to the applicant to receive identical documents twice. This is a case where it is appropriate to advise the applicant they will get the documents they need through the ART process and ask them to withdraw their duplicative FOI request.

Staff information

If a job candidate wants feedback on their job application, they can contact the recruitment company that managed the process directly (for example DFP Recruitment, Hoban Recruitment, etc). These companies can provide the panel's notes and scoring.

Candidates can also email the Recruitment team directly to get copies of notes. Candidates can also contact the panel chair and ask for more feedback, for example a phone call about the candidate’s application.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Candidates should only lodge FOI requests to get job application feedback if they have tried these alternate options but have been unsuccessful.

Australian Privacy Principle 12 (APP 12) also applies to staff (or former staff) seeking their own personal information. This means any staff member (or former staff member) can make a request under the *Privacy Act 1988* to access their own information.

This document was released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 by the National Disability Insurance Agency.