



Disability Services Commission

# Western Australian National Disability Insurance Scheme (WA NDIS) Operational Policy

## Support Needs Assessment

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### 1. Key words

Assessment, medical report, fund, support, planning, reasonable, necessary, goals, participation, choice, control.

### 2. Policy statement

This operational policy outlines how the support needs of a person in WA NDIS are assessed to inform the planning process.

### 3. Principles

- People with disability have the same rights and responsibilities as all other people to participate and contribute to the life of the community.
- Services provided by WA NDIS are complementary to, not a replacement for nor duplicate of, existing supports and people should be assisted to coordinate all available supports.
- People with disability can exercise choice and control in the selection, design and implementation of their supports and services.
- Planning may identify a requirement for formal supports and services; these are most effective when they are complementary to, and strengthening of, informal natural relationships and connections in the person's life.
- Investment in the capacity of eligible people with disability aims to minimise lifetime support costs.
- All citizens have equal access to supports from the service system most appropriate to their needs.
- Activities and services are to be designed and administered so as to be sensitive and responsive to the individual and the diverse needs of all people with disability taking into account age, gender, religion, Aboriginality, cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds, developmental needs, and geographic location.

- WA NDIS is responsive to changing needs of individuals, whether as a result of unforeseen variations in an individual's circumstances or foreseeable life transition points.

## 4. Definitions

### Planning and Assessment Tool

Planning and Assessment tool is computer based recording tool, into which the Local Coordinator enters information from a range of sources about an individual's capacity across 13 domains. The tool charts indicates levels of support required across ten domains. This approach is consistent with the NDIS Rules regarding assessment tools referencing the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.

## 5. Implementation

This operational policy will be implemented in WA NDIS areas.

The information required to complete a needs assessment can mostly be gathered by the Local Coordinator during conversations with the person, their family or carer, or relevant stakeholders. The assessment will be conducted in a responsive and non-intrusive way and can be completed over a period of time.

Local Coordinators are expected to use their judgement (drawing upon their skills, experience and expertise) in determining the depth and pace of these discussions, how this information is gathered and the manner of engagement with the person. They will be sensitive to the person's needs and circumstances. For example, some individuals may find the needs assessment highly beneficial and others may find it overly intrusive.

The assessment will be of appropriate rigour reflecting a balance between the information a person provides, the complexity of presenting needs and level of supports, and the funding which may be required.

Information to complete the planning and assessment tool may be sought from a range of other sources, for example existing files, medical reports, information and assessments. A Local Coordinator may require assistance to understand the information available and may seek the expertise of other staff and/or professionals, including the Allied Health Consultant and the Eligibility and Access team.

The needs assessment completed in the development of the person's first plan may not need updating for subsequent plans. However, it may become evident during planning conversations between the person and the Local Coordinator that there has been a change in needs and a new needs assessment would inform a new plan. The needs assessment should be updated at least:

- every three (3) years for adults
- every two (2) years for children aged between 7 and 18 years old
- annually for children under 7 years of age.

### **Planning and Assessment Tool**

There are two versions of the Planning and Assessment Tool. One has been developed for use with adults (aged 18 years and over) and one is for use with children (aged 0 to 17 years). The Planning and Assessment Tool evaluates the area and nature of support needs across 13 domains.

The Planning and Assessment Tool allows a more detailed consideration of needs where any one of the domains, or core areas of functional capacity, is significantly and permanently impaired and is identified by the person as presenting specific challenges that would need to be addressed to enable them to achieve their individual goals.

The Planning and Assessment Tool covers any difficulties experienced by the person and the impact of their disability in the domains of:

- learning and applying knowledge
- general tasks and demands
- communication
- mobility
- self-care and special health care needs
- domestic life
- interpersonal interactions and relationships
- community, social and civic life
- education and training
- employment (paid or voluntary work) (pre-employment for adolescents)
- support needs for sustaining informal care
- assistive technology, equipment and home modifications
- Individual empowerment and vulnerability.

## **6. Compliance**

Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

## **7. Communication**

This document will be published on the Commission's website and intranet, and relevant employees and other stakeholders advised of its existence.

## **8. Evaluation and review**

This policy will be reviewed in 24 months or whenever required by a significant change to



relevant policy, people, process, technology and/or information. Evaluation of the policy will take into account operational learning, feedback from stakeholders and relevant data.

## **9. Related documents**

WA NDIS Individual Funding Allocation and Management Process Operational Guidelines

WA NDIS Planning Framework

Individualised Funding Policy

WA NDIS Operational Policy – Reviewing and Appealing WA NDIS Decisions

WA NDIS Planning and Assessment Tool

