

NDIS & Counsellors

A review of each state and territory's requirements

The National Insurance Disability Scheme (NDIS) is an initiative operated by the National Insurance Disability Agency (NDIA). Its aims are to ensure that all of those whom are suffering from a disability have the supports necessary to realize their full potential. For counsellors, this means there is an opportunity to provide assistance to those who would not normally have access to counsellors. Only those that are registered as providers can provide services under the mandate of NDIS. The purpose of this information packet is to simplify the guidelines necessary to become a provider; to make the process as “pain-free” as possible.

Within the current guidelines; counselling is recognized as a therapeutic support and is classed under the “Professional Support Clusters”. There must be evidence of experience (namely, providing details of ongoing professional development and clinical supervision in place) and capacity requirements evidence (such as facilities & equipment, national police check, working with children/ vulnerable people check, and state approval where applicable). This document will highlight the requirements and what you will need for your application process in order to meet criteria. It should be noted that filling out the correct forms and providing the correct evidence does not guarantee you will be a provider, nor will it guarantee private practise will be more viable. It is important to mention that the process may take a considerable amount of time, due to the bureaucracy associated with the process; please be patient. The purpose of this document is to provide clarity and guidance to the process of becoming a registered provider with the NDIS.

South Australia:

As it currently stands, NDIA is implementing the current quality framework from the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion to ensure there are standards across both agencies and little disruption to those currently using the services.

- Be first registered with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion by completing the *Disability Services Provider Panel* application (known as the *DSPP Form 1* which can be obtained by emailing dcsi.disabilitysa@dcsi.sa.gov.au for an application kit)
 - Within which, they must provide their business information (ABN, address, contacts, business type, etc.)
 - Their Financial Viability (have been trading for at least three years, staff award rates, any other state or commonwealth funding, proof of insurance)
 - Describe the services offered (Community Support Services – 2.01 Therapy Support for individuals, 2.03 Behaviour/specialist intervention, 2.04 Counselling for families/individuals/groups)
 - Highlight the experience and ability to provide services (relevant qualifications, ongoing professional development, recruitment and volunteer policy if needed, Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal background inclusion, policy for providing behaviour management programs, protocol for a working relationship with Disability Services ((stating they will comply with all recommendations))
 - The locations' safety and security (OH&S status)
 - Show the quality of service
 - Compliance with the NDIS
 - A complaints process must be in place (similar to what ACA already implements)
- All providers will be required to undergo a criminal screening assessment through the South Australian Department of Communities and Social Inclusion and be cleared to work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Providers delivering supports through NDIA will be encouraged to employ workers who have attained a Cert III in Disability Services as a minimal qualification

South Australia Continued:

More helpful information can be found below:

<http://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/registering-provider>

<http://www.ndis.gov.au/document/411>

<http://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-portal-registration-faqs>

http://www.ndis.gov.au/sites/default/files/ndia_provider_registration_guide_to_suitability_requirements.pdf

Tasmania:

Tasmania has now begun rolling out the NDIS across the state. Tasmania is now providing an insurance agency model with the aim of providing better services, greater access and to streamline the process for individuals using the services. For ACA members, this means there is a greater opportunity for sole proprietors and smaller entities to provide services in the locality to assist individuals realize their full potential. There are a number of requirements to be considered first.

- New providers must first register with the NDIS while ensuring they comply with Tasmanian Legislation in regards to quality assurance, safety standards and restrictive practices. (See “How to Register with the NDIS” document)
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have quality and safety standards for the “Funded Community Sector” that must be met. They are highlighted below
 - Community Services Organisations must have systems and processes in place to record and monitor continuous improvement activities against recognized systems (similar to on-going professional development).
 - Continue to undertake those continuous improvement activities
 - Have a process in place to ensure there is learning from incidents (similar to clinical supervision)
 - Have a complaints process for serious incident reporting (similar to the ACA complaints process)
 - Further information here: http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/business/community_sector_relations_unit/quality_and_safety
- All new NDIS support providers in Tasmania must have National Criminal Checks in place in order to provide services.
- Finally, the new provider must submit their details & complete the below form
 - https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/151760/Organisation_Details_Form.pdf
- From here the DHHS will complete a “due diligence assessment” before authorized to deliver services funded by DHHS and be registered as a provider with NDIA
- New providers requesting registration to provide any ‘disability specific’ support clusters listed above must lodge an Application Form for the Registration of Providers with the NDIA in accordance with the NDIA’s Provider Registration procedures. Upon receipt of the registration form, the NDIA will refer the request to

the DHHS for consideration, if appropriate. The DHHS may then contact the provider to complete relevant Quality and Safety and Due Diligence checks. DHHS will subsequently advise the NDIA and the Provider of the outcome of these checks and the NDIA will complete the NDIA's Provider Registration process accordingly.

- Essentially; you must register with the NDIS and you will be informed of the further requirements you must meet.

In Victoria new providers must first submit their registration to NDIA and confirm their acceptance of NDIA's *Terms of Business*. Follow the link below to see the terms of business.

http://www.ndis.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/terms_of_business_registered_providers.pdf

- During the assessment, the provider will then be directed to apply with the Victorian Department of Human Services.
 - The purpose of this registration with the Department of Human Services is to determine your eligibility to be a Disability Service Provider (DSP)
 - In scope activities could include *Futures for Young Adults (17201)*, *Individual Support Packages(17081)*, *Therapy (17042)*, *Early Parenting centre services(31256)*, *Health Services and Rehabilitation Programs(3203)*, *Parenting Assessment and skills development services(31255)*, *Stronger Families(31262)*
 - It should be noted that providers should only apply for the services in which they are qualified to provide.
 - The form is located at the following URL : <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/policy,-procedures-and-forms-for-registration-of-disability-service-providers-and-community-services>
 - Within which the provider will show their contact details, ABN and application status.
 - The purpose of this is to have a system of checks and balances between the old agency and the new.
 - National Criminal Checks and Working with Children Checks must be completed
 - A complaints process must be in place (similar to what ACA already implements)

Victoria Continued:

Additionally, providers will be required to achieve certification or accreditation to the Human Service Standards with a Victorian Department of Health and Human Services approved independent review body within 12 months of registration at their own expense. Also, providers will be required to undertake a full certification/accreditation review once in every three-year period.

Working with Children Checks and National Criminal Record checks must be completed as well. In order to engage with the NDIA as a therapeutic support, all of the steps must be completed.

Australian Capital Territory:

The ACT government is undertaking legislative amendments to ensure that the current quality assurance and safeguarding obligations in contracts are able to transition in the NDIS environment.

For new providers, the best information is directly from NDIA; with applying to be a new provider the first step.

- New providers of disability services are required to first register with the NDIS. Throughout the current trial, providers will be required to comply with ACT legislation in regards to quality assurance, safety standards and restrictive practises. These include:
 - Staff and volunteers have undergone a *Working with Vulnerable People Check* and registration in order to be engaged in the role
 - There must be a written *Child Protection Policy* that details voluntary and mandatory reporting requirements, training and avenues of assistance for staff to help them comply with the framework and legislation in place.
- Providers are required to undertake a self-assessment annually, against the National Standards and undergo performance and financial audits every three years. This can be found below
- https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2013/national_standards_for_disability_services_-_full_standards_2.pdf
- Once completed, NDIS will redirect to the appropriate service & following steps required.
- The Disability Services National Minimum Data Set Codes linked to NDIS Support clusters are as follows: 2.04 Counselling (individual/family/group) -> Therapeutic Supports

New South Wales:

New South Wales is the most populated state in Australia. As such, there is a great need for disability support services in this state. The prospective provider must first register NDIA, then seek third party accreditation. Similar to Western Australia, they are moving away from a tendering process and to an insurance agency approach; focusing on individualized needs and plans rather than “top-down” approach.

- New providers must undertake (at the time of application) a self-assessment to demonstrate the organisation’s capacity to comply with the *NSW Disability Services Standards (NSW DSS)*. Additionally, new service providers must undertake another self-assessment using the *NSW Key Performance Indicator (KPI) guide*. NDIS will request these self-assessments as part of registration. They are found below:
 - https://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/quality/standards_in_action
 - https://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/quality/key_performance_indicator_kpi_guide
- Within 12 months of registering with the NDIA, new providers must attain independent third party verification to confirm organisational performance against the *NSW DSS*
 - The third party verification will be done by a party that is accredited either by the *Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ)* or *International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua)*.
 - After acting on their feedback and providing a *Verification Statement* to NDIS the process is complete.
- It should be noted that there have been changes to the complaints, reviews and monitoring policy. NDIA participants will be able to make complaints about service providers to the ombudsman NSW

New South Wales Continued:

- Once this whole process is completed, providers can then apply to be a part of the ADHC supplier directory – which includes many of the same requirements that would already be provided in the beginning stages (contact details, ABN, addresses, ability to provide services, operational processes, overview of service model, etc.)