

DOING BUSINESS IN THE NDIS?

A Business Process Development
Guide for Providers

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A business process development guide

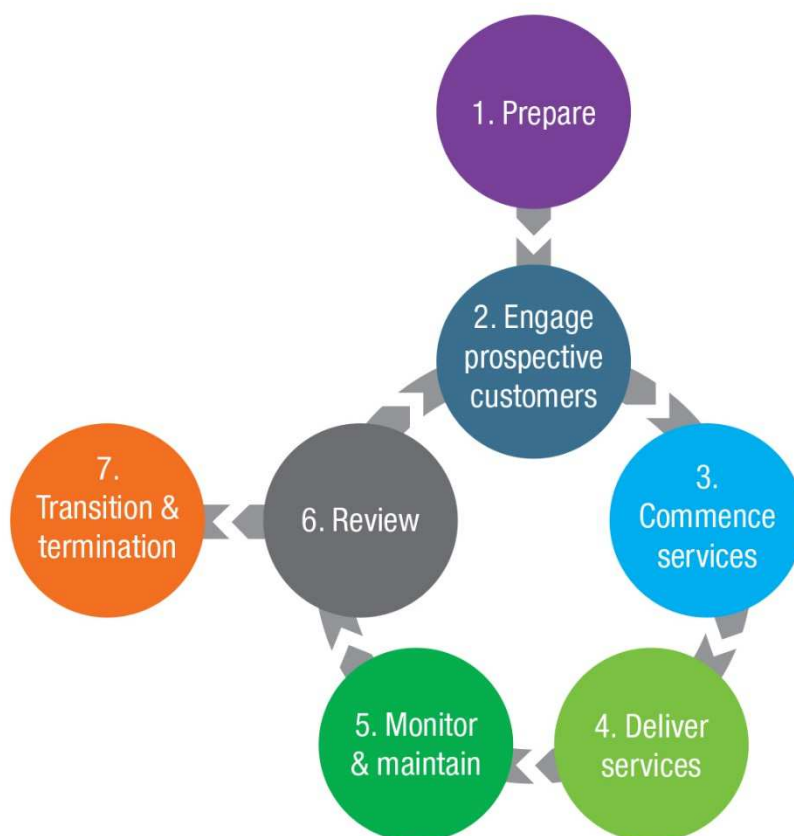
About the Guide

This guide will assist leadership teams to determine their required business processes for operating in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) business environment. The guide covers the whole customer lifecycle. At each stage, there are specific procedures required.

This guide will be useful for a range of service providers as the content is not prescriptive. Organisations may take what they need and customise their systems for their own circumstances. In smaller organisations, a process might simply require creating one item on a checklist; in larger organisations, a detailed process might be required.

What parts of my business processes might need to be reviewed?

NDIS might require you to review all aspects of your interactions with customers. This guide is based on a model of interaction between customers and a provider over time. Seven stages are identified.



Suggested steps in reviewing your systems and processes

1. Conduct an initial meeting of senior leaders about business process redesign using this checklist as a conversation starter. Involve the entire leadership team, as each team member will have a part to play in successful implementation of the new processes.
2. Task one person to draft the new procedures.
3. Seek comments on the draft, and incorporate feedback as appropriate.
4. Conduct a pilot of the new procedure.
5. Review the results of the pilot and amend your procedures as required.

Stage 1: Prepare

Prior to prospective customers contacting your organisation, consider which of the following systems and processes are required.

Research/preliminary work

1. Review the NDIS Provider Toolkit, including the NDIA Terms of Business for Registered Support Providers¹
2. Identify who will be the Primary Contact for your organisation in the NDIA Provider Portal, and ask them to complete Provider Digital Access (PRODA) registration²
3. Decide the support categories your organisation wishes to provide and identify the associated registration groups³
4. Complete NDIA registration⁴
5. Identify who else in the organisation will require access to the NDIA Provider Portal and ensure they complete PRODA registration
6. Primary Contact gives access to provider portal
7. Confirm all registration groups have been approved in the Provider Portal

Roles and responsibilities

8. Identify which person/position will keep up to date with NDIS policy developments, including NDS member resources of 'Inside the NDIS' Newsletter and NDIS Issue Register
9. Identify which person/position will keep up to date with changes to the NDIA's Provider Manual and weekly Provider Newsletters
10. Identify which person/position will have responsibility for keeping the business processes up to date
11. Identify which person/position will work with existing customers on pre-planning
12. Identify which person/position will work with existing customers on commissioning, including service bookings and service agreements
13. Identify which person/position will work with potential new customers
14. Determine delegations for authorising quotes and service agreements
15. Identify who will have responsibility for making payment requests in the NDIA Provider Portal, and how often payment requests will be made
16. If the organisation is to be a Specialist Disability Accommodation provider, identify who will have responsibility for registering the properties with the NDIA
17. Amend job roles and position descriptions as required

1. Prepare

¹ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m3> Module 3: Terms of Business

² <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/health-professionals/services/medicare/proda>

³ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m4> Module 4: Guide to suitability

⁴ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m2> Module 2: Registering as a provider

A culture of customer service

18. Determine how to build a culture of customer responsiveness, but build understanding of when and how to say no to requests for support
19. Determine how the organisation will communicate changes in service offerings to customers

Essential documents

20. Document what supports will be offered
21. Develop pre-planning documents or use NDIA pre-planning documents
22. Develop a price list for those supports, and ensure that prices and conditions are in accordance with the latest NDIS Price Guide⁵
23. Develop a template service agreement (including the Schedule of Supports)^{6 7}. Determine whether the service agreement should be a legally-binding contract. If so, develop arrangements in relation to customers who lack legal capacity to enter a contract.
24. Develop policy and procedures about cancellations, including any charges for late cancellations
25. Develop policy and procedures about ‘no shows’, including procedures for discharging safeguarding requirements and for any charging

Marketing

26. Conduct an NDIS market analysis of potential new clients, potential growth areas, and competitors
27. Design and implement marketing and promotion strategies, which may include:
 - 27.1. Clear information about what you offer, in language relevant to NDIA plans
 - 27.2. Clear information for potential customers: How do I become a customer?
 - 27.3. Information for potential customers about what to expect from you
 - 27.4. “Come and try” or other free pre-sign up opportunities
 - 27.5. Assistance with pre-planning for NDIS
 - 27.6. Pathways for immediate feedback about what works in the process, including from those who don’t become customers
 - 27.7. Customer engagement processes and relevant information are prepared
28. Consider if you wish to support potential NDIS participants with access requests and requests for plan reviews and, if so, how.

⁵ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-and-payment.html>

⁶ <https://www.nds.org.au/stpvic/resource-library>

⁷ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m5> Module 5: Service agreements

New systems

29. Establish an entry point for customer enquiries
30. Ensure that financial processes for NDIS participants have been updated, and redundant practices have ended
31. Modify information management and record systems, identifying a 'single source of truth' for customer data, for recording enquiries and generating quotes/service agreements, and for work flows for customer business processes
32. Design systems for minimising and managing non-attendance
33. Establish service delivery tracking systems that record services delivered, evidence required, and meet NDIA audit requirements⁸
34. Identify and purchase any necessary equipment for staff (for example: phones, cars, computers, GPS) and any associated policy changes (for example, for working in the field)
35. Implement credit card and/or bank transfer arrangements to assist with cash flow
36. Determine claiming and invoicing procedures, including frequency
37. For accommodation providers, develop and communicate vacancy management procedures
38. For accommodation providers, end 'board and lodging' arrangements and move to rent and 'other expenses' arrangements
39. Modify HR systems to facilitate customer/staff matching
40. If registered to deliver Coordination of Supports, develop conflict of interest policies and processes⁹
41. Ensure all staff are aware of NDIS systems and practices

1. Prepare

Nice to have

42. Establish external referral systems in the event you cannot provide a requested service
43. Develop memorandums of understanding (MOUs), purchasing arrangements, or outsourcing agreements for when you need to work closely with other organisations to implement a customer's plan (if subcontracting arrangements are in place, they must meet NDIA requirements and Australian Consumer Law¹⁰)
44. Develop and implement an outcome measurement tool if desired

Maintain the systems

45. Modify exit processes for departing staff to ensure they can no longer access the NDIS Provider Portal for your organisation

⁸ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m7> Module 7: Payment and assurance

⁹ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m3> Module 3: Terms of Business

¹⁰ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m3> Module 3: Terms of Business


Stage 2: Engage prospective customers

For existing customers phasing-in to NDIS

1. Develop and implement pre-planning for all current customers
2. Support customers in the phase-in process (for example, some customers will want to be supported in the planning meeting with NDIA)
3. Monitor progress of each customer during phase-in (that is: customer contacted by NDIA; planning session held; plan issued; quote requested; quote provided; service agreement provided; service agreement signed; service booking made in NDIA Portal)
4. Ensure that quotes/service agreements and service bookings are back dated to the start date of the NDIA Plan, and if necessary create two schedules of support (one schedule for those services already provided and a different schedule if there are changes for future service delivery)
5. Assist customers deemed not eligible for NDIS to access the Continuity of Supports Programme if appropriate
6. Follow processes below

For all customers, including new customers

7. Ask customer if they are willing to share their NDIS plan with you in order to match service delivery with goals identified in the plan¹¹
8. Matching participant with workers/staff (see person-centred tools and resources)
9. Assess risks, for example, you might not be able to support a customer unless behaviour support is in place
10. Issue quotes/service agreements as required to customer and, if required, to NDIA
11. For customers whose funding is administered through the NDIA Portal or by a plan manager, if required, make service booking for agreed services and ensure relevant box is ticked on Portal
12. Make information available for customers about rights and responsibilities, privacy, complaints, feedback mechanisms, etc.
13. Follow-up customers who have not returned a signed service agreement
14. Ensure that the signed service agreement is appropriately stored



2. Engage
prospective
customers

¹¹ <https://ndis.gov.au/finding-and-engaging-providers.html>

Stage 3: Commence services

1. Establish logistics to commence services, including:
 - 1.1. a clear process about what the commencement of services will look like
 - 1.2. a process for managing expectations about timeframes
 - 1.3. recruitment, and
 - 1.4. rostering
2. Record further customer information including contact details, significant others, any Local Area Coordinator or Coordinator of Supports contact details, workplace health and safety assessments, any further risk assessments, and required equipment
3. If using outcome measurement, collect baseline data
4. Seek customer feedback, commencing on the first occasion of service delivery
5. Monitor compatibility issues for any group environment as part of ongoing risk assessment



Stage 4: Deliver services

1. Implement systems for minimising and managing non-attendance
2. Implement systems for recording and monitoring services delivered, including evidence¹²
3. Put in operation customer service strategies during service delivery, for example, a support worker checking that they have met the customer's needs that day
4. Invoice NDIS self-managing customers, plan managers and private purchasers
5. Make payment requests in the Provider Portal for customers whose package is held by the NDIA



4. Deliver
services

¹² <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m7> Module 7: Payment Assurance

Stage 5: Monitor and maintain

Essential to have

1. Have a procedure for regularly collecting, considering and responding to customers' feedback
2. Implement changes to service agreements when required
3. Manage risks, as risks might change on each occasion of service
4. For providers of Specialist Disability Accommodation, notify NDIA of vacancies in accordance with the NDIS Terms of Business¹³
5. Lodge Annual Attestation Statement/s as required by NDIA

Nice to have

6. Monitor customer actual spending compared to service booking, and inform customers of potential under-spending or over-spending
7. Use service booking data in financial forecasts, assuming some under-spending
8. Implement relationship-building
9. Employ community-building strategies
10. Review outcomes and implement lessons learnt



¹³ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m3> Module 3: Terms of Business

Stage 6: Review

In addition to ongoing internal monitoring of service delivery, processes are needed for when NDIA formally reviews the customer's NDIA Plan. Following NDIA reviews of a participant's plan, check for any changes made by NDIA and the participant, and go to Stage 2 of the Customer/Provider Lifecycle.

Life transitions

NDIA operational guidelines have requirements for the following life stages¹⁴:

- School stages
- Adolescence and identity
- Transition out of school
- Transition into/out of employment
- Retirement
- Aged care

Regular NDIA plan review

NDIA periodically reviews plans with participants, which may change the supports needed by the customer.¹⁵

1. Record when next plan review due and schedule any assistance to be offered to customers in the review
2. Identify information to provide to review, such as any gap, progress toward goals, or new goals.

Crisis events

Crisis events can also occur.

3. Ensure practices reflect the required State/Territory and NDIA incident response procedures¹⁶
4. Implement established processes for crises
5. Implement processes for when a formal review is required

¹⁴ NDIA Operational Guidelines: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/operational-guideline/overview-sitemap>

¹⁵ <https://www.ndis.gov.au/operational-guideline/overview-sitemap>

¹⁶ <https://ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit.html#m3> Module 3: Terms of Business. See under 'Compliance':

Stage 7: Transition and termination

1. Exit customers in accordance with agreed procedures for:
 - 1.1. customers moving on to a different provider
 - 1.2. customers who no longer require services
 - 1.3. customers who are deceased (State/Territory law also applies)
2. Follow protocols for relationship management for exiting customers:
 - 2.1. internal communication – program/service coordinator, finance, etc.
 - 2.2. archiving and storage of data
 - 2.3. feedback and any follow-up after service termination
3. Identify any learnings for future service delivery.



Checklist of processes to consider across each step in the lifecycle of the customer/provider interaction

- ☐ Processes are in place for customer/carer involvement in providing feedback
- ☐ Communication and cultural sensitivity is addressed, e.g., Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander customers and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse customers
- ☐ Person-centred tools and resources are implemented
- ☐ Communication channels exist to ensure staff know and understand all relevant processes
- ☐ Roles for each process are identified and allocated
- ☐ Documentation relating to processes is finalised and tested
- ☐ Processes for meeting compliance obligations are in place (legislative, sector specific, and broader compliance) such as a compliance register
- ☐ Feedback mechanisms and quality systems are operating
- ☐ A staff capacity and capability strategy is implemented
- ☐ Safeguarding practices are in place
- ☐ Confidentiality is protected