

Organisational Capability Assessment Tool

**A tool to assess your organisation's capacity to
provide services for people with complex and
challenging support needs.**

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Background

People with disability may have a number of circumstances in their lives, some of which relate to their disability and others that do not but collectively mean they have complex and challenging support needs. These individuals are likely to be eligible for funded supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Eligible people with complex and challenging support needs may have all their needs met by one provider or may choose multiple disability service providers. Like those without a disability, these people will often also be accessing a range of services such as health, mental health, education etc. Agencies such as the Department of Justice or Department of Communities (Child Protection) may also be involved in the person's life.

In an effort to help people living with disability to achieve their goals, the NDIS announced in late 2018 that it recognised the diversity and complexity within disability and the need for more specialist support. The NDIS advised it would roll out new 'pathways' to assist people in their individual journeys with the NDIS; one of these new pathways is the 'Complex Support Needs Pathway'. This pathway commenced in the Cannington area in WA in July 2019.

The NDIA has said that

"participants are identified for the Complex Support Needs Pathway by the complexity of their situation and personal factors such as being homeless or returning to the community from living in residential aged care. Involuntary or voluntary involvement with particular government systems such as Justice or mental health would also be factors which would necessitate entry to the complex support needs pathway".

NDIS and complex support needs

The NDIA defines complex support needs as circumstances where a person has multiple support needs based on the presence of personal and situational factors that require a comparatively greater need for coordination of multiple services to support the participant in the development and implementation of their plan; that is, where one or more personal and/or situational factors requires a more tailored approach to address multiple needs.

Organisational Assessment Tool

Case example:

Sarah is a 56-year-old female with incomplete quadriplegia. She has insulin dependent diabetes but is unable to manage her condition due to her intellectual disability.

She has minimal informal supports as her mother is elderly and her one sibling is interstate.

Neither is able to support Sarah but no formal guardianship arrangement is in place. Sarah exhibits challenging behaviours on a regular basis. Her supported independent living provider is struggling to meet her needs and may withdraw services.

Personal Factors

- Identified Behaviours of Concern and/or Regulated Restrictive Practice.
- Hard to reach / difficulty engaging/ homeless and transitory lifestyles
- Multiple diagnosis
- Clinical complexity of disability
- A history of trauma or abuse
- Limited or no expressive communication, including poor literacy, English as a second language

Situational Factors

- Involvement (voluntary or involuntary) in other government service systems such as health, child protection, guardianship orders, mental health and justice
- Immediate unmet need for targeted support
- Extraordinary challenges/barriers where no single service can address the needs of an individual at the time
- Transitional supports required for returning to the community, such as leaving a rehabilitation clinic, hospital, incarceration.
- Insufficient family or formal support to assist with decision making or planning
- Needs can only be addressed by multiple community supports services
- Multiple family members with a disability or a parent/carer with disability
- Dependent children

Case example:

Harry is a 36-year-old male who had a stroke attributed to the aggressive treatment of his childhood cancer.

He has a significant right-sided hemiplegia which is more pronounced in the right-sided upper than lower limb. He has also recently acquired epilepsy, a late-onset artefact as a result of the stroke. He cannot talk (expressive Dysphasia and Dysarthria from the stroke).

He has been in a mental health hostel for over five years due to Bipolar post a brief period in prison related to petty crimes. He is an alcoholic although he has expressed that he wants to stop drinking. He is unemployed and at risk of homelessness as his behaviours when binge drinking are at odds with the hostel rules.

Disability service providers and complex support needs

Disability service providers who wish to provide services to people with complex and challenging support needs must have a sound understanding of their organisational capacity and identify to what extent they could perform this role.

People with complex support needs will present with their unique set of circumstances. Often these individuals will be very vulnerable and may not be able to self-advocate. It is therefore critical that service providers who chose to provide services to individuals with complex support needs understand their organisational capacity, strengths and limitations.

The introduction of the NDIS Complex Support Needs Pathway will not resolve all issues for this cohort of vulnerable individuals.

The NDIA will activate this pathway as they assess individuals but not all individuals who are thought to have complex support needs may be supported on this pathway.

By virtue of the complex support needs of this cohort the disability sector needs to develop new approaches to support individuals and this will often include working alongside other disability and human service providers.

To support his new approach a guide outlining how to successfully partner and collaborate has been developed by Brightwater, and can be found here: www.ndistoolkit.com.au

Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool

This tool has been developed to assist providers to assess their capacity and identify areas they may need to develop in order to successfully provide services to people with complex and challenging support needs.

To ensure best practice service delivery and better outcomes for individuals, organisations should assess their readiness to support this cohort adequately to reduce the likelihood of withdrawal of services (if the service provider finds they can't support the person's needs) or inadequate or inappropriate services being provided (through failure by the organisation recognising its limitations in service delivery).

The assessment tool may be useful in preparing for the rigours of complying with standards of service provision within the [Quality and Safeguarding Framework](#) that will commence from 1 July 2020 in Western Australia.

Appendix 1 provides links to information for service providers who wish to support people with complex supports needs.

How to use the tool

The tool provides the opportunity for organisations to 'self-audit' and reflects on their capacity to support individuals with complex support needs. This tool will help organisations to:

- Assess their organisational capacity
- Identify strengths as an organisation
- Identify areas which may require improvement, referral or partnering with others
- Clarify the specific nature of support they wish to provide; the cohort that best matches their organisational capabilities.

To assist organisations to identify their capacity and strengths, the following domains will be assessed:

- Organisational Strategy
- Customer and market focus

- People and capability
- Information and knowledge management
- Safeguarding and quality management

An honest assessment will enable an organisation to gain the most from this assessment process. It will assist organisations to identify areas of improvement that are required to build organisational capacity to provide service delivery which is sustainable.

Who should complete the assessment tool?

This tool has been designed for board, management and executive level staff to gauge the capacity of their organisation when supporting individuals with complex support needs.

Organisations may also choose to select staff who are delivering client services to also complete some or all of the tool.

Questions to consider before completing the assessment tool:

Questions	Organisation responses
What constitutes complex support needs when you are providing services to individuals?	
Has your organisation got experience in providing support to individuals with complex support needs?	
If yes, are there personal or situational factors common to the individuals supported by your organisation?	
If yes, was there a time where assistance was needed or services withdrawn?	
When your organisation provides support to someone with complex support needs, how is a crises dealt with? Is this effective and sustainable?	
If your organisation doesn't provide services for people with complex support needs, why not?	

Organisational strategy

- This section encourages organisations to think about their organisational values and how these align with the cohort they have been working with.
- Is supporting this cohort sustainable and part of the organisational vision?
- Is there clarity and clear boundaries around who the organisation will support and pathways to follow when this isn't appropriate?
- Is this clear to staff providing service delivery?

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Does your organisation have clear guidelines around the specific cohort who will be provided support services?				
Does this cohort include individuals with complex support needs?				
Does your organisation have clarity around the specific complexities it is willing and able to work with?				
Does your organisation have an assessment process to determine which individuals will be accepted or declined to your service?				
Does your organisation provide comprehensive and accredited training to new staff to ensure competency for working with your cohort?				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Does your organisation have a framework of trauma informed practice?				
Does your organisation have guidelines in place to ensure continuity and adequate planning for those needing episodic support?				
Does your organisation have clear guidelines to identify when referrals or partnerships are necessary?				
Does your organisation have clear guidelines for staff in relation to home visits to clients and staff safety?				
Does your organisation have clear guidelines for staff regarding how to refer individuals who cannot be supported?				
Does your organisation have clear guidelines for staff regarding how to effectively partner with other organisations that are also supporting the individual?				
Does your organisation have a complaints management framework easily accessible to clients and based on the principles of natural				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
justice?				

Customers and market focus

- In a new and competitive market, it is essential that organisations reflect on how they want to provide services to people with complex support needs
- To do this means understanding how the organisation is positioned in the sector, what the strengths and skillset of the organisation are and what is sustainable practice.

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Does your organisation practice accessible communication to individuals with English as a second language or lower literacy levels (e.g. alternative languages, easy read, pictorial, AUSLAN, braille)				
Does your organisation support other forms of communication such as Auslan, compic, electronic or other communication devices?				
Is your organisation viewed as culturally safe (for example by CaLD, LGBTI and Aboriginal individuals)?				
Does your organisation work in partnership with other services to effectively meet the needs of an individual?				
Does your organisation have guidelines for how				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
to partner with other services to provide effective and cohesive support for an individual?				
Does your organisation need to work in partnership in order to more appropriately support individuals in your target cohort?				

People and capability

- It is essential that staff are supported to understand organisational values and processes. This includes having transparent and clear guidelines available to staff around what the organisation can and will do, and clear instruction and pathways for staff to follow.
- Once your organisation has established the target cohort and parameters for the individual group you will work with, it is essential that staff are competent in providing appropriate, safe and necessary supports to those individuals.
- Please note, training refers to professionally accredited and formally recognised and approved training. Staff must be competent in recognised training in order for your organisation to tick off below criteria.

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Are staff competent at supporting individuals who exhibit behaviours of concern (at risk of harming others or themselves)				
Are staff competent in supporting individuals with psychosocial disability?				
Are staff competent in supporting individuals who may be homeless, transient or difficult to engage?				
Are staff competent in supporting individuals who have multiple diagnoses?				
Are staff competent to provide services to individuals with cognitive impairment, or co-morbidities that require significant intervention				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
and ongoing support?				
Are staff competent in supporting individuals who have a history of trauma and abuse, adhering to the organisations' trauma informed practice?				
Are staff competent to support individuals who have significant communication difficulties?				
Are staff offered/required to undertake ongoing professional training and development once part of the organisation to maintain currency?				
Are staff competent in working with other government departments involved with individuals, such as legal guardians or Department of Justice?				
Are staff competent in their understanding of the legal requirements associated when liaising with government departments?				
Are staff competent in supporting individuals in transitional facilities?				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Do staff have the capacity to respond to individuals in crisis and provide support until alternate supports are in place?				
Are staff competent in working with individuals based in a rural or remote area with limited resources and support options?				
Are staff competent in supporting an individual who has little to no informal supports in their life?				
Are staff competent in supporting Aboriginal Australians or CaLD individuals in a culturally competent and secure manner?				
Are staff aware of the impacts of intergenerational trauma and systemic racism for Aboriginal people?				
Are staff competent in providing information to individuals in culturally appropriate formats?				
Do staff utilise appropriate translation services for Aboriginal Australians and CaLD individuals?				
Are staff competent in connecting individuals with other services if unable to provide the				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
support that is needed?				
Do staff have the appropriate clearances to work with client cohort (e.g. Working with Children Check, Prison Clearances, and Police Clearances)?				

**CaLD = Culturally and linguistically diverse*

Information and knowledge management

- Regardless of the specific cohort your organisation has chosen to work with, it is essential that there are very clear policies and procedures in place for staff to refer to which can direct their actions.
- Consistent and accessible guidelines for service delivery staff is an essential part of best practice, and protects staff and the organisation by way of provision of clear instruction.

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Are staff familiar with and competent in providing required information when transitioning an individual between services?				
Does your organisation provide clear guidelines for staff to know the individuals they can support? (e.g. and when to refer on)				
Are there clear processes in place to guide staff to when they need to partner with other organisations?				
Does your organisation have clear processes in place to guide staff in relation to know when and how to share information that complies with legislation?				

Safeguarding and quality management

- When working with individuals with complex support needs, it is essential to have clear processes in relation to legalities, escalation pathways, responsibilities and communication.
- It is essential and best practice to have established a dialogue and clear contingency plans with all stakeholders at the outset; this ensures everyone is aware of roles, accountabilities and expectations.

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Does your organisation clearly establish delegation of responsibilities for all parties when partnering with other organisations?				
Are staff delivering services competent in assessing an individual's vulnerability, decision-making capacity and dignity of risk?				
Does the organisation have a mechanism to test that client decision-making is genuine and respected?				
Are staff competent to execute escalation pathways if they are concerned about risk to an individual and/or their vulnerability?				
Are clear guidelines in place within your organisation to respond to after-hours crises and provide support?				

Item	No or N/A	Progressing	Achieved	Actions/notes
Are staff providing service delivery competent in their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of legal guardians and administrators and the associated requirements?				

Appendix 1 Further Resources

Advocacy

Advocacy WA

<https://advocacywa.org.au/>

Disability Advocacy Network Australia

<https://www.dana.org.au>

Carers WA

<https://www.carerswa.asn.au>

Individual Disability Advocacy Service

www.sscls.asn.au

Complex support needs

Complex Support Needs Planning

Resource Kit

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au>

Criminal justice support

Department of Communities Disability
Justice Service:

DJS@DSC.wa.gov.au

Justice Coordinator on 6167 7867; 6167
7885 or 6167 8154.

Intellectual Disability Diversion Court

www.magistratescourt.wa.gov.au

Crisis

Mental health emergency response line

<https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/getting-help/helplines/mental-health-response-line/>

Lifeline

<https://www.lifelinewa.org.au/>

Organisational capability & governance tools

NDIS Provider toolkit

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/provider-toolkit>

NDS Business Resource Guide

<https://www.nds.org.au/resources/ndis-business-process-guide>

Change Readiness Assessment

<https://changesynergy.com.au/change-readiness-assessment/>

Elements of Effective Governance

<https://www.oag.govt.nz/good-practice/governance/organisation>

NDS Fundamentals for Boards

<https://www.nds.org.au/resources/fundamentals-for-boards>

Psychosocial

Mental Health Commission

<https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/>

Reimagine Today

<https://reimagine.today/>

Mental Health Council

<https://mhaustralia.org/general/getting-ndis-right-people-psychosocial-disability>

WA Association for Mental Health

<https://waamh.org.au/Organisation>

Cultural services

Ethnic Disability Advocacy Service

<http://www.edac.org.au/>

Mental Health in Multicultural Australia

www.mhima.org.au

Drug and alcohol

Alcohol and drug support service

<https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/our-services>

Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA)

www.wanada.org.au

Holyoake Drug and Alcohol Services

<https://www.holyoake.org.au/>

Aboriginal services

First Peoples Disability Network

<https://fpdn.org.au/>

National Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC)

www.nidac.org.au

Derbarl Yirrigan Health Service

<http://www.dyhs.org.au/>

Legal - Guardianship

Office of the Public Advocate

<https://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au/>

Legal - Administration

The Public Trustee

<https://www.publictrustee.wa.gov.au/>

Rural services

WA Country Health Service

www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au

Rural Link – Mental Health Commission

<https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/getting-help/helplines/rurallink/>