



DISABILITY WORKFORCE RESOURCES

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Introduction

Growing the workforce

Building a workforce in the NDIS environment presents both challenge and opportunity. In a 2019 [Department of Social Services Report](#), the Federal Government notes, “one in five jobs created in Australia over the NDIS transition period will be disability care jobs.”

The report predicts approximately 71% of new jobs will be support worker roles, 12% allied health roles, 11% coordination and social worker roles and 6% managerial roles. At the same time, service providers report their inability to recruit sufficient disability workers and allied health professionals. This is leading to lengthy waits for services, especially in regional areas.

Just some of the questions that this raises are:

- Where will this workforce come from?
- How will it evolve?
- What skills and experience are needed to fulfil the positions available?
- What qualifications will deliver the skill sets required by NDIS participants and organisations?

Challenges for the disability sector

In this environment, service providers recognise that they need to find ways to attract and retain talented, committed employees in a competitive labour market. New employees need to be inducted and supported so they feel valued and can contribute.

As a person-centred service industry, workers are key to success. Building positive cultures with capable leadership, with opportunities for learning and career development pave the road to success and quality services for people with disability.

NDS Workforce Resources

National Disability Services (NDS) has developed a wide range of workforce resources that include:

- The NDS [Workforce Hub](#) has multiple resources grouped under four main categories; Build, Optimise, Know and Develop the workforce.
- The [Innovative Workforce Fund](#) website contains case studies, tools, and resources from projects funded to explore innovative ways to support people with disability under the NDIS.
- The NDS [Allied Health Workforce Resource](#) assists the sector to meet the challenge of building a sustainable allied health workforce.
- [Carecareers](#) is NDS' workforce attraction hub, offering career advice and recruitment tools specifically for the disability sector.
- [NDS Learn and Develop](#) provides a range of solutions focused on Learning and Organisational Development designed to support capacity building and ongoing professional development of the disability workforce.
- [National Disability Practitioners](#) provides information and resources to develop and support the disability workforce.

This interactive workforce pdf is designed to help you find and take advantage of the many workforce resources NDS has developed; as well as some other key links to assist with all aspects of your workforce strategy and planning.

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning looks at what an organisation needs to accomplish in a given period of time and analyses what knowledge, skills, and experience are required to achieve this. This includes the size, skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience needed. It assists in defining the activities necessary to have 'the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time'.

Workforce planning assists business to answer questions such as:

- What are the key workforce segments we need such as Disability Support Workers, Allied Health Assistants and Allied Health professionals?
- What number of supervisors and managers are needed and where?
- What succession risks does the organisation have for key roles and how long does it take to develop people to be ready for those roles if vacated?
- Is support available to manage transition risk as people take on a supervision role for the first time or move into more senior roles?

These considerations build on the supply and demand understandings and should form part of the organisation's workforce plan and HR strategy.

Resources

- ▶ NDS Guide to [Workforce Planning in a Nutshell](#) (2016) outlines the stages involved in workforce planning, and includes useful templates.
- ▶ [Workforce Planning Kit](#) (2016), Handbook and templates for developing and implementing a workforce plan.
- ▶ The Analysing Time Guide, located under Understanding Workforce Costs in the [Workforce Hub](#), can support costing and pricing, rostering and management of staff.



- ▶ The [NDIS Workforce Capability Framework](#) has been developed by the NDIS Commission and translates the Commission's principles, [Practice Standards](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) into clear and observable behaviours that service providers and workers should demonstrate when delivering services to people with disability.
- ▶ [Workforce support to the disability sector in response to COVID-19 \(2021\)](#). Purpose at Work creates an overview of the disability sector workforce issues during the COVID-19 pandemic and provides recommendations to NDS, under the Safer and Stronger project. With the objective of optimising provider performance, business processes and workforce management through an overview of priorities, issues and strategies.
- ▶ [Disability Workforce Innovation Connector Project \(2018 – 2020\)](#) For information about the project, Workforce Connector Model, learnings from related Victorian Regional Readiness Funded innovation projects and tips for recruitment of under-represented disability workforce segments – men and young people.

Workforce Data and Business Planning

Workforce data provides the evidence needed to inform workforce business decisions, necessary to achieve strategic business objectives. It is used to benchmark and inform workforce planning.

Resources

- ▶ NDS Workforce Hub: [Knowing Your Workforce](#) provides links to a range of workforce data
- ▶ The NDS [Workforce Census](#) tracks the changing structure and composition of the disability workforce with periodic workforce surveys.
- ▶ Australian Disability Workforce Reports contain data compiled from NDS Workforce Census: [First Edition July 2017](#), [Second Edition February 2018](#), [Third Edition July 2018](#).
- ▶ The annual NDS [State Of The Disability Sector Report](#) is based on an annual market survey and outlines key issues that affect disability service providers, including workforce challenges.
- ▶ [NDIS Data Insights](#) provides current comprehensive information about NDIS participation including data on participant age, location, services accessed.
- ▶ The Federal Government's [NDIS Demand Map](#) provides an up to date forecast of the NDIS demand by postcode across Australia.
- ▶ The [NDS' NDIS Readiness Toolkit](#) (V.3 2015) outlines a set of self-assessment exercises structured around seven key business domains that focus on business practice required under the NDIS.



Leadership and Change Management



Employees look to leaders to foster a shared organisational vision and clear pathways to achieving it. Organisations' ability to flourish and respond positively to change rely on skilled leaders from team leader to CEO. Effective leaders understand and champion change management processes. They are reflective and engage in continual learning.

Resources

- ▶ NDS [Learn and Develop](#) provides access to a range of training programs, workshops and modules that are designed to support capacity building and ongoing professional development of the disability workforce. Examples include [Leadership Development](#) and [Managing Change and Communication](#).
- ▶ [National Disability Practitioners](#) (NDP) is an association for disability practitioners, ranging from support workers to leaders. The [NDP Learning Hub](#) includes leadership related resources.
- ▶ NDS [Fundamentals for Boards](#) (2019) provides links to guidance, advice, tools and information to support board members.
- ▶ NDS [Change Readiness Checklist for Managers](#).
- ▶ [Change Management – The Change Room](#) (2015) is a suite of tools and resources designed for front line managers to overcome barriers to change and manage change around them.
- ▶ NDS Purpose at Work video series [Creating an Enabling Work Environment](#) focuses on how organisations can create a work environment that enables employees to do their best work by giving an overview of the key aspects that create the conditions for organisations and teams to thrive.

Workforce Diversity

Not only does the workforce need to grow to meet the needs of the sector, it also needs to attract different types of workers from diverse backgrounds. This will assist service users to exercise choice and control and have access to the service they require.

Resources

- ▶ [Diversifying the Disability Workforce](#) (2018) provides three video case studies of projects aiming to diversify disability workforces.
- ▶ [Building a Diverse Workforce: Practice Strategies](#) (2016) assists organisations to recruit and retain a culturally diverse workforce.
- ▶ [NDS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Guide and Toolkit](#) (2019) assists organisations with information and tools across two main areas to effectively recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- ▶ [NDS Case Studies of Men in the Disability Workforce](#) (2019).
- ▶ [NDS Supporting Young Trainees](#) (2017) factsheet provides information on supporting young workers and trainees.
- ▶ [Think Support \(WA\)](#) focuses on tools to attract young workers to disability, including host videos, written information for young people about disability support work, entry into the sector and links to current training & employment opportunities.



Recruitment

Recruitment is key to having sufficient employees with the right mix of skills values, attitudes, knowledge and experience to deliver quality and safe services.

Resources

- ▶ [Carecareers](#) is NDS's workforce attraction hub, offering career advice and recruitment tools for the disability sector. Potential disability workers can take the Career Quiz to find out where their skills are best suited to work in the sector.
- ▶ [NDS Values Based Recruitment Toolkit](#) (2016) explains the concepts behind values based recruitment and offers a range of practical tools.
- ▶ The [Disability Workforce Capability Framework](#) (2015) defines skills, knowledge and capabilities for all major job roles across the sector.
- ▶ The Capability Framework has a suite of [Person-Centred People Management Resources](#) (2015) which support the practical application of the Framework and integrate person-centred practice within organisational and workforce culture.
- ▶ The NDS [People and Culture Project](#) (2017) has practical resources on employee engagement; diversity and inclusion; values-based recruitment; supporting young trainees; induction and mentoring; supervision and performance appraisal; and performance management.
- ▶ [Safe Support Worksafe](#) includes a set of principles & tools to follow during a support service in a participant's home. Under each principle are behaviours everyone can uphold in the home, to keep each other safe.



- ▶ [NDIS Worker Screening Checks \(2021\)](#)
Registered NDIS providers must ensure that [key personnel](#) and other workers in certain types of roles have a worker screening clearance that meets the requirements of the NDIS Practice Standards. This helps ensure that key personnel and workers in these roles do not pose an unacceptable risk to the safety and wellbeing of NDIS participants. This [link](#) outlines NDIS requirements and provides links to each state and territory registration portal.

Workforce Retention



Workforce retention can save organisations considerable cost in recruiting, on-boarding and training employees. Other benefits include continuity of service and strengthening participant relationships. Positive early workplace experiences, delivery on the employee value proposition, healthy culture, quality supervision, learning and career opportunities all contribute to workers choosing to stay with an organisation.

Resources

- ▶ [Employee Engagement Information Sheet](#) (2017).
- ▶ [Employee Engagement Survey](#), located under Understanding Workforce Costs in the NDS workforce hub is an online survey to help organisations measure employee engagement and commitment.
- ▶ [Employing a Flexible Workforce in a Person-Centred Environment](#) (2014) is a guide to introducing flexible working practices that comply with the Australian industrial relations framework, and improve employee engagement and workforce utilisation.
- ▶ [Direct Support Learning and Development Framework](#) (2016).
- ▶ NDS Disability SAFE [Recommendations for Reducing Workers Compensation Premiums in the NSW Disability Sector](#).
- ▶ NDS webinars on [Wellbeing Teams](#) explore the components of self-organising wellbeing teams.

Employee Capability Building

Resources

- ▶ NDS [Learn and Develop](#) provides access to a range of training, workshops and modules that are designed to build capacity and ongoing professional development. This includes courses on [Manual Handling](#) and [Hand Hygiene](#).
- ▶ [National Disability Practitioners](#) (NDP) is an association for disability practitioners. The [NDP Learning Hub](#) offers an array of workshops, webinars, online learning and resources relevant to disability workers, including allied health professionals.
- ▶ The NDS [Zero Tolerance](#) Initiative assists people to understand, implement and improve practices which safeguard the rights of people they support, includes topics such as [Understanding Abuse](#) and [Human Rights and You](#).
- ▶ NDIS Commission [Quality, Safety and You](#) worker orientation e-learning module for NDIS workforce introduces obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- ▶ [New Ways to Build Worker Capability](#) (2018) highlights case study videos of various service providers' experiences of building worker capability.
- ▶ The NDS [Allied Health Workforce Resource](#) (2015) includes skills and knowledge benchmarks, a remote supervision tool, and student supervision models.
- ▶ NDS [Workplace Literacy Activity Toolkit](#) (2016) enables employers to gather information about workers' literacy and numeracy skills.



Resources (continued)

- ▶ [Allied Health Hub - National Disability Practitioners](#)
The NDP Allied Health Practitioners Hub is an open access online gateway to information, resources, and connections to support Allied Health professionals delivering services under the NDIS.
- ▶ [My Allied Health Space](#) provides learning resources to support the [Allied Health capability framework: disability and complex support](#) needs that guides allied health professionals to work ethically and collaboratively across professions and service systems. It was developed to support professionals working with NDIS participants. It can be used to help people with a disability and their families/carers to choose allied health professionals with knowledge and skills that suit their needs
- ▶ The [Psychosocial Learning Hub](#) is designed to address the needs of NDIS support workers, support coordinators and their supervisors by building their mental health capabilities in ways that are relevant, safe and informed by the needs of participants with a psychosocial disability.

Employee Wellbeing and Performance

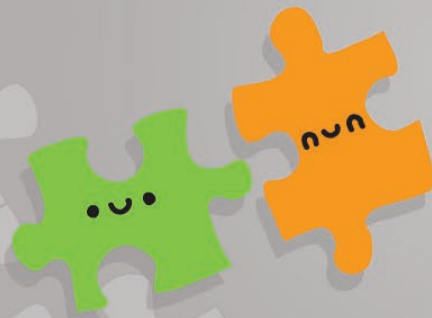
Employees are key to organisational performance and quality services. Fostering employee wellbeing contributes to performance and retention. Wellbeing is a shared responsibility between employers and employees. Successful organisations find ways to value and support their employees.

The best results for organisations, employees and participants come from teams and individuals that are set up for success. This involves understanding and appreciating employees' strengths and providing coaching and development support to develop new skills and knowledge. Structuring work and responsibilities to engage employees and encourage them to find the best ways to deliver quality service is an important strategy being used by many organisations in the disability sector.

Resources

- ▶ [NDS Person-Centred Supervision and Performance Appraisal \(2017\)](#) information sheet with accessible word version and video.
- ▶ The NDS program of [Zero Tolerance](#) resources designed to assist people to understand, implement and improve practices which safeguard the rights of people they support, includes advice on [Zero Tolerance Practice: Supervision and Safety \(2015\)](#).
- ▶ [Employee Assistance Programs \(EAP\)](#) are offered by most organisations to support staff in maintaining their health and wellbeing. EAP operates as a voluntary and confidential free counselling service for all staff. Sometimes employers extend this to cover families of staff in recognition of the impact family issues can have on workers.





About National Disability Services

National Disability Services (NDS) is the peak body for non-government disability services. Its purpose is to promote quality service provision and life opportunities for people with disability.

NDS's Australia-wide membership includes more than 1,200 organisations, which support people with all forms of disability. NDS provides information and networking opportunities to its members and policy advice to state, territory and federal governments. For more information please visit the [NDS website](#).

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Disclaimer

National Disability Services believes that the information contained in this resource is correct at the time of publishing. However, NDS reserves the right to vary any of this resource without further notice. The information provided in this document should not be relied on instead of other legal, medical, financial or professional advice.

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