

Tools, Resources and Information for Developing your Risk Management Approach

All NDIS providers, registered and unregistered, have a responsibility to provide high quality and safe services to people with disability. For organisations who employ staff, they also have a legal and ethical responsibility to the people they employ to provide a safe working environment.

The list of resources below aims to provide some tools and assist with developing or reviewing the way your organisation manages risk. The resources are drawn from a range of different sources. They are not an exclusive list and do not replace your organisation's policies and procedures. The information provided is a starting point and should be used and adapted to meet the size and scope of your organisation and the supports you provide.

This resource provides links to resources on:

- **Understanding the NDIS Commission expectations**
- **Considering other regulatory obligations**
- **Developing your overall strategy and policy**
- **Understanding and assessing the risks your organisation is exposed to**
- **Gathering the best possible information to inform decision making**
- **Monitoring risk and knowing whether your risks are changing**
- **Analysing risk events once they have occurred**
- **Reviewing your risk management approach**



Other NDS resources: For more information and resources [NDS Risk Incidents and Complaints interactive pdf](#) provides easy access to tools and resources developed for NDIS providers to support them to effectively manage and respond to risks, incidents and complaints.

Risk Management and Registered Providers of Supports

Registered providers of disability supports must comply with the **NDIS Practice Standards** in relation to how they manage risks in the services they provide and how their organisation is run. Risk Management can be found in **Core Module 2 of the Practice Standards, Provider Governance and Operational Management**. The standard requires risks to participants, workers, and the provider be identified, analysed, prioritised, and managed through a documented risk management system, relevant and proportionate to the provider. A provider must be able to demonstrate, that the services they provide are done in a way that is consistent with their risk management system.

The language of risk and risk management is embedded through the NDIS Practice Standards. In addition to the Risk Management standard, the Practice Standards make fifty-four references to risk in the contexts of:

- **Organisational risk**
- **Workplace health and safety**
- **Infection prevention and control**
- **Individual risk assessment in provision of support**
- **Dignity of risk in decision making**
- **Continuous improvement**
- **Risk in relation to complex supports, mealtime management, chronic health risks and high intensity support provision**
- **Service agreements and tenancy management**
- **Emergency management and continuity of supports**
- **Transitioning supports to and from a provider**
- **Safeguarding from abuse and neglect**
- **Behaviour support and restrictive practices**
- **Early childhood support services**
- **Safe support environments**

Understanding provider obligations and the NDIS Commission expectations

Registered providers of supports must comply with the **NDIS Practice Standards**, in relation to how they manage risks in the services they provide and how their organisation is run.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 	<p>Information on the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators. Risk Management can be found in Core Module 2 of the Practice Standards, Provider Governance and Operational Management.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Code of Conduct 	<p>Provides information on the NDIS Code of Conduct (the Code) for providers and workers. The Code applies to all providers or supports, registered and unregistered and sets out expectations for conduct for safe and ethical services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Risk Management Plan checklist 	<p>Shows what the NDIS Commission identifies should be included in a Risk Management Plan. It can be used to guide your risk management or review your existing approach.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Worker Screening 	<p>Information on NDIS Worker screening. The NDIS Worker Screening Check is an assessment of whether a person who works, or seeks to work, with people with disability poses a risk to them.</p>



In WA, NDIS Worker Screening is managed by the **Department of Communities Worker Screening Unit**, for more information see [NDIS Worker Screening Check \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)



Considering other regulatory obligations in relation to risk management

All Australian businesses are required to adhere to laws and codes to manage risks to the people they employ, the people who access their supports and services and the general public.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work health and safety legislation - DMIRS 	<p>Provides information on WHS Act 2022, regulations and employers main responsibilities and duties under the Act.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers Compensation Information for Employers - WorkCover WA 	<p>Information on legal obligations under the <i>Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981</i>. This information covers your legislated rights and obligations including managing injured worker's return to work, and the costs of non-compliance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer Protection - DMIRS 	<p>These resources provide information on consumer rights. Providing a service means that organisations need to comply with consumer protection legislation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Privacy Act - OAIC 	<p>Information on the Privacy Act 1988. This is in place to promote and protect the privacy of individuals and relates to how organisations manage information management and records.</p>

Please note: The links above apply to organisations delivering services in WA. Please visit your corresponding state websites for accurate information.



Developing your overall strategy and policy

An effective risk management system should identify real and potential risks, with the intent of eliminating or reducing the likelihood of a risk occurring.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management - Community Door 	<p>Explains the concept of risk management and some practical strategies to assist organisations to manage the risks they face.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Risk Appetite and • Defining Risk Appetite and Tolerance - Comcover 	<p>An overview of risk appetite and tolerance. These allow an organisation to understand how much risk they are willing to accept. By having these clearly identified, they can guide and lead to more transparent decision making.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guide to writing your risk management strategy - VMIA 	<p>Information and links to additional resources for writing and implementing your risk strategy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Risk Management Policy Checklist Certification and • Verification Policy Checklist 	<p>These checklists cover the elements required for a risk management policy. Having a clear policy which sets the benchmark and provides the standard and objectives your organisation wants to achieve.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Worker Health and Safety Management Policy. 	<p>A sample WHS Management Policy which could be adapted to the size and scope of your supports and services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Communicate Clearly 	<p>Tips and guidance for writing in plain English. It is important that your policies are clear and easy to understand for your workers and the people who are impacted by them.</p>



Your risk management system is likely to include but is not limited to:

- Each area of operations – examples include incidents, complaints.
- Risks associated with services provision such as individual risks to people accessing your services, risk associated with use of equipment, infection prevention and control.
- Workplace health and safety risks or other risks to the people who work for you such as risk of injury or harm.
- Emergencies, disasters or crisis situations such as continuity of supports, individual safeguarding, loss or damage to property.
- IT and information management, such as privacy or cyber related risks.
- Financial management or reporting such as changes or loss of funding streams.
- Risks to the organisation's reputation through actions by or about the company.



Insurance: Having and maintaining appropriate insurances is an important part of an organisation's risk management. For more information see [NDS Insurance Management](#).

Understanding and assessing the risks your organisation is exposed to

Understanding the risks of your organisation, might include a range of activities with a range of different people to ensure that you are able to accurately capture the risks you are exposed to. Below are a range of tools which might assist.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Risk Management Model 	<p>A practical self-assessment tool that provides a framework to support planning of risk control activities for small, medium and large Community Service Organisations.</p>



Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories of Risk - VMIA 	<p>Looking at the common categories of risk and asking reflective questions such as the ones in this resource, can be a good starting point.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for Business Continuity in Times of Disaster - CSIA 	<p>Scenario planning is about looking at different possible situations and planning for how you might respond to them. This is commonly used in emergency and crisis planning, but it doesn't have to be limited to this level of risk.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop your SWOT analysis - Business.gov.au 	<p>Using tools such as SWOT analysis - to look at your Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats - can help you to ask questions and think about your organisation in different ways.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PESTLE Analysis - University of Sydney • PESTLE - VMIA 	<p>Tools such as PESTLE analysis can support you to look more broadly at risks your organisation might face, by considering different categories such as Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment Tools, some include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Home Risk Assessment • Individual Risk Assessment Form - Disability Safe • Safety Checklists - WorkSafe ACT • Working from home safety and wellbeing checklist - Business Victoria 	<p>Using a selection of different risk assessment tools. Risk assessment tools help organisations to determine, analyse and evaluate a risk for different areas of their business.</p>



Gathering the best possible information to inform your decision making

Communication and consultation are important considerations at each step of the risk management process. Effective communication with the people in your organisation who are responsible for implementing risk management, and those who are impacted by risk management will help support an open culture of questioning and learning when it comes to risk.

Involving and communicating with the people who access your services will help gain an understanding of their experience of accessing your services. It will also help to understand their choices and how they can be assisted to choose some risk in life experiences, through the supports they receive.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Top Tips Booklet - Voice and the Table 	<p>Practical information sheets with tips to ensure people with disabilities have a real and equal Voice at the Table.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate and consult with people with a disability - Vic Gov 	<p>Tips for conducting consultations and actively including people with a disability.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDS Factsheet: Involvement of participants in the governance operations and leadership 	<p>Information about providing opportunities for people with disability to contribute to the governance of the organisation.</p>



Fostering a culture where people can report risks or complaints. Think about reviewing your internal and external mechanisms. See [NDS Sector Readiness Complaints Management Beyond Compliance Review and Action Plan](#).



Talking to your workers at all levels, including the workers who deliver your services will assist in gaining a more holistic understanding of your services and the risks you are exposed to.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are communication and consultation important to safety and health? - DMIRS 	<p>An overview of effective communication and consultation to improve safety outcomes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Consultation in the Workplace - DMIRS 	<p>Guidelines for consultation in relation to WHS issues.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and cooperation in the workplace - Fair Work Ombudsman 	<p>A guide for managers and employers to take a best practice approach to consultation and cooperation.</p>



Researching reliable sources of information, such as government sources and peak bodies, to get contemporary and up to date information. Some of these could include:

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission 	<p>Information from the NDIS Commission who are responsible for regulating NDIS providers. This website has information for registered and unregistered providers on the expectations and benchmarks for high quality and safe services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Health, Government of Western Australia • Department of Communities - Government of Western Australia 	<p>Local state government websites. Regularly reviewing state government sources can provide up to date and accurate information about risks or issues which impact your services and organisation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkSafe and • Disability services: Safety basics - DMIRS 	<p>State based WorkSafe websites provide information, resources and guidelines to support you to manage risk.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak bodies and other disability associations - Job Access 	<p>Peak Bodies – such as NDS - and other disability associations are excellent sources of information and resources.</p>



Engaging with other providers.

Engaging with other providers is an important part of analysing your options and understanding how others are approaching and responding to risk. Consider looking on peak body websites and other forums to look for opportunities to engage through Communities of Practice or Forums.



Monitoring risk and knowing whether your risks are changing.

Serious complaints may require further investigation as part of your handling process.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Analysis Template - Business.gov.au 	<p>An example of a risk analysis template. These can assist with considering what risks your business faces and what impact those risks could have.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Risk Incident and Complaints Management resource 	<p>An example of a risk matrix. Having a tool, like a risk/hazard matrix, can provide a consistent approach to determining the likelihood, consequence, and rating of each risk.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How key risk indicators help you manage risk - VMIA 	<p>An overview of how to identify the indicators of whether risk is changing, and how. Identifying what your indicators of change are, can be a useful tool for monitoring risk.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Risk Register Manual • NDS Risk-Register • Risk register and treatment plan template - Business Victoria 	<p>A risk register manual and examples of risk registers. A risk register is an important part of risk management. It is a tool to track identified current or future risks, with the aim of analysing and solving or treating the risks before they become a problem. These links show different examples of risk registers and how they can be used.</p>

Analysing risk events once they have occurred

When risk events do occur, it is important to look at why. This can assist you to put measures in place to prevent them reoccurring wherever possible.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root Cause Analysis - Victoria Health Root Cause Analysis - SA Health 	<p>Using Root Cause Analysis can be an effective tool for looking at why something happened and how it could be prevented in the future.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDS Conducting Investigations Guide NDS Investigation Action Plan Template 	<p>A guide for conducting investigations including a checklist and a template to follow, if a complaint requires further investigation.</p>

Reviewing your risk management approach

To ensure your organisation's risk management system is working effectively, it is important to review it on a regular basis.

Resource	How is this resource helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding Risk Management - Department of Finance 	<p>Practical strategies for embedding risk management into an organisation with questions to test and reflect on.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing a Risk Management Approach - Department of Finance 	<p>Information on the different types of review and detailed steps for reviewing a risk management framework.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS What good risk management looks like 	<p>This checklist can assist you to identify what needs improvement in the way you manage risk and can be displayed as a prompt and reminder to staff and encourage good practice.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDS Internal Audits Factsheet 	<p>Provides information about organisational internal audit programs, their purpose and how they might be designed, implemented and reviewed.</p>

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This document was developed for WA providers through the NDS Sector Readiness project. Where state-based resources have been identified in relation to laws and regulations, please visit your corresponding state websites for accurate information.

Please note: This resource was last updated in September 2023. National Disability Services Limited (NDS) believes that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publishing. However, NDS reserves the right to vary any of this publication without further notice. This resource will need to be adapted to meet the specific needs of your organisation and the people who use your services. The information provided in this publication should not be relied upon instead of other legal, medical, financial, or professional advice. Please always refer to online documents for latest versions including the NDIS Practice Standards.

