



**NDIS Quality
and Safeguards
Commission**

Practice Reviews

A framework for NDIS Providers

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Overview

Providing NDIS participants with quality support and services in a safe environment with care and skill is an important obligation for all NDIS providers, and is fundamental to the rights of people with disability.

In this context, it is especially important that both the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) in its regulatory role, and NDIS providers delivering supports and services, address the causes of, and contributors to, harm and deaths of people with disability to prevent avoidable abuse, injuries, and deaths.

Registered NDIS providers also have an obligation to meet regulatory requirements in relation to incident management and reportable incidents. See information at the end of this document about related regulatory obligations for registered NDIS providers.

The NDIS Commission has developed a range of resources to support incident management, and is developing resources for the safe support of people's health conditions and other complexities, such as epilepsy, respiratory diseases, dysphagia and aspiration.

This *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* complements those other resources, and is intended to help NDIS providers conduct practice reviews so that they can:

- prevent further incidents occurring;
- better equip workers to manage incidents when they do occur; and
- influence improvements across other service delivery functions.

The *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* provides a holistic overview of the components of a practice review, and a roadmap for how to integrate these with existing quality management and continuous improvement activities. It provides a suite of informed and practical resources and tools that can be used by all NDIS providers of varying size, purpose, and maturity.

Context

Practice reviews are a common occurrence across a range of professional occupations, such as medical and allied health practitioners, and other human services providers. In these specific professional settings, they are primarily designed to review performance, and to help maintain and improve standards of the profession.

For the disability sector, practice reviews are a way to bring a professional lens to disability support work. Within the context of the *NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework*, and its developmental and preventative domains, practice reviews contribute to safeguarding, and improving the standard of support provided to, people with disability.

*'Measures in the developmental domain are intended to **strengthen the capability of people with disability, the workforce and providers**. While these are not regulatory functions, they are included in the Framework because they are fundamental to supporting quality and safeguarding.*

*Measures in the preventative domain are intended to **prevent harm and ensure quality services are delivered to people with disability.**'*

NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework 2016, p14

In developing the *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* it was found that here in Australia and internationally, while there is some evidence of practice reviews occurring, they are not routinely carried out in disability sectors.

There is, however, evidence of aspects of practice reviews being included in continuous improvement activities of organisations of all sizes and scope. A variety of terms are used to describe these activities, such as ‘service review’, ‘practice audit’, and ‘quality and safeguarding review’.

The *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* provides a universal approach and language for practice reviews in the Australian disability sector.

Definition

A practice review is a reflective process that examines a provider’s engagement with a group of participants, and improvements that can be made to their experience of service, often with a focus on a particular practice area, a cluster of services, and/or a particular team of support workers.

A practice review is not an investigation. An investigation is a fact finding process to determine the root cause of an event, primarily with a view to preventing it happening again.

A practice review is focused on understanding the factors contributing to peoples’ experience of a service, with a view to learning and improving practice.

Objectives

The objectives of the *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* reflect those of the *NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework*, in particular:

- to uphold the rights of people with disability, including their rights as consumers
- enable effective monitoring and responses to emerging issues.

In addition, the *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* seeks to promote:

- safe service delivery
- participation of people with disability in the quality management of funded supports.

Principles

The principles that underpin the *Practice Review Framework for NDIS Providers* are:

- People with disability have a right to safe, innovative, high-quality support.
- People with disability are experts in their own lives.
- Continuous improvement is fundamental to high quality support.
- Best practice is the goal all providers strive to achieve.

Components

Table 1 outlines the components of a practice review and where further information and tools to assist in doing practice reviews can be found.

Table 1: Practice review components, and resources and tools

COMPONENTS	RESOURCES AND TOOLS
Defining practice reviews	<p><i>Practice Review Framework</i></p> <p><i>What is a practice review?</i></p> <p><i>What is a practice review? Easy English</i></p> <p><i>Information for family, carers, and participant supporters</i></p>
How practice reviews are different	<p><i>The continuous improvement continuum</i></p>
When to do a practice review	<p><i>Building a practice review culture</i></p> <p><i>Indicators and triggers for practice reviews</i></p>
Who to involve in a practice review	<p><i>Identifying people to participate in a practice review</i></p> <p><i>Who should lead a practice review</i></p>
The steps involved in a practice review	<p><i>Consulting with people with disability during a practice review</i></p> <p><i>Engaging people in practice reviews</i></p> <p><i>How to do a practice review</i></p> <p><i>Questions and prompts to use in a practice review with people with disability</i></p>
What to do after a practice view	<p><i>Reflection exercise for decision makers</i></p> <p><i>Reflection exercise for practice review participants</i></p> <p><i>Reflection exercise for reviewers</i></p>

Regulatory obligations

It is important that registered NDIS providers understand that their obligations to meet regulatory requirements are separate and distinct from undertaking practice reviews.

Registered NDIS providers are required to implement and maintain incident management systems that enable the identification of systemic issues and drive improvements in the quality of the supports they deliver. Registered providers must also notify, investigate and respond to reportable incidents.

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018* sets out the specific requirements of registered NDIS providers in relation to incident management systems. These include, among other things, assessing all incidents that occur, considering the views of persons with disability affected by the incident, in relation to:

- whether the incident could have been prevented,
- how well the incident was managed and resolved,
- any remedial action needed to prevent further similar incidents from occurring or to minimise their impact and
- whether other persons or bodies need to be notified of the incident.

Registered providers must also have procedures in place that specify when an investigation by the provider is required to establish the causes of a particular incident, its effect and any operational issues that may have contributed to the incident occurring.

In relation to reportable incidents, the NDIS Commission may, among other things, require a provider to carry out an internal investigation in relation to an incident or require a provider to engage an appropriately qualified and independent expert to carry out an investigation in relation to an incident.

Undertaking a practice review does not replace these regulatory obligations. However, practice reviews are a valuable way to understand the experience of NDIS participants accessing the supports and services you deliver and to gain perspectives from a range of stakeholders to inform planning on strategies and practices that will enhance and improve the quality of supports and services you deliver.

For more information relating to requirements for registered NDIS providers, please go to [our website](#).

Contact Us

Call: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines).

Our contact centre is open 9.00am to 5.00pm (9.00am to 4.30pm in the NT), Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

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