

Quality Requirements

For Ability Links NSW Providers

Ability Links NSW is the NSW approach to local area coordination. It is a key foundation in the NSW Government's plan to reshape and improve the way people with disability, their families and carers are supported by placing them at the centre of decision making.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) has been moving towards developing a consistent approach to quality assurance to ensure that supports and services are delivered to a standard of quality that meets the expectations of people with disability and the community. Improving the quality of support is fundamental to a person centred service system that enables people with disability, their families and carers to exercise choice and flexibility in accessing their supports and services.

ADHC's Quality Framework Requirements

ADHC's quality reform is built on the National Quality Framework and is based on the New South Wales Disability Services Standards (NSW DSS which align with the National Standards for Disability Services). The quality requirements are set out in the Funding Agreement (FA) 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2018 which can be accessed via:

http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/funding_and_grants/funding_agreement

As NSW continues to deliver more person-centred support, it is important for all providers to give assurance to people with disability, their families, carers, funders and other stakeholders that they provide quality support, continuously improve and achieve the best possible outcomes for people with disability.

As set out in the FA and outlined in ADHC's Quality Policy, ADHC funded providers will be required to:

1. Implement a quality management system (if providers do not already have one); and
2. Provide evidence to an independent third party to confirm organisational performance against the NSW DSS (known as 'third party verification').

Quality Management Systems

A quality management system is the means by which an organisation undertakes regular review against measurable outcomes and has procedures, processes and resources in place to best meet the needs of people with disability, their families and carers, and to ensure ongoing compliance with the NSW DSS.

The key processes involved in a quality management system are outlined in the [ADHC Quality Policy for ADHC funded services](#).

Funded providers with existing quality management systems (whether formal or in-house systems) which include the key processes described in the policy, are not expected to undertake additional activities unless they wish to strengthen or enhance existing quality management systems.

Third Party Verification

ADHC funded providers will be required to undertake third party verification (TPV) of their performance against the NSW DSS, once during the life of each funding agreement. This process will include recognition of other quality standards and systems a funded provider may have in place.

As funded providers may have varying levels of experience in demonstrating compliance and providing evidence, third party verifiers are required to adopt a flexible approach.

The verification process will take into account funded providers' self assessment, feedback from people with disability, their families and carers, and may include an onsite review (sample of sites where the provider/program operates).

If a funded provider has existing accreditation that involved an onsite review and consultation with program participants, their families and carers, it may not be necessary to repeat these processes during third party verification.

Who needs to comply with these quality requirements?

All providers that sign the FA, including non-output supports (such as consumer peak, industry peak organisations and information/advocacy services) or funded providers of non-direct client supports will be subject to the same quality requirements and quality reporting requirements as outlined in this fact sheet.

What is the time frame for compliance with quality requirements?

Generally, all funded providers are required to have their full compliance with the NSW DSS verified by the third party verifier and obtain a Verification Statement within the term of the current FA – that is, before 30 June 2015. However, ADHC recognises that flexibility and additional support may be required for some Ability Links funded providers to meet the quality requirements. In addition there are different arrangements for service providers working in a partnership or Joint Working Arrangement.

Working in partnership or Joint Working Arrangements

If your organisation is working in a partnership (including a time-limited partnership) or a Joint Working Arrangement and is in receipt of other ADHC funding for disability supports and services, you will need to include the Ability Links NSW program within the scope of the TPV.

If the lead agency is new to ADHC funding, the lead agency will be required to meet ADHC's quality requirements and ensure that other organisations that do not have a FA with ADHC provide supports and services in line with the NSW DSS.

For more information and clarification about the partnerships and Joint Working Arrangements, contact ADHC's Quality Team to discuss the best approach to meet ADHC's quality requirements.

Next Steps

The ADHC Ability Links Team, with the support of the Quality Team, will:

- Contact each Ability Links provider to discuss and confirm expectations and time frame; and
- Send a letter to each Ability Links provider confirming the expectations and time frames as discussed.

Ability Links providers are encouraged to contact ADHC's Quality Team on (02) 9377 6016 or via email: ADHC-QualityTeam@facss.nsw.gov.au or your Ability Links Relationship Manager if you have any concerns.

Supports available to help funded providers meet the ADHC Quality Requirements

ADHC is continuing to work in partnership with National Disability Services (NDS) to implement a range of supports for service providers. Some of these supports, funded via the Industry Development Fund (IDF) have been designed to help funded providers through the range of activities they are required to undertake as part of the quality reform:

- ADHC Quality Website: <http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/quality>
- Quality Policy for ADHC funded providers
- Self assessment tools (paper based and online) such as [KPI Tool](#) and the [ADHC Systems Recognition Tool](#).
- It's Your Business – *Quality Management* Chapter 10
- NDS Quality Development Project Manager
- NDS Quality Development Project Team telephone advisory service
- NDS Information sessions
- Good Governance Panel of Experts
- Financial support to prepare for and fund the cost of TPV
- Approved list of Third Party Verification Providers

For more information

For information on IDF supports and financial subsidies which may be available, contact the NDS Quality Team via email at: QualityNSW@nds.org.au.