



New NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

This fact sheet explains three new NDIS Practice Standards and new and amended Quality Indicators relating to mealtime management, severe dysphagia management and emergency and disaster management. These changes take effect from 15 November 2021, with a transition period for registered NDIS providers to comply.

About the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

Mealtime management and severe dysphagia management

Amendments to the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators to introduce new standards relating to mealtime management and severe dysphagia management are in response to the findings and recommendations of Professor Julian Trollor and Dr Carmela Salomon's 2019 report: [*Scoping review of causes and contributors to deaths of people with disability in Australia*](#) (Scoping Review).

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) committed to a series of activities in response to the Scoping Review findings including providing guidance and ensuring compliance in relation NDIS providers and workers safely delivering quality mealtime supports and services.

These new standards will ensure NDIS participants requiring support for mealtimes and support to manage severe dysphagia have access to nutritious meals of the correct texture and delivered in a way that is appropriate to their needs and preferences.

The development of these standards has occurred in consultation with people with disability and their representatives, NDIS providers, experts in the field of nutrition and swallowing, and the NDIS Commission Disability Sector, and Industry, Consultative Committees.

Emergency and disaster management

To address the management of NDIS supports and services during sustained disruptions such as COVID-19, this new NDIS Practice Standard has been developed to strengthen guidance to registered NDIS providers on complying with their obligations to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of the NDIS participants they support during COVID-19, or future emergencies or disasters.

Additional amendments have been made to Quality Indicators across a range of existing NDIS Practice Standards that are relevant to emergency and disaster management, such as those related to support planning and service agreements. These amendments consolidate the advice issued by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner throughout the pandemic and provide stronger guidance about what NDIS providers should have in place to prepare, prevent, manage and respond to emergency and disaster situations.

The new standard is a result of evidence to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Royal Commission) hearing into the experiences of people with

disability during the COVID pandemic, and of the NDIS Commission's experience in supporting NDIS providers to respond appropriately in the delivery of NDIS supports and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for adjustments to the NDIS Practice Standards to better reflect provider practice in the context of the pandemic was a recommendation of the Royal Commission.

In developing the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, the NDIS Commission consulted with stakeholders representing people with disability, industry peaks, advisors with expertise in pandemic and infectious disease control and the NDIS Commission Disability Sector, and Industry, Consultative Committees.

What are the changes?

New NDIS Practice Standards

The new NDIS Practice Standards and amendments to the Quality Indicators are outlined in the [*National Disability Insurance Scheme \(Provider Registration and Practice Standards\) Amendment \(2021 Measures No. 1\) Rules 2021*](#) (Amending Rules), and the [*National Disability Insurance Scheme Legislation Amendment \(Quality Indicators\) Guidelines 2021*](#) (Amending Guidelines).

The amendments introduce three new NDIS Practice Standards:

- **Mealtime management:** this standard applies to a provider that is responsible for providing supports to participants who require assistance to manage mealtimes (such as those with mild dysphagia) and is intended to help ensure quality and safety in the provision of mealtime management. It deals with the nutritional value and texture of meals, and with their planning, preparation and delivery. It will appear in Schedule 1 – Core Module, Part 5 – Support provision environment, of the NDIS Practice Standards;
- **Severe dysphagia management:** this standard applies to a provider that is registered to provide high intensity daily personal activities and has severe dysphagia management set out in the provider's certificate of registration. It requires those providers to ensure that each participant requiring severe dysphagia management receives appropriate support that is relevant and proportionate to their individual needs and preferences. It will appear in Schedule 2 – Module 1: High intensity daily personal activities, of the NDIS Practice Standards; and
- **Emergency and disaster management:** this standard is intended to address the planning required by providers to prepare, prevent, manage and respond to emergency and disaster situations whilst mitigating risks to and ensuring continuity of supports that are critical to the health, safety and wellbeing of NDIS participants. It will appear in Schedule 1 – Core Module, Part 3 – Provider governance and operational management, of the NDIS Practice Standards.

Is there a transition period for the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators?

The following transition periods apply for existing registered NDIS providers:

- The mealtime management practice standard applies to existing registered NDIS providers from Monday 13 December 2021.
- The emergency and disaster management practice standard applies to existing registered NDIS providers from Monday 24 January 2022.

There is no transition period for the severe dysphagia management standard, which will be in effect from 15 November 2021.

Where a transition period applies, existing registered NDIS providers will have a period of time to prepare for the commencement of a new standard. Compliance with the standard is not expected during the transition period, however registered NDIS providers should use this time to plan for the implementation of the standards.

New and amended Quality Indicators

As well as the three new NDIS Practice Standards and their associated Quality Indicators, additional amendments have been made to Quality Indicators relating to the following existing NDIS Practice Standards that are relevant to emergency and disaster management:

Core module

- Person-centred Supports
- Risk Management
- Human Resource Management
- Continuity of Supports
- Support Planning
- Service Agreements with Participants
- Responsive Support Provision
- Transitions to or from a provider (Previously Transitions to or from the provider)
- Safe Environment
- Management of Waste

Module 3: Early childhood supports

- The Child

Verification module

- Human Resource Management
- Risk Management

For more details on the changes, refer to the updated [NDIS Practice Standards](#) document on the NDIS Commission website.

New High Intensity Skills Descriptor for severe dysphagia management

To accompany the new NDIS Practice Standard for severe dysphagia management, a new high intensity skills descriptor has been developed. The new descriptor is detailed in the [NDIS Practice Standards: Skills descriptors](#) document.

High intensity skills descriptors apply to providers required to be audited against Module 1: High Intensity Daily Personal Activities, relevant to the high intensity supports they provide.

This skills descriptor is an interim descriptor, as all high intensity skills descriptors will be undergoing a limited review, including consultation over the next 6 months as part of the [NDIS Workforce Capability Framework](#).

Application of the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

The table below shows how the new NDIS Practice Standards and new and amended Quality Indicators relevant to those standards apply to NDIS providers.

Relevant NDIS Practice Standards Module	New \ NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators	Date of effect	Who does it apply to?
Core Module	26A: Mealtime management and associated Quality Indicators	Monday 13 December 2021	<p>This Practice Standard applies to all registered NDIS providers who are required to comply with the standards specified in Schedule 1 of the NDIS Practice Standards (Core Module) and are responsible for providing supports to participants who require mealtime management.</p> <p>It does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transitioned providers; • providers registered for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) only; or • individuals or partnerships delivering Early Childhood Early Education (ECEI).
Core Module	18A: Emergency and disaster management	Monday 24 January 2022	<p>This Practice Standard applies to all registered NDIS providers who are required to comply with the standards specified in Schedule 1 of the NDIS Practice Standards (Core Module).</p> <p>It does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transitioned providers; • providers registered for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) only; or • individuals or partnerships delivering Early Childhood Early Education (ECEI).
Module 1	30A: Severe dysphagia management	Monday 15 November 2021	<p>This Practice Standard applies to all registered NDIS providers that are registered to provide high intensity daily personal activities if severe dysphagia management is set out in the provider's certificate of registration</p>

How do the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators apply to future applicants for registration?

The new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators will apply to applicants (either new applicants or renewing NDIS providers) who submit a registration application to the NDIS Commission on or after 15 November 2021.

How do the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators apply to existing applicants for registration?

If you have commenced an application (either new applicants or renewing NDIS providers) prior to 15 November, but have not yet been assessed by an approved quality auditor as meeting the applicable NDIS Practice Standards and other requirements relevant to the application before **15 November 2021**, the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators will apply.

Your auditor will work with you to identify if the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators apply.

How do the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators apply to *existing* registered NDIS providers for the purposes of mid-term audits?

For existing registered NDIS providers, the new NDIS Practice Standards and related Quality Indicators apply in relation to a mid-term audit carried out on or after **15 November 2021**, subject to the transition periods providing for the mealtime management standard to come into force on 13 December 2021 and the emergency and disaster management standard to come into force on 24 January 2022.

An existing registered NDIS provider is a person or entity who was a registered NDIS provider immediately before 15 November 2021.

I am a transitioned provider, do I need to comply with the new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators?

For transitioned providers (to whom the transitional arrangements under any of sections 26 - 29 of the Practice Standards Rules apply), the new standards do not apply until you make an application to renew registration.

Will the new Practice Standards appear in the NDIS Commission Portal?

The new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators will be visible in the NDIS Commission Portal and Applications Portal from 15 November 2021.

Compliance approach

Quality and safety in mealtime supports, and COVID-19 preparedness and response have been identified as [Compliance and Enforcement priorities](#) for 2021-22 by the NDIS Commission.

Registration requirements under the NDIS Commission and the NDIS Practice Standards are designed to be proportionate. Auditors will ensure that the way an NDIS provider demonstrates they meet each standard is appropriate to their size, scale, and supports they deliver.

Compliance against the new requirements will be monitored as part of the wider quality audit process, specifically the certification pathway. Compliance will also be monitored through other functions of the NDIS Commission, including complaints, reportable incidents and section 13 and 13A notifications under the Practice Standards Rules.

Find out more

More information about these changes and related resources is available on the [new NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators page](#) on the NDIS Commission website.

Contact us

- General enquiries: contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au
- Call 1800 035 544 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (9am to 4.30pm in the NT), excluding public holidays.