

Choosing a Homecare Provider: An Essential Guide & Checklist



Free Resource Guide



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Choosing the Right NDIS Provider: An Essential Guide & Checklist

We have put together an essential guide and checklist around the important considerations to make when choosing an NDIS provider. In this document, you will find a deep dive into the 11 essentials to consider when looking for a provider. At the end of each point, you will find handy tips on what questions to ask when interviewing providers. We have also included an interactive checklist at the end which you can use throughout your journey.

1. Does your provider have knowledge of the NDIS or relevant state funding body, and are they a registered provider?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) aims to assist all Australians under the age of 65 who are living with a permanent disability. Benefits of your provider being registered with the NDIS include:

- **Consistency and reliability**

NDIS service providers ensure that they deliver what they promise and complete high-quality services in an agreed timeframe. Due to standards and obligations that they must meet, you can be assured that you will receive reliable and consistent services from NDIS providers.

- **Mutual trust and respect**

Along with providing you with the support you need, NDIS providers carry out their duties with trust and respect.

- **Individualised support**

An NDIS provider tailors every arrangement to meet your specific needs, which means that the support you receive will depend upon your preferences and those of your family/legal guardians.



- **Help for your support network**

Disability doesn't only affect the person with the condition, but also their family members and support system. Providing care may increase physical, emotional, and financial stress. NDIS grants family members/carers access to support and services to assist them in taking care of their loved ones, and themselves.

- **Independence and confidence**

NDIS companies listen to the opinions of their participants to address their respective needs. This may include help with various aspects of your life, such as day-to-day activities or meal options. Regular feedback ensures that you receive appropriate support and satisfaction.

- **Equal access for all**

NDIS providers tailor the support they give to participants according to their needs, and equal access is provided for every person.

Registered providers are required to meet the NDIS Practice Standards and adhere to the NDIS Code of Conduct. This safeguards you and delivers a strong and vibrant provider market and should be a non-negotiable when considering a provider.



**Ask if the provider is a
Registered Supplier of the
NDIS, and how long they have
been part of the scheme**



2. Does your provider specialise in your form of disability support?

It is important to seek a supplier with specialisations that match your specific requirements. This ensures that you are provided with support by an experienced and knowledgeable provider who understands your particular needs. Specialist disability support services may include 24/7 care, community support, or domestic/personal support etc. Choosing a provider that has the capability, experience and established process to help support your unique needs provides peace of mind and a smooth transition.



Ask the provider about the current clients they service and their specific disabilities, and if they have serviced your kind of disability in the past.

3. Does your service provider conduct service reviews and do they have proven experience?

Regular service reviews are an essential part of your care plan, allowing you and your support team to give important feedback to your provider. This feedback is used to develop staff and refine the effectiveness of your care plan and your broader environment.

A thorough and professional provider will:

- Take the time to regularly gather feedback from you and your support team
- Take note of areas in which they excel and those that require improvement
- Implement proven and measurable methods to track progress
- Provide choice as to when service reviews take place



Ask the provider what their mechanisms or channels are to gather feedback, and how they actively apply the feedback to improve services.

4. Does your provider recruit specifically for you and your needs, and do they directly employ staff or rely on contract workers?

It is imperative that a provider delivers consistency, both in your routine and the staff that are tasked with supporting your needs. To this end, the methods applied for the employment and retention of staff are vital.

Providers that directly employ staff deliver greater consistency, as they can more easily manage their workforce. This allows for:

- Greater choice of staff (including those with experience and an understanding of your specific requirements)
- Thorough performance appraisals focussing on known strengths and weaknesses
- Tailored training courses and individualised development sessions
- Reviews that include your feedback
- Improved communication between you, your provider, and their support staff
- The retention of quality staff, which may involve:
 1. Mentoring
 2. Adequate compensation
 3. Wellness offerings
 4. Recognition and rewards
 5. Flexible working arrangements
 6. Acknowledgement of milestones
 7. An emphasis on teamwork

Ask the provider if they directly employ staff for your services and ask for details on their onboarding and training processes.



5. Is your provider reliable and do they provide consistent communication with you and your family?

It is important that your provider keeps you informed of any developments or changes that could impact your care. Where possible, this type of consideration enables you and your support team sufficient preparation and the time to make suitable arrangements. Sudden impacts to your care may include staff turnover/role changes or the inability of a care worker to attend a shift/s. Additionally, is there an after-hours team who can provide around the clock assistance in an emergency or times of distress.

Trust is essential in building relationships, which means that effective communication should be a key feature of any service provider offering. While communication between you and your caregiver is important, even more important is communication between you and your provider. Consistent and positive communication should be at the top of your priority list when selecting a provider.

Features of good communication involve:

- **Consistency**

Whether it be weekly check-in calls, monthly home visits, or daily text messages, look for clear and consistent messaging from your provider.

- **Promptness**

You should be informed of a scheduling change as soon as is practicable. This should include a plan to resolve the issue and any updates, as necessary.

- **Flexibility**

Your provider should give you options regarding how and when you receive communication. You may prefer a certain method (email, phone call etc.) over another, or your preferred frequency may change depending on personal considerations.



- **Personalisation**

Good communication involves more than just schedules or other factual considerations. It should involve a genuine and personal interest in your life, your family, and any upcoming events or milestones. Considered and personal contact can have a major impact on how satisfied you are with your care.



Ask the provider to share their communication plan. Essential elements to look for include frequency of communication, proactiveness, and personalisation.

6. Does your provider understand the dual role of your home (as both a workplace and your private household)?

A level of mutual respect and trust is involved when inviting a provider and caregivers into your home. Acting as both your private home and a workplace for your provider and their staff, homecare requires a certain degree of understanding and compromise from both parties.

Quality providers will work with you and your family to understand your requirements and unique circumstances. This includes the way you like to manage day-to-day tasks, together with how the environment in which you live may have an impact on the care they provide.



Special considerations may include:

- The level of access for you and your caregiver
- Potential hazards or dangers
- Any automation or smart home technology
- Motorised beds/devices
- Security and CCTV systems



Ask the provider if they have systems and processes in place to ensure staff respect your home environment. If the provider has a lot of experience in home care this is a plus!

7. How does your provider ensure the quality and experience of their staff? (i.e. what checks do they complete to ensure quality service and do they have a clinical governance team)?

Homecare work isn't just about having the right formal qualifications; just as important is the dedication to helping others. As well as assisting with cooking, collecting prescriptions, transporting, administering medications, and general domestic duties, your carer may also provide social and emotional support to enhance your quality of life.

However, homecare workers are usually required to complete a qualification in individual support.

Qualifications in this industry provide a blend of both theoretical and practical work experience.



Necessary qualifications and checks typically include:

- Education Certification(s)
- Certificate III or IV in Individual Support/Aged Care/Disability
- Photo Identification (e.g. Passport, Driver Licence)
- Australian Business Number (ABN)
- National Police Check (issued within the past 12 months)
- BLS or CPR or First Aid Certificate
- Details of a Professional Referee for a reference check
- Working with Children Check (optional)
- NDIS Workers Screening Check (optional)

Formal homecare courses provide an overview of legal and safety protocols when supporting people due to ageing, disability, or special needs. These qualifications and reference checks combine to provide comfort as to the quality and experience of those providing you with care. Additionally, as the industry increases the emphasis on robust clinical care, documentation, case conferencing, and operating procedures, choosing a provider with an established clinical governance framework may protect your safety and help to ensure effective personalised care.



Ask the provider about their recruitment process, assessments, and the checks they complete to ensure quality service and if they have a clinical governance team.



8. How does your provider manage any issues that arise?

No one wants to think about confronting problems when choosing a provider, but issues do occur from time to time. A quality issue resolution process ensures that:

You, your carers, and their representatives are aware of how to raise an issue and that there are easy processes to do so. A dedicated and centralised compliance officer will be responsible for the administration of the issue resolution procedure.

- All issues will be acknowledged within a specified timeframe
- All complaints will be investigated within a specified timeframe
- All complaints are responded to in writing within a specified timeframe
- Issues are dealt with promptly, fairly, and sensitively, with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to all parties involved

The aim of an issue resolution process is to ensure that procedures are properly and effectively implemented, and that you feel confident that any issues and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.



Ask the provider about their formal issue or complaints process and its inclusions, such as interviews and investigations, verifiable time frames for action, and an official report detailing the outcome.

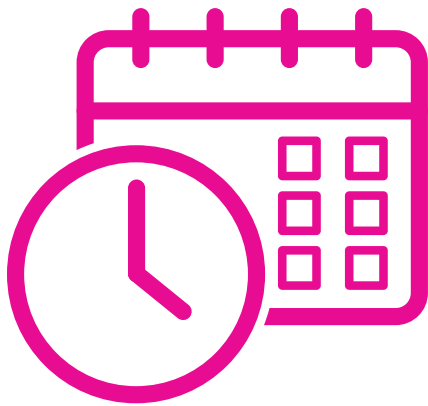


9. Does your provider have a track record of providing 24/7 care, if required?

Not all homecare providers are alike. Some may not offer all the services and support you require, so it's important to understand who and what is best for you and your family.

Should you require 24-hour care, it's important to ensure that your provider:

- Is upfront and honest with their abilities to cover shifts
- Outlines their resources and capacity to be responsive
- Provides evidence of their experience with 24/7 clients



Ask the provider on their ability to provide 24/7 client services, including the resources and capability to be responsive, including evidence of 24-hour services.

10. Does your provider offer any additional services that could be applicable to your case, such as an EAP program?

Quality providers offer additional services can provide valuable support to you or your family, your friends, or your support team.

Value adding services may include:

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) supports people dealing with personal, family and/or work-related concerns that may impact their wellbeing, work performance, health and safety, or morale. When offered by a provider, this service can deliver considerable benefits to both you, your carers, and your family members.

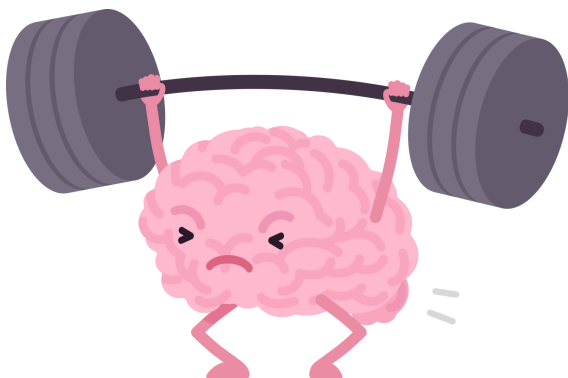


Staff Training

Regular staff training and upskilling relevant to your clinical needs ensures that your carers are at the forefront of innovations in an ever-changing industry. This training may include specialist skills in caring for people with neurological and mobility conditions such as dementia, Alzheimer's, stroke rehabilitation, falls prevention, MS, or Parkinson's.

Investment in Technology

Some providers specialise in home care technology, which may offer efficiencies and a better quality of life, depending on your specific needs. Smart home technology may include sensors and monitoring equipment, telecommunications to support health care delivery, assistive machinery in the home, and operational analytics.



Ask the provider if they have any value adding services that are unique to their main service offering.

11. Does your provider understand your personal aspirations, and do they support you when striving to meet a milestone?

Support and understanding are a crucial part of your care plan. Goals and milestones vary from person-to-person depending on individual circumstances; everyone aspires to achieve in their own way. As an extension of your family and friends, your provider plays a pivotal role in helping you to reach your objectives.



Goal planning is also an important part of your care plan to provide motivation, increase confidence and independence, and to track your progress.

Your goals may involve big or small targets, including:

- Grocery shopping or visiting a shopping centre
- Working or studying now or in the future
- Attending a special event
- Completing certain household tasks
- Travelling to a favourite location

Ask the provider for examples of how they actively support clients meet their goals.

Whatever your goals may be, it is essential that your provider understands and supports them with a care plan and specialised staff that encourage and strengthen your ability to reach your targets.

SUPPORT

Thankyou for reading!

Be sure to check out www.abilityangels.com.au for more free resources and tools



Homecare Provider “Essentials” Interactive Checklist

We have collated the most prevalent, essential areas of homecare, and the key considerations to be made when choosing a homecare provider. Feel free to use this interactive checklist to guide you when interviewing providers on your journey.

Service

1. The provider has metrics in place to measure service levels and performance	
2. The provider creates tailored care plans based on the specific needs of their clients	
3. The provider has a planned and effective issue resolution process in place	
4. The provider has confirmed hours of operations and how they manage their hours, providing 24/7 care to their clients	
5. The provider understands the importance of goals and aspirations and has outlined their process and examples on how they achieve goals for their client base	
6. The provider has outlined additional services of added support and value	

Experience

7. The provider has proven experience and knowledge to provide the necessary care for the disability	
8. The provider has extensive experience in homecare and has provided evidence on how they and the team respect their client's home environment	
9. The provider has experience in 24/7 care and the resources to accommodate a complex level of care (note: if applicable)	
10. The provider is a registered NDIS provider or other relevant funding body	

Recruitment & Staffing

11. The provider conducts person-centred recruitment and builds teams based on the clients' unique needs	
12. The provider has established recruitment practices, including behavioural and skill assessments to ensure both the quality and suitability of the homecare teams	
13. The provider has outlined a comprehensive staff onboarding and induction program	
14. The provider has an active retention strategy to retain care staff and teams	
15. The provider has an active sourcing strategy for homecare staff	

Communication

16. The provider has a proven track record of planned and proactive communication	
17. The provider has outlined a clear and defined company structure, including critical roles and the support team structure	
18. The provider seeks regular feedback from clients	