



Delivered by the
National Disability
Insurance Agency

GPO Box 700
CANBERRA ACT 2601
1800 800 110
[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

MC24-002812

Gwen Hamers

gwen@hamersedge.com.au

Dear Gwen

Thank you for your email of 4 September 2024 to the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme about the role of social workers within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I appreciate you taking the time to raise your concerns about experiences with our staff and partners. I would like to assure you the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) recognises the important role social workers play in maintaining and maximising quality of life for people living with disability.

We recognise social workers as allied health professionals who can provide a range of reasonable and necessary supports to participants, including therapy supports, provided they are a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers. Social workers can also design, implement and assess the effectiveness of therapy supports, which may include assessing and evaluating an individual's functional capacity.

The NDIA is committed to making sure our staff and partners are highly trained in their roles. NDIA staff and partners undertake intensive training through a structured and tailored induction programme when they commence with us. We also provide ongoing training to support staff in their reasonable and necessary decision making.

We employ a diverse range of people from different backgrounds, including allied and specialist health professionals and people living with disabilities and or who have lived experience with disability. This includes qualified social workers who are employed as NDIS planners and Partners in the Community.

We're continuing to invest in building the capability of our staff. In May 2023, the Minister announced a \$429.5 million investment in the NDIA's workforce capability and systems, to improve consistency and equity in decision making for access and planning decisions for NDIS participants. Since this announcement we have:

- increased the number of specialised planners and National Contact Centre staff
- delivered more training to NDIA staff and partners to increase their knowledge about the participant's disability and the supports and services they need
- improved guidance material for our frontline staff to do their job.

On 3 October 2024, the new NDIS legislation came into effect. The changes in this legislation are designed to bring greater clarity and flexibility to NDIS participants.

We are updating our guidance material to align with the legislation changes.

This includes providing clear guidance on which allied health professionals can conduct functional capacity assessments.

I recognise the impact of providing clear guidance externally about this issue has on participants and social workers, regardless of the cause.

We are continuing to work with people with disability and the disability community, including engaging with allied health peak bodies to improve to processes for gathering information from participants, their carers and allied health professionals.

We will continue to provide updates about this on the [NDIS website](#)

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to the NDIA's attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Aaron Verlin

Acting General Manager

Service Design

National Disability Insurance Agency

22 October 2024