

EVALUATION OF NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Relatively poorer outcomes for people with intellectual disability.



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The Evaluation of the NDIS final report (Mavromaras et al., 2018) was released recently. It indicates that people with intellectual disability have relatively poorer outcomes from participation in NDIS than participants as a whole and are at greater risk of receiving inadequate levels of support. The evaluation found NDIS is in general leading to higher levels and quality of services and support, improved choice and control over supports, and increased participation and well-being for participants. However access, outcomes, and benefits were not equitably shared across all people with disability. The report states that:

The NDIS was identified to work best for participants and families who were able to strongly advocate for themselves. In contrast,

poorer outcomes were reported for NDIS participants with intellectual disability, psychosocial disability and complex needs or with older carers facing their own health issues. NDIS participants from CALD (Culturally And Linguistically Diverse) backgrounds and living outside urban areas were similarly considered to be disadvantaged under the NDIS.

While many NDIS participants experienced improved supports and outcomes, up to 20 per cent felt worse off than before and about one-third felt no better off. People with intellectual disability and those with mental/psychosocial disability were least satisfied that their NDIS supports were adequate. Those unable to understand NDIS processes or to effectively express their needs were considered to be at risk of receiving inadequate levels of support. Indeed the report goes so far as to say that, 'People with disability who are unable to advocate for themselves or who struggle to navigate NDIS processes are at risk of receiving lower levels of services than previously and many have.' (Executive summary p. xv)

People with intellectual disabilities fared less well than participants generally in relation to several further key outcome areas. They experienced poorer choice and control over their supports, less clear benefits in relation to social participation and reported poorer wellbeing than people with other types of disability.

The report highlights the unfavourable and inequitable impacts that can affect people who have difficulty accessing, understanding and navigating NDIS information and processes and who are less able to advocate for themselves. Whilst a need for better assistance with planning and advocacy emerged clearly through the evaluation research advocacy, as the report notes, is not funded under NDIS.

The evaluation draws on qualitative data from in-depth interviews as well as quantitative data from a large scale survey to assess the impacts of the three-year NDIS trial. It was undertaken between 2013 and 2017 by researchers from the National Institute of Labour Studies at Flinders University with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. The report can be accessed in several formats, including audio, at (<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programs-services/for-people-with-disability/national-disability-insurance-scheme/ndis-evaluation-consolidated-report>).

References

Mavromaras, K., Moskos, M., Mahuteau, S., Isherwood, L., Goode, A., Walton, H., . . . Flavel, J. (2018). *Evaluation of the NDIS. Final report*. Retrieved from <http://apo.org.au/system/files/143516/apo-nid143516-732911.pdf>