**NDIS Workforce Capability Framework workshop: participant session**

**Recorded Tuesday, 7 August 2023**

So thank you for joining us today. My name's Melissa Raassina. I'm an Assistant Director with the Worker and Provider Quality team with the NDIS Commission. So just some general housekeeping which I have popped into the chat. Please note your cameras and mics will be muted. However, you can leave any questions in the Q&A or the chat if you can't access the Q&A. If there are any questions, comments or you're having issues with sound or video please do pop that in the chat for us. Sometimes you do need to leave the meeting and come back if you're having any issues with seeing the screen.

So we will address your questions throughout this session. For any general questions about the NDIS Commission, please send to contactcentre@NDIScommission.gov.au that is in the chat as well for you to see that e-mail. We will try to keep discussion today around the Framework, so you may also see at the top of your teams that we are recording and transcribing this session. If you do require captions, you can either use the CART captions link provided in today's e-mail, or you can go to your Teams’ settings up the top, the dot dot dot that says ‘more’, there is an option for ‘language and speech’ and you can turn on live captions.

The recording, transcription and slides from this session and our other workshops will be made available online at a later date via the Workforce Capability Framework website. We will also be providing a survey link at the end of this session that we hope you'll take time to complete for us.

But before I go any further, I'd like to acknowledge the lands on which we are meeting on today across the country. I'm personally coming to you from the land of the Yugambeh and Jagera peoples in south of Brisbane. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples present and I would also like to acknowledge all people with lived experience of disability and the experience of those who are supporting people with disability.

So shortly, I will introduce today's speaker Sam Jenkinson. But first, I'd like to give you a quick introduction to the Framework, and now I know some of you may have joined us for our last set of workshops.

We will still make sure that we give you an overview of the Framework just in case. Thank you. So today's session will focus on the Position Description Tool and our Recruitment and Selection Resources. But first, that quick overview of the Framework. So the NDIS Commission released the NDIS Workforce Capability Framework in 2021. And since then we've been building a range of tools and resources to support using the Framework.

So the Workforce Capability Framework was created to support the improvement of services and quality of supports in the NDIS. Hopefully, if you haven't attended a session before, you've heard of the Framework or seen something about it somewhere and you're attending this to find out a bit more. So the Framework itself is an interactive, online tool and its purpose is to show what the capabilities are for all workers funded under the NDIS. And when we say capabilities, we mean the observable behaviours, the skills, the attitudes and the knowledge that a worker should have.

The Framework and the tools have been developed with participants and workers and providers, and it's really a tool to help build the capacity of providers, workers and participants in the NDIS and to help get that shared language of what good looks like as well as contribute to providers’ continuous improvement in building and quality workforce. So we do have resources to support providers, workers and participants, and that's all the way from workforce planning through to career development for workers.

And I guess most importantly, the Framework is connected to the Code of conduct which all workers and NDIS providers must adhere to under the NDIS legislation, so all workers, even those that are directly employed or sourced privately, are expected to meet the Code of Conduct, and the Framework translates this. But it also connects back to the Practice Standards which registered providers need to adhere to as well and it does that by describing what quality can look like from the perspective of the person with disability, and you can see that circular diagram we've got there, which just shows you that all of these areas, so workforce planning, workforce development, career planning and recruitment and selection all link back together and the Framework provides a suite of tools and resources for each of those sections to give you a whole sort of program you can follow.

So on the screen here we've just put a screenshot of part of the Framework. When you go to the interactive version on the website and you can see how they describe the capabilities and they're really useful when providers and participants are supporting workers to know what they should be doing. So for example, on the screen here we can see the expectations of a worker's role in general support work, such as uphold my rights, communicate effectively, build trusted relationships and work collaboratively. And so when you do actually take the time to look at the interactive Framework, it's not only describing expectations of a general support worker working with a person with disability, but it also describes capabilities from frontline managers and supervisors as well as senior leaders. And there are also additional capabilities for supporting identity or specialist areas like coordinating support, meal time management and others.

And for other roles, such as Allied Health, you could go into the Framework and select advanced support work, noting that the core capabilities are the exact same across all the roles, including ancillary work and support roles as well.

So on the screen now, you can see the tools and guides that support the Framework and we have the Workforce Management and Planning Tool and the strategy document that goes with that; we have the Position Description Tool; the Recruitment and Selection Resource;, the Self-Assessment Tool for Potential Workers; the Career Options Guide; the Supervision for Capability; and the Training for Capability Guide. And so, these tools and guides can be used by providers, participants and workers across that whole suite of areas from workforce planning onwards. And now I'd like to just pause to introduce our main speaker as we go into main depth about how you can use the Framework and Sam will also pause for some questions. So here is our Director of Workforce Provider and Quality Sam Jenkinson.

Hi, everybody. Welcome. I'm really glad to see so many people have joined us today.

So I will just very briefly go talk about the difference between the NDIA and the NDIS Commission. So together, we form that whole system around the NDIS. But the NDIA are the agency that do all of the planning, funding, um, they do the funding to get the LACs. They will they do the funding for support coordinators and they have a lot of resources and supports that are specifically there to support people to manage their plans and to implement their plans. And, actually if you go to the next slide, Mel, I'll just do a little bit of a um, go through: this is just something that we've put together to try and show, where or what a participant's journey might be through the NDIS and where the different bits fit. Beause I think that's probably, you know, can be some of the what can make it quite confusing at times.

So, what we've done here in this diagram, and I'll talk through it as well, is that, you know, when a person first gets their plan approved, that might be the first part of their journey. Once the, you know, eligibility has happened and that'll be then contact with the NDIA or the LACs and the planners and all those sorts of things.

To check how you can use your plan, there's a lot of great resources on the NDIA website and then the NDIA website also has tools like a budget calculator to help people manage their funding. So we haven't replicated or we haven't sort of made new tools for that, but rather on our website, on our participant page we actually point people and connect them into the right places on the NDIA page, so that's all part of the NDIS role to support people to implement their plans and what that looks like, and that's where any questions about funding and your plan’s funding or what's in your plan do need to go back to the NDIA.

The next step that someone might do is actually go ‘well I if I’m either, you know, maybe I'm self-managing or I'm using a plan manager or I wanna use a plan manager, I need to find a provider or I need to find, you know, if a provider is registered and what are they registered for?’ We have the NDIS Provider Finder and there is one both on the NDIA’s website as well as one on the NDIS Commission's website. The NDIS Commission website also has the list of providers which have had any sort of compliance action – so that's where the NDIS Commission is either investigating or asking a provider or making a provider/requiring a provider to fix things because they've got issues which are not meeting the Practice Standards or the Code of Conduct – and the NDIS Commission website also has that list of providers and workers who have been banned, which you can also find, so we make sure that that link is there cause that's actually really important to know when you're first starting out as well.

And to check in with at any time that you're looking at changing your provider or looking for new workers. Then we've got some of the tools the NDIS Commission Workforce Capability Framework has provided, and that's where if you've decided to self-manage and employ your own workers, um, you might need to create a job description that can help you both know what you're looking for as well as guide what a worker is doing in the work that they're gonna be supporting you with. And we're gonna talk a little bit more about that today.

If you're self-managing and directly employing your own workers, you'd be going through that recruitment process and needing to hire your own workers. And we've got some resources that can support people with that.

Then welcoming your new workers and setting up regular feedback, we've got some resources to support participants with that part as well. So that’s sort of just some of the journey if you're self-managing and directly employing your own workers. Some of those same tools can also be used if you're self-managing and using a plan manager or using sole traders and people who might be connecting in different ways with the sorts of supports that you need.

So I’ll just go onto the next page. We've got a new participant page on the website now on the Workforce Capability website. And so, what we've done is tried to put the resources that we've got there in a way that makes sense for where a participant is in the different stage of their journey in trying to implement your plan. So, the participant page is set up to start with, with finding supports that might suit you, and one section is about finding an NDIS provider and some of the tools and the guidance that you might use to be able to find a right, the right provider for you and the other section is about engaging a worker which has more of the things if you’re wanting to directly employ or recruit your own workers.

Then we have a section on guiding your supports which talks a bit about how you might give feedback to workers and providers, how you can make complaints and the sorts of things that you can do to help keep your workers or providers delivering good supports. And we have a number of Easy Read resources as well as Auslan of all of our animations and videos.

But today I am just going to focus specifically on the Position Description Tool and how that could be used. The Recruitment and Selection Resources and the supervision resources and how that can be used for participants that are wanting to usually self-manage as well.

So we're gonna go a little bit into detail on what might be included when you're welcoming a new worker as well.

But I'll just start today with the Position Description Tool and we've got a little bit of a video that we're gonna share. And this is one of the video animations that we've got on the website, which we've got one on almost every tool. Now if you want to have a look in a bit more detail, but this is one on the Position Description Tool. So Mel, I'll get you to share that one.

You can view the video with captions here: [(2) NDIS Workforce Capability Framework Position Description Tool - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cq0jBfq89dA&list=PLFgDbrzQXfs_Lvis42LOv7JMl8Vmwq1ye&index=27)

So that's just a bit of a, um, outline of what's in the Position Description Tool and it can be used by people who are wanting to develop a position description for a worker that they're going to employ or recruit themselves, but you could also use it to write up and use it to develop a position description, even if you're working with a provider and provide that to the provider that has a bit more detail about what you need and what you want. You could also use it if you're wanting to provide more information on your expectations, even when you're engaging with a support coordinator or an allied health professional, it doesn't need to only be about when you're recruiting a worker directly, because the way the Position Description Tool works, it automatically takes the capabilities from the Framework and pops them into the position description. What that means is if you chose the additional capability of ‘support me to coordinate my supports’, then that would come into the position description. So, that's where you could use that position description for engaging a support coordinator, for example. So what I thought I might do is just very quickly go and share with you what that looks like on the website and then that can, so that you know where it is and what that looks like. So I'm just going to share my screen very briefly. I'm hopeful that people can see this.

This is the homepage for the Workforce Capability Framework. And I'm going to go into the participant page and then down to under engage a worker that supports me. Then describe support needs. Now you can get to it from the other pages and from the homepage further down as well, but that was just a way of also just being able to show you the, the new participant page that's there. So with the position description it is interactive and online and then when you choose NDIS participant, it takes you through and you, as you fill in each box you then get your downloadable one at the end.

But, as you can see, you can click on the capabilities. So whether it's general support or advanced support. Because there's also a provider area, there's the supervision and frontline management and those other areas. And there's also then the additional capabilities that you can add. So the next page of this has the additional capabilities. But, what I might do is just very quickly show you where they are so you know what would come in to the Position Description Tool.

So here, you'll see at the top on the Framework the general support work, advanced support work and then here are additional capabilities. So, if I was doing a position description and I was doing it for my support coordinator, I could choose to add the additional capability of ‘work with me to explore and coordinate my supports’.

And when the position description is developed, it would include the additional capabilities related to support coordination that come in at the bottom of the Framework there for each of those areas, as you can see here.

So it's not just about general support workers, but also includes all those other areas as well. So I’ll just come back to our slide deck. If you have got any questions, please do pop them in the chat or the Q&A.

There's also a question around resources for providers who provide support staff to participants with complex and high needs.

Yep, um, so we would suggest using advanced support work in the capabilities and then, depending on the types of complex and high needs that the person has, there are additional capabilities you can choose that go into things like ‘support me with my psychosocial disability’, ‘support me to implement my allied health or health plan’, ‘support me to implement my medication plan’, ‘support me to implement my mealtime management plan’. So there's some different things that you can choose to add and they'll get attached then to the position description.

There's also the high intensity support skills descriptors. I know that's a long name.  
Which there's also, you can find a link to which goes into more detail on what workers should know when they're supporting people with particular types of health support needs, such as ventilator support, tracheostomy support, catheter support.

And some other things in there, subcutaneous injections and things like that.  
So I’ll just go on to the next slide, because we do want to make sure we're covering off a couple of things for you to explore further yourselves. So one of the things we've got next that we wanted to share with you is our Recruitment and Selection Resources. So this is this is the other the other video will show today, but we do have little videos on a number of the different tools, but we'll just share this one as well, which is on the Recruitment and Selection Resources.

You can view the video with captions here: [(2) NDIS Workforce Capability Framework Recruitment and Selection Resources - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWCU8ejg-nM&list=PLFgDbrzQXfs_Lvis42LOv7JMl8Vmwq1ye&index=26&t=8s)

Thanks for that. Um, so we do have the Recruitment and Selection Resources and as you could see from the video, we have tried to, um, show how the Position Description Tool can then be used for multiple purposes, so it can support what you might use in the way you advertise for a worker. And also then after you've recruited it can be used in the way that you provide feedback and keep checking in with someone that they're doing the right thing.

So I will declare that I am also a self-managed participant myself and I do hire my own workers so I do have a bit of experience or I do have a little bit of experience in this area and have used some similar things.

With the position description resources, what we've tried to do is put out a step-by-step sort of going through the process of planning for your recruitment, um, doing interviews or doing other ways of assessing for people and again, we do have both a participant version and a provider version. They're very similar, but the provider version just has a little bit more in it as organisations or companies have a little bit more to think about when they're doing recruitment, but if you are using a provider then we'd really you know, it's perfectly OK to ask the provider to be involved in the recruitment process, particularly if it's about recruiting workers that are gonna be supporting you.

On the next slide, I've got a couple of, just a list of some of the templates and a checklist that we've got, and there are a couple more coming as well. So we're just in the process now of finalising a bit of a checklist that someone could print off that's like two pages that you could use to make sure that you're sort of covering off each part along the process with a couple of key questions for each part of the process of recruitment.

We have a tip sheet for you know a practical how to do interviews in a great way. We've also got a tip sheet which is just currently being finalised with a little bit more detail on developing interview questions, and I'm going to go a little bit more into that in a moment because one of the things which we're wanting to do is try and make that support people to make that connection between what's in your position.  
description and what you're looking for and then the sorts of questions you can ask in an interview. And interviewing workers is something that you can do with, um, sole traders, again support coordinators, allied health professionals. You know, it's OK to have some questions ready to ask them and not just assume that because you've connected with someone that you're gonna have to engage them or hire them immediately.

We also have some templates there that people can use to shortlist candidates when you're recruiting, so a bit of a scorecard where you can put people's names and then score against how different people are going and a scoring sheet for when you're doing interviews as well. And then a template letter of offer as well as an unsuccessful letter. So if you're connecting and emailing out to people that maybe you've interviewed, that you're not wanting to hire as well.

So, what we've got on the screen now is this example of an interview question. And as I said, we've got a tip sheet that we're just finalising, which hopefully we'll have up on the website very shortly. But, what we wanna do is support people to be able to write their own questions based on your needs. And so, we talk about the way you might write a question is to have questions that really get someone to show you and share with you, not just have they got a qualification in something, but how do they really respond to doing something in their behaviour and their attitudes so what we suggest is having a look at your position description and looking at the capabilities.

Then that knowledge and skills and attitude that you're wanting to get from a worker. And so, for example in the Capability Framework we have, um, ‘support me to make my own choices’ as a one of the core capabilities in upholding a person's rights. So a question that you might ask somebody to find out whether they understand that capability could be a question like ‘tell me about a time when a participant you worked with wanted to do something that you thought was risky.’

So you're setting up a situation in your question that the person has to be able to share with you something that they've done before, which shows you whether they've actually got that capability. And so, then you would ask them, ‘what did you do in that situation and what happened?’

And then what we've got on this tip sheet that we're gonna be sharing shortly, we actually have some examples of what might be an answer that's not so great, what might be an answer that's good and what might be an answer that's very good and what we suggest is that when you're writing questions for an interview, you actually might put some things that you hope you might get in an answer. So that then when someone does give an answer you know whether that's a good answer or not. So for this question we've suggested that an answer that might not be great is if someone says ‘Ohh well I had a look you know they told me they wanted to go and do skydiving and really I thought that was too risky. So I told them that they really shouldn't do it.’

Well, that's not really the best answer. It's not really gonna help you in supporting you to make your own choices. A good answer, um, could be that the person acknowledges that. ‘Yeah, absolutely. You have the right to do that. It's your choice.  
I'll support you to do that, and I've supported people to do that before.’

A really good answer would be someone going ‘Yep, I had someone ask me about doing something like skydiving before, and so we sat down and we worked out well. What would be maybe areas where there might be higher risk. How would we work out how to do that? What support we needed to do that? And then we were able to go and do that activity safely and the person had a great time.;

So that's just a bit of an example of how there might be some different levels of answers that you get from support workers and thinking about asking good questions can help you to know whether somebody is gonna be able to support you well. So that's some of what we've got in the resources there that we want to encourage people to use if they're recruiting and hiring their own workers.

I'm also just wanting to highlight dome other parts of the participant page. So we've got a section called ‘guide my supports’ and in this section it's where we're focusing on how, if you're recruiting and hiring your own workers, you wanna have a good relationship with the worker. That means you can provide feedback and so setting up that relationship at the very start where you are providing regular feedback and building that into the way that you're engaging your worker. So whether that's right from the very start, asking how are things going? This is what I've seen that you're doing well, this is what I've seen that you know, I'd like you to work on a little bit more.

I can set up that good relationship that's based on feedback happening in a regular way, so giving regular feedback, giving feedback when things work well or when they need to improve or don't work well, and also the resources that we've got talk about how when you're giving feedback, we make some suggestions on ways you can give feedback that focus on the issue and how it impacts you.

And then, if you've got that regular feedback set up, then you can have some good conversations to ensure that together you're working on improving the supports that you're getting. But it's really important to know that if things can't be fixed, or if somebody is providing supports in a way that are basically breaking the rules, breaching the Code of Conduct that might be looking like it's abusive then it's important to know that you're agreement has how you can end the agreement. And, of course, if you're directly employing your own workers and paying for that support, you'd need to ensure that it's meeting any employment contracts that you might have in place, but also having a look at your service agreement as well and then looking at what other supports you might need.

So those supervision and giving feedback resources that we've got there, we're trying to, we wanna try and support people to help you set clear expectations with workers and with providers so that you can give that feedback to them as well. And certainly again, I would recommend that if, even if you end a relationship with a worker or with a provider, because things have not gone great, if they have done things which are a breach of the Code of Conduct, then absolutely let us know at the NDIS Commission. As I said before, even if we can't get to your complaint straight away, if we know that you're safe because you've moved on to a different provider or worker, us knowing that information helps us to know what workers and providers we might need to investigate further as well.

Is there any information on the provider one, explaining to them that participants have the right to make their own service agreements with them?

Not specifically, but what we talk about in the Workforce Capability Framework is that everything should be done in a way that's engaging with the person with disability in how they do it, so that that should include service agreements as well.  
And it is something that we emphasise all the time with providers as well.

Another question there was about relationship skills and soft skills are seen by employees in industry generally to find the most suitable person. Sorry just making sure I can get up to that again. Um, we are absolutely encouraging providers to have participants as members of interview panels, and I know some providers are starting to do that and particularly in the provider session that we did last week, we actually mentioned, you know if, if two or three people are sharing a house, for example, in a group home setting, it absolutely makes sense that if you're recruiting workers for that house, that the participants who live there are involved in that recruitment in some way, we think that that's really important and would encourage you to give that feedback to providers as well.

Someone suggested that it would be useful to have a feedback tool from other participants on their experiences with service providers. It is absolutely, uh, quite feasible to do reference checks when you're, when you're doing, so part of the Recruitment and Selection Guides talks about doing reference checks as being one of the key parts of how you assess a worker and you know what you can do reference checks with providers as well. You can ask them if they have any previous people or current people that would be willing to speak to you about how they are as a provider. That's perfectly OK. The same way that you would maybe do that with when you're engaging, say, a tradesperson and you might look up reviews online and that sort of thing, perfectly OK to do in this space as well.

And when it comes to soft skills as opposed to qualifications, I do know part of that is the behavioural questions. Did you have any other comments on that?

Uh, yes. So yes. So when you are asking the questions we talk about. So, I think in the slide it said behavioural questions. What we're really talking about there is questions that will help you get a bit more about someone's soft skills. So, how they've actually interacted and engaged with other people and certainly the Framework sort of explains those little bit more. But, you can also do an activity so it doesn't just have to be an interview. You could ask someone, um to engage in an exercise as part of the assessment that you doing so. Um, it could be as simple as you know, ‘I just wanna get an idea of how you go about doing, um, you know, getting around knowing your way around a kitchen, could you, you know, make me a cup of tea or coffee. And this is where the things are. And just seeing how they interact with you and ask questions whilst they're doing that activity can give you an idea of whether that someone that you're gonna feel comfortable with or not.

You could ask someone to do a written exercise as part of an assessment, or you could ask someone to write up a bit of a plan about an activity that you wanna do as part of an assessment if you're looking for a support coordinator, for example.  
So this, it's not just interviews as being the only way that you can assess whether someone's gonna be the right support worker for you.

Absolutely. And certainly we would recommend and we do have in our feedback resources that are coming up onto the website shortly, we do talk about when you're first engaging with a provider a particularly, but also even when you're recruiting, ensuring that your contracts are really clear about, uh, how you might end a contract. So and that also depends on the type of employment that you do, whether that's casual or part time. If you're directly employing or in a permanent way, then you might need to ensure that you've got clear you know what happens if there's a dispute. If someone's being employed in a casual way, then there's different requirements. With a provider, having clear about how you are going to end the contract if you want to, in the agreement is also really important because you should not be staying with someone if they're not providing the right supports with you. But you need to know that you can end that in the best way, and that's going to be not causing any further problems as well.

And as Melissa has said, we do have the, um, complaints with the Commission and if there is anything where you are really feeling unsafe and you contact the Commission, that's our first priority at the NDIS Commission, so that will be the immediate thing that will focus on, is any complaint where someone is really feeling unsafe or there might be abuse or neglect happening.

I know we're just getting close to time, so I will just point to some of the other resources that we also have. So, a lot of the resources around asking interview questions, giving feedback to workers and all of the different fact sheets, we also have available as Easy Read. So, that's where it's got both the picture and plain language. We have small fact sheets on each of the tools as well that give you a bit of a snapshot of what's there. And we now have a videos and animation explainers, and you saw two of them today which cover across all of the different tools and the Framework as well.

We do have also a Recruitment and Selection Guide and a, um, Position Description Tool guide that are specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that might be recruiting their own workers or agencies or providers that want to engage Aboriginal and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

And we have our brochures and fact sheets. The main brochure is in 11 community languages, but there's all the fact sheets that also now currently getting translate, translated.

And so, just one of those things there around someone's talked about opportunities to empower participants to learn those types of communication skills and certainly the supervision resources that we've have around giving feedback and trying to set up as much as possible that regular feedback for with workers and providers we hope might assist with some of that work as well.

I know there's a couple of other questions there: Someone's asked about the worker modules for registered providers. The worker orientation module is mandatory and if you as a participant are engaging workers or sole traders, we highly recommend that you can make it as an essential requirement in your position description for the workers that you engage with and would encourage everyone to do those as well.

And someone's asked about, about knowing the Code of Conduct, and again that is actually through that worker orientation module is the best way to know about the Code of Conduct. And again, I would encourage people to use that.

Thank you very much for your time today. We really appreciate you joining us.