

5 Simple Steps to be ready for your NDIS quality audit



By Ollie Kelly

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What exactly is an audit anyway?

The International Organisation for Standards (ISO) defines auditing as 'An evidence gathering process'.

The NDIS Commission quality and safeguards commission is now in full effect in all Australian States and Territories except WA which comes online in July 2020.

If you're reading this, you may have an audit approaching, for verification or certification. Or you may be deciding if you wish to register with the scheme at all as you may feel that the requirements outweigh the benefits. Only you can decide that, but this guide will show you that an audit is not something to be feared. Even if your registration does depend on it, YOU are in control at each and every moment and by following the 5 steps in this guide, you will be ready to go for an audit pass and a new mindset to continually improve your business.



Step 1

Make sure you have the right system in place

Sounds obvious right? Well, maybe it's not. There is so much information available on the NDIS Commission site, as well as from the other experts, that information overload can easily set in. Standards, indicators, detailed guides, forms, inductions.....wow. I just want to know what I have to do and why.

So the first step is to think carefully about what you are about to embark on and to make sure that whatever you are putting in place is going to benefit your business further than just being able to charge NDIS rates. Remember these key items:

- 1) The framework exists to ensure that people with disability are provided supports and services from individuals and companies with the right ethos, credentials, commitment and approach. This is vitally important.
- 2) Your quality and Safeguarding system is designed to make the above possible within the context of **your business**. Not somebody else's or a different type of service. If you're a small provider, the system should be lean. You can still comply with a smaller system. It should not get in your way to the extent that people wouldn't want to use it. That defeats the whole purpose and any experienced auditor will appreciate that. The Commission has ensured that the complexity of provider systems should be **proportional**.



Step 2

Love your system

Love it with all of your heart. Nurture it and want to see it succeed.

There are lots of ways to approach anything in life, but if you start on the right foot and tell yourself that using and improving your system is just how your business now operates, you will find that:

- A) You really will begin to improve your offering as a provider and;
- B) You won't be half as worried about what you might get asked in a quality audit.

Whenever you go back to check something in one of your policies/procedures or other documents, always be on the lookout to check that it all makes sense to you. Challenge yourself and your people to ask, "Are we absolutely without doubt offering the safest, highest quality and best version of ourselves and our service to our participants?"





Step 3

Pre audit readiness

As the audit approaches you will naturally start to think about it more. Now is a good time to go to the NDIS Commission Website and read the Quality and Safeguards Practice Standards and Quality Indicators for your relevant modules. Go through it line by line and make sure you have a mechanism in place that ticks off that requirement. This exercise will not take you long. Ask yourself, how would I provide evidence that this is how we do things?

If you have developed your system with **i40 Guardian Quality and Safeguarding** or downloaded one of our document packs, you will be in a strong position so long as you have been operating according to your documents. Never get too complacent, but certainly don't lose any sleep! You are doing everything required of you.





Understand your auditor

We auditors can be a strange breed sometimes. We live in facts. But saying that, part of an auditor's training is on human communication - in fact this is taught as a critical skill. So if you've never been through an audit before don't expect a tyrant to walk through the door. They will be quite courteous.

They have a job to do and that job is to verify that your processes meet the set requirements - and that you and your people are actually using them in the real world. But they are a person just like any other.

Your auditor won't be allowed to 'help' you as they have strict requirements around independence and professionalism, BUT remember that whatever they pick up - it is a gift. An opportunity to improve what you're doing or identifying a hole in your business that you perhaps didn't think was there.

Think of your auditor as a doctor giving your business a health check within an NDIS perspective. They are not the enemy.



Know what to expect on the day(s)

It's showtime!

On the day, the auditor will introduce themselves and provide you with context about what will happen during the audit, and when. If your nerves are getting the better of you, don't be afraid to tell them. They will put your mind at ease.

They will then begin with your documentation. Listen carefully to what they are asking for and don't panic if it takes you a couple of minutes to find something. They are used to that. For certification audits, on later days they will also interview you and your people. Perhaps share this guide with your staff to relax them. Verification audits are completed within one day.

At the end of the audit you will be informed of any 'non conformances', if you have any. Make sure you clarify what they are - this is very important. You will then need to close those actions out.

If you don't have any issues, **CONGRATULATIONS!**, you have passed audit and will be much better prepared for your next ones.



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