

## Choosing your Third Party Verification Body

### Background

In order to undertake verification against the NSW Disability Services Standards, you will need to choose and engage a third party verification (TPV) body. A TPV body is an organisation that is approved by NDS to undertake independent verification against the requirements of the NSW Disability Services Standards (NSW DSS). The TPV body will be contracted by your organisation to undertake the on-site verification activity. In some cases they may also be engaged to conduct a gap assessment against the standards. The TPV body's responsibilities will include the selection and management of the verification team, determining the sites to visit, an on-site review of your performance against the NSW DSS, collation of the team's findings and the supply of a report and verification statement.

NDS has approved eleven TPV bodies to offer TPV activities. They are required to meet Operating Guidelines and Model Procedures (see the IDF website).

TPV bodies are required to have systems and processes in place to ensure that they are able to carry out the verification of service. These systems and processes promote the independence, transparency, accountability, consistency and impartiality of the verification process.

Certification costs will be market-driven and each verification body will charge according to its own commercial rates. The actual cost of certification will need to be negotiated between your organisation and your chosen verification body.

**Note:**

**Already using an accreditation body?**

Your organisation may already be using a certifying body for other standards requirements. You may wish to continue using them; however only those listed as approved can attract a subsidy for the fee charged.

### **Already meet the Home Care Standards?**

If you have current accreditation (within one year) with the Home Care standards. ADHC only require you to be verified against the 15% of the NSW DSS that aren't covered in these standards. This means the TPV process should be shorter and less involved than verification against the full standards. You will need to identify this is the case when seeking a quote from a TPV.

### **Questions to ask**

- Is the Third Party Verification (TPV) body formally approved by NDS? – if so you are entitled to apply to NDS for funds to subsidise the cost of verification.
- What are the full costs you will be required to pay to the verification body? (You may be entitled to a limited subsidy, see Subsidy application form and FAQ on the above link).
- How do the cost of the TPV's services compare? – compare the quotes from at least two TPVs. Make sure you are aware of what is included and excluded in the quote.
- What experience has the TPV body in assessment of disability services, and its understanding of the disability sector and the NSW Disability Services Standards? Can they provide references?
- What experience do their verification team members have, particularly in working with people with disability, for example, their strategies and approaches to communicating with people with disability?
- What approaches does the TPV have to engaging people with disability in the verification process?
- What feedback can other disability services which currently use third party verification bodies provide?
- If you are already certified/accredited to another set of Standards, can the audit/review/verification be conducted concurrently or combined to minimise duplication, time and cost?
- Is the TPV available to conduct the verification, (including the lead time you would need to provide them to adequately prepare) at a time that suits you?