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FOI 22/23-0922  
**Standard Operating Procedure**

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## Referral to the Complex Support Needs Branch

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will help you to determine if a participant's circumstances meet the requirements for referral to the Complex Support Needs (CSN) Branch. Participants with complex support needs require coordination of multiple services to assist them in the development and implementation of their NDIS plan.

**Note:** The decision to assess suitability for CSN and restream a participant to Complex can only be made by the CSN Operations Team. A referral to CSN can only be made by Internal Agency staff or Partners in the Community.

**NOTE:** If the participant record has transitioned to PACE, please refer to the [Work Instructions - How to refer a participant to CSN through PACE](#) to refer the participant to CSN.

### 1. Recent updates

Date	What's changed
July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Referrals in PACE</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Amendments to requirements for submitting a referral to CSN.</li> </ul>

### 2. Checklist

Topic	Checklist
Pre-requisites	<p>You have read and familiarised yourself with the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Practice Guide Complex Support Needs</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Standard Operating Procedure - Manage Inbound Documents</a></li> </ul>

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Topic	Checklist
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	<p>Prior to referring a participant to CSN, you are satisfied that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The participant meets more than one situational and personal factor that <b>significantly impacts</b> their ability to achieve their goals.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The situation cannot be resolved through changes such as a new provider, additional funding for a support coordinator or plan reassessment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The participant cannot be adequately supported by an experienced Local Area Coordinator or National Delivery Planner in conjunction with an appropriate support coordinator.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If a plan reassessment is due within 100 days, further information may be sought for the prioritisation and urgency of the request.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the current plan has been auto extended or a plan continuation has been initiated; a plan reassessment should be considered prior to a referral to CSN.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants with open activities including s47a, s48 or s100 will be considered in relation to individual cases and the participant’s personal and situational factors.</li> </ul>
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">2.1 Consider participant circumstances for referral to CSN</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">2.2 Complete the CSN Referral for Assessment Form</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">2.3 Interaction for CSN Referral for Assessment</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">2.4 Reviewing a Suitability Decision</a></li> </ul>

## Procedure

### 2.1 Consider participant circumstances for referral to CSN

Consider the participant circumstances and factors in [Table 1](#). To refer to CSN there should be:

- one or more situational or personal factors identified with a significant level of intensity or impact and;
- a requirement for an extraordinary level of support and liaison across mainstream interfaces for the participant to be able to achieve their outcomes.



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2.1.1 Table 1: Situational and Personal factors indicating complex support needs

Situational Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voluntary or involuntary involvement in other government service systems, in particular health, child protection, guardianship, mental health, and justice.</li><li>• Transitional supports for returning to the community (for example leaving rehabilitation or hospital, justice facilities).</li><li>• An immediate unmet need for targeted support or a crisis due to a sudden unexpected change in the participant's circumstances.</li><li>• Extraordinary challenges concerning provider market or services.</li><li>• Insufficient formal (for example, supported decision maker, advocate, guardian, nominee) and informal (for example, family member, carer, friend) support to assist with decision making or engaging in planning. This includes the context of informal supports.</li><li>• Minimal or no informal supports resulting in service and support related risks.</li><li>• Multiple family members with disability or a parent/carer with disability.</li><li>• Homelessness where the participant is unable to maintain appropriate accommodation due to the impact of their disability needs and mainstream supports are unable to provide alternative solutions/options.</li><li>• Child in voluntary or statutory out of home care, or at risk of requiring accommodation outside the family home. The child should be referred to Complex Support Needs.</li></ul> <p>Refer to: <a href="#">Practice Guide - Children at risk of requiring accommodation</a> and <a href="#">Practice Guide - Children at risk of requiring accommodation outside the family home</a> and for additional information.</p>
Personal Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identified behaviours of concern and/or use of regulated restrictive practice.</li></ul> <p>Refer to: NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission <a href="#">Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practices Fact Sheet</a> for more information on restrictive practices including types and definitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deterioration in behaviour/creating a risk to self or others.</li></ul>

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## Situational Factors

**Refer to:** [Practice Guide - Positive Behaviour Support and Behaviours of Concern](#) for additional information.

- Hard to reach/difficulty engaging (including a significant psychosocial disability or someone who is itinerant) and after utilising HLOs/JLOs if participant has a health/justice interface.
- Multiple diagnosis.
- Clinical complexity of disability.
- A history of trauma or abuse having a significant current impact.
- Limited or no formal means of communication.
- Increased risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

**2.1.2** Consider the prerequisites for entry to CSN to ensure the participant situation cannot be resolved by a plan reassessment or National Delivery super intensive planning response prior to referring to CSN.

**2.1.3 Upload** relevant assessments, documents and include **interactions** on the participant record evidencing the need for referral to CSN.

**2.1.4** Ensure you update the participant contact, communication and (where applicable) support coordinator and Guardian details on the NDIS Business System.

**2.1.5** Ensure you check the participant's disability/ies have been **recorded** correctly in the NDIS Business System. Where required, discuss the participant's situation and presenting complexity with your Team Leader for approval to progress with the referral to CSN.

## 2.2 Complete the CSN Referral for Assessment Form

A Complex Support Needs Referral for Assessment Form (Referral Form) must be used to capture current information and evidence to support the assessment process for a participant referred to CSN.

The CSN Referral Form requires you to enter details and tick checkboxes that relate to the circumstances of complexity. You can add further comments, if necessary, to provide additional detail on the participant's circumstances. The information you enter on the Referral Form will support CSN Operations in assessing the complexity of the participants situation.

To support you in successfully completing the Referral Form, please refer to the [Standard Operating Procedure - Complete the CSN Referral Form](#) for detailed step by step guidance.

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**2.2.1** Download and save a copy of the [CSN Referral for Assessment Form](#) with the Participant's First Name and Surname, including the date you are completing Form using the File Name: **CSN Referral Form\_FirstName\_Surname\_DD.MM.YYYY**.

**2.2.2** Open the MS Excel Referral Form using the Desktop App. The Referral Form cannot be completed using the MS Teams Web App.

**2.2.3** Complete all Sections of the Referral Form and ensure all checkboxes are ticked according to circumstance and presenting complexity.

**2.2.4** Once you have completed the Referral Form, **Upload** to the participant record as an inbound document using the Inbound Document Header: **CSN Referral Form\_FirstName\_Surname\_DD.MM.YYYY**.

**2.2.5** **Create** and **Assign** the [CSN Assessment Request Interaction](#) to the **CR SDP Return to CSN CRM Inbox**. Leave the interaction status as **open**.

### 2.3 Interaction for CSN Referral for Assessment

#### 2.3.1 Refer to Complex Support Needs Branch for Assessment

**Category 1:** Specialised

**Category 2:** Complex Support Needs

**Category 3:** CSN Assessment Required

**Channel:** Internal Notes

**Status:** Open

**Assign to the Team Responsible:** CR SDP Return to CSN

**Notes:**

Referral submitted by [Login ID]

Assessment requested for participant that may require the additional support of the Complex Support Needs Pathway. The CSN Referral for assessment has been reviewed by a Senior Planner, Team Leader or EL1 to confirm the Participant meets the pre-requisites for entry to the Complex Pathway [LOGIN ID of Approver (where applicable)]

Information and evidence to support the Participant Suitability for Entry to CSN is attached to the Participant record as inbound document:

**CSN Referral Form\_FirstName\_Surname\_DD.MM.YYYY**

### 2.4 CSN Operations Assess Participant Suitability for CSN



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CSN Operations Team receives the referral through the CRM Interaction aligned to the **CR SDP Return to CSN** CRM Inbox. CSN Operations complete the Suitability Assessment Checker for suitability to enter CSN and advise the referrer of the outcome within **five business days**.

The CSN Suitability Checker will be completed within **one business day** of the referral **interaction** if an escalated or urgent circumstance referral has been undertaken for the participant at a Director or above level (Area Manager level or above for Partners in the Community). An escalated or urgent circumstance referral is categorised as **Extreme** under the [Escalation Prioritisation Matrix](#). An escalation request can be via email to the CSN Operations team at [CSN@ndis.gov.au](mailto:CSN@ndis.gov.au)

The CSN Referral Interaction is acknowledged by CSN Operations and the **Referral for Assessment Interaction** is updated by the assigned CSN Operations Team Member.

Once the CSN Suitability Checker is completed, CSN Operations upload the Form as an **inbound document** in the System under the Document Title: **CSNP Suitability Checker DD.MM.YYYY – SUITABLE/NOT SUITABLE for CSN– Participant Name – NDIS#**

A new open **interaction** is created by CSN Operations and assigned to the Referrer with the **outcome** of the CSN Assessment.

- If the participant **does not meet suitability** for CSN, the participant will remain in their current pathway and Planning will continue with National Delivery or Partner in the Community.
- If the participant is **suitable** for CSN, the CSN Operations Team will update the participant's stream to Complex. The CSN Branch will take over the planning process when a CSN Planner is aligned to the participant.
- If the participant enters CSN from an **escalation or urgent circumstance** request, the CSN Branch may organise a warm handover with the staff familiar with the participant's circumstances prior to taking over the planning process.

**Note:** The streaming value Complex is **only for use by the CSN Branch** and the decision to give a participant the streaming value of Complex can only be made by CSN Operations Delegates.

## 2.5 Reviewing a Suitability Decision

If you are not satisfied with the CSN Suitability Assessment Outcome and would like to discuss the decision, please send an email to [csn@ndis.gov.au](mailto:csn@ndis.gov.au) advising the participant's name and NDIS number. A CSN Operations team member will contact you to discuss the outcome within **two business days**.

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### 3. Related procedures or resources

- [Escalation Prioritisation Matrix](#)
- [Standard Operating Procedure - Complete the CSN Referral Form](#)
- [CSN Referral for Assessment Form](#)
- [Practice Guide - Positive Behaviour Support and Behaviours of Concern](#)
- [Work Instructions - How to refer a participant to CSN through PACE](#)

### 4. Feedback

If you have any feedback about this Standard Operating Procedure, please email [operations.csn@ndis.gov.au](mailto:operations.csn@ndis.gov.au)



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## 5. Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	CRG 656	Class 1 Approval  Guidance updated to highlight that young people at risk of entry into an aged care facility should be referred to Complex Support Needs Pathway and that children in voluntary or statutory out of home care, and children at risk of requiring accommodation outside the family home should be referred to CSN.	APPROVED	2020-07-23
2.0	JC0075	Changes to wording following SD&P review by MBM48. Class One approval obtained.	APPROVED	2019-05-22
3.0	P19702	Content from CSNB and reviewed by AV0006 and AH0030. Endorsement provided by MP0027.  Updates to the template, referral process, workflow diagram and accompanying accessible text.  Class 3 approval	APPROVED	2019-11-27
4.0	JS0082	Class 1 Approval	APPROVED	2019-12-16
5.0	CWO032 CAN031 and CF0034	Class Two Approved  Updates to the template to support the newly established exceptionally complex support needs program, and interlink processes with Service Delivery and CSN branch.  CSN Endorsement	APPROVED	2020-01-03

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Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
6.0	CS0074	Class 1 Approval New guidance that homelessness is a situational factor indicating complex support needs. Updated CSN Specialised Planner to CSN Planner and added additional situational factor added – at risk of entering aged care.	APPROVED	2020-03-17
7.0	KN0014	Class 1 Approval Inclusion of complex streaming process and information. Replaced Service Delivery with National Delivery.	APPROVED	2020-03-25
8.0	CRG656	Class 1 Approval Guidance updated to highlight that young people at risk of entry into an aged care facility should be referred to Complex Support Needs Pathway and that children in voluntary or statutory out of home care, and children at risk of requiring accommodation outside the family home should be referred to CSN.	APPROVED	2020-07-23
9.0	JS0052	Class 2 Approval Updated to reflect CSN Review Changes to Referral Form and prerequisites for entry.	APPROVED	2022-09-12
10.0	JS0052	Class 2 Approval	APPROVED	2023-07-15

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