

# A GUIDE TO SEEKING RECOMMENDATIONS





**Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability Queensland (DSIDQ) often gets asked to recommend the best medical provider, allied health professional, NDIS service provider and other professionals in the disability space. Unfortunately, DSQ are unable to provide recommendations to particular services/professionals. This is because we are required to maintain an unbiased position in the sector. We thought it might be helpful to put together a few tips on how to find what you are looking for.**

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## **What type of service are you seeking?**

There are lots of different services and professionals out there, so the options can be overwhelming when deciding which to go with. Focus on what the priority is and start looking into what services are available locally to you. Some of the other things to consider when exploring options for services and professionals could be: how long the waiting times are, whether they offer a range of different delivery methods (online, face to face, mobile), what experience and skills they have and whether the provider is a good fit for the person they will be working with.

## **Are you willing to travel?**

Sometimes there are long waiting lists due to high demand. It may be worth looking into options that may be a little further out if it means that you are able to access the service/professional sooner.

### **Ask the community.**

DSIDQ can assist with connecting you in with your peers via our Facebook group. This group may be able to suggest some providers that they have linked in with in their local area and share the experiences they have had – both good and bad! Remember that each person's needs and expectations of providers are different, so bear that in mind when seeking and accepting recommendations.



## Ask lots of questions.

It is important once you have shortlisted a few services, that you ask to book in a meeting to ask any questions you have before committing. Some of the questions you could ask may be:

- What type of skills and experience does the individual/team have?
- What would the support look like in a group/individual setting?
- Can the person bring their own support worker?
- What are the costs involved for the person to participate?
- Are we able to organise to come and visit to see whether it is something that the individual will enjoy?


Doing some research on the organisation can be helpful too – Google and Facebook can be helpful places to look for reviews.

Having the person with intellectual disability involved in this process can be valuable, as they will be able to guide some of those decisions.



**TIP:** Make sure that you find out if the service you are trying to access can be claimed under your NDIS funds (if this is your wish). **REMEMBER** any NDIS funds you spend must relate directly to the goals that are in the NDIS plan. Not all services can be claimed in your plan, even if provided by a NDIS provider.

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**Do I need a service/professional that has specific skills and experiences working with people with an intellectual disability or Down syndrome?**

DSIDQ often get asked for recommendations on services/professionals that have specific skills and experiences working with people with intellectual disability. However, having these skills and experiences may not necessarily be beneficial. It may be hard to gauge from 1-2 meetings with the service/professional whether they are going to be good, but some of the qualities to look out for would be in the interactions they have with the individual:

- Do they have great listening skills?
- Are they communicating respectfully and directly with the person, not the carer or supporter?
- Do they give the person enough time to process the information and respond?
- Do they know when to step in and step away with support for the person?
- Do they have the ability to problem solve with the person?
- Are they open to listening and learning about the needs of the person they are supporting rather than relying solely on their knowledge of intellectual disability/Down syndrome?



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## Where else can I find recommendations?

**Peers:** Your peers are the best people to seek recommendations from as they are the people using the services, having the experiences and can sometimes have an idea of which provider may be taking new clients. An easy way to ask for recommendations is in Facebook groups you have access to. If you need a group to ask, DSIDQ has a family support group you can access as a parent or carer located here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/126096520879509>

### Local Area Coordinators

LACs in your area may also be able to assist you in finding the right supports. You can search for a local LAC via the link here:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/locations>

### Find a registered provider

NDIA website provides some information on how to look for a registered provider in your area and what you should look for. You can access the link here:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers/find-registered-provider>

### Disability Support Guide

The Disability Support Guide is an online register of service providers that you can access for free via the following link:

<https://www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au/>

### Disability Gateway

Helps Australian's with disability and their supporters access trusted information and connect to services in their area.

<https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/>