On this page:

- Download the research report
- What we did
- What we learnt:
- What we will do with the research findings

The NDIA have completed a research project and wrote a report called ‘From ADEs to open employment research’.

We wanted to know how NDIS participants working in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) are supported to change their employment type if this is what they want. ADEs are also called supported employment services.

Download the research report

From ADEs to open employment report

- From ADEs to open employment Report (DOCX 1.2MB)
- From ADEs to open employment Report (PDF1.1MB)

The report summary

- From ADEs to open employment Report Summary (DOCX 52KB)
- From ADEs to open employment Report Summary (PDF 241KB)

Easy Read version

- From ADEs to open employment Easy Read (DOCX 63 KB)
- From ADEs to open employment Easy Read (PDF 6.1MB)

What we did

The Evidence and Practice Leadership Branch conducted research to understand how NDIS participants working in supported employment services (for example Australian Disability Enterprises) who want to move to open employment are supported to transition.

Three NDIS participants with experience working in an ADE took part in this research as research consultants. They made sure the research asked relevant questions and had meaningful findings for NDIS participants with high support needs, their employers, and the disability sector.

The research focused on adult NDIS participants who:

- have an intellectual disability (including Down syndrome) because they are the most represented disabilities working in ADEs
- requires support at work or job customisation
- have worked, or currently work in an ADE

We did this research by listening to people with disability, their families, open employers, ADE providers and the broader disability sector.

We used data from:

- Interviews and focus groups (45 research participants)
- Survey responses (116 research participants)
- NDIS administrative data (16,369 NDIS participants)

We analysed the data using standard research methods and then combined the data to get a good understanding of the key themes coming out of the research.

What we learnt:

The research told us that the NDIS, other government departments, and family and mainstream supports can do the following.

Build employment goals early:

- Introducing employment goals while participants are at school.
- Including participants' family and carers in planning conversations about employment to bring them on the journey.
- Including School Leavers Employment Supports (SLES) or other employment capacity building supports in plans at the right time.
- Considering further education and training options when planning for post school activities.

Build participant knowledge and understanding:

- Employment options including microenterprises.
- Independence in the community and financial literacy.
- Workplace expectations and rights.
- NDIS funded and mainstream employment supports.

Gain open employment experience:

- Gaining work experience in open employment while at school.
- Gaining after-school work in open employment settings.
- Building the capacity of open employers to enable open employment opportunities.
- Building participant confidence in their employment potential.

Build abilities of supported employment services:

- Provide work experience in mainstream or community-facing settings.
- Directly hire supported employees in open employment positions.

- Develop partnerships with open employers and local Disability Employment Services (DES).
- Educate employers about participant needs through on the job support to both employers and participants.

- Use job customisation to support transitions to open employment.
- Give on-going on the job support to maintain open employment.

What we will do with the research findings

We will use these findings to inform future policies and projects to improve employment outcomes for people with disability.

We will also make sure we co-design these improvements with participants and the disability community.

Information on employment and the NDIS is available on our website.

To find out more about this research, you can email our research team at Research@ndis.gov.au