**Choosing your Third Party Verification Body**

**Background**

In order to undertake verification against the NSW Disability Services Standards (NSW DSS), you will need to choose and engage a third party verification (TPV) body. A TPV body is an organisation that undertakes independent verification against the requirements of the NSW DSS. The TPV body will be contracted by your organisation to undertake the on-site verification activity. In some cases, if you already have accreditation or certification against other industry standards you may also be able to engage them to conduct a gap assessment against the NSW DSS. 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.

Third party verifiers or certifying bodies for NSW DSS and comparable standards must be accredited either by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) or the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua).

National Disability Services (NSW) holds a list of third party verification bodies who can conduct TPV against the NSW DSS at the [Industry Development Fund – Quality Resource List](http://idfnsw.org.au/images/TPV-Profiles-April-2017.pdf). This list includes TPV bodies who have met the criteria set by NDS to be listed and who have agreed to the operating guidelines.

TPV bodies are required to have systems and processes in place to ensure that they are able to carry out the verification. 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.

**For FaCS/ADHC funded service providers who 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 the Home Care standards. This means the TPV process should be shorter and less involved than verification against the full NSW DSS. You will need to identify that you are certified against the Home Care Standards when seeking a quote from a TPV.

**Questions to ask TPV bodies**

* What are the full costs you will be required to pay to the verification body?
* How do the costs of the TPV's services compare? You should compare the quotes from at least two TPV bodies. Make sure you are aware of what is included and excluded in the quote.
* What experience has the TPV body in the assessment of disability services, and what is its understanding of the disability sector and the NSW Disability Services Standards? Have they had experience in working with similar providers eg: providers who work with similar clients or customers e.g. people with an intellectual disability or early childhood intervention. Can they provide references?
* What experience do their verification team members have, in working with people with disability, for example what are their strategies and approaches to communicating with people with disability?
* What approaches does the TPV have for 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 costs?
* 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?