Disability Services National Minimum Data Set 2014-15; Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
Synonymous names:	DS NMDS DQS
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Data quality

Data quality statement summary:

- All states and territories and the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) ('the jurisdictions') collect data on the disability support services provided under the National Disability Agreement (NDA).
- The AIHW compiles the annual Disability Services National Minimum Data Set (DS NMDS) from the information supplied by the jurisdictions.
- Services provided under the NDA vary between jurisdictions.
- The counts of service users depend on the accuracy of the statistical linkage key. This varies by jurisdiction and year.
- While every effort is made to incorporate responses from all service type outlets provided under the NDA, each year a small number are not included. This varies by jurisdiction and year.
- Some outlets do not report on all service users, due to administration or other errors, and it is not possible to accurately estimate the number of service users who may be missing from the data as a result. This varies by jurisdiction and year.
- Non-response rates to data items vary by jurisdiction and year.

Institutional environment:

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government under the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. It is an independent statutory authority established in 1987, governed by a management Board, and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health Portfolio.

The AIHW aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians through better health and welfare information and statistics. It collects and reports information on a wide range of topics and issues, ranging from health and welfare expenditure, hospitals, disease and injury, and mental health, to ageing, homelessness, disability and child protection.

The Institute also plays a role in developing and maintaining national metadata standards. This work contributes to improving the quality and consistency of national health and welfare statistics. The Institute works closely with governments and non-government organisations to achieve greater adherence to these standards in administrative data collections to promote national consistency and comparability of data and reporting.

One of the main functions of the AIHW is to work with the states and territories to improve the quality of administrative data and, where possible, to compile national datasets based on data from each jurisdiction, to analyse these datasets and disseminate information and statistics.

The *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987*, in conjunction with compliance to the *Privacy Act 1988*, ensures that the data collections managed by the AIHW are kept securely and under the strictest conditions with respect to privacy and confidentiality.

For further information see the AIHW website www.aihw.gov.au.

The AIHW has been maintaining a minimum data set on disability support services since 1994, firstly as a snapshot collection and then from 2003–04 as an annual collection. The AIHW receives, compiles, edits and verifies the DS NMDS data in collaboration with jurisdictions, which retain ownership of the jurisdicitional level data and must approve any jurisdictional level output before it is released.

Timeliness:

The publication *Disability Support Services*and associated online data cubes are released annually. The current version of the DS NMDS contains data on disability support services provided under the NDA in 2014–15.

The DS NMDS cannot be compiled for a given year until each jurisdiction is able to supply and sign-off data for that year. Sign-off of jurisdictional data submissions is due by the December following the end of the collection period. Data are required to be released by the end of the following June. In 2014–15, the last jurisdictional data submission was received 8 January 2016 and the final jurisdiction gave sign-off 15 January 2016.

The AIHW has been reporting on disability support services collected under the various iterations of the national disability agreements since 1994.

Accessibility:

The AIHW website provides disability support services data which can be downloaded free of charge. Numerous reports, including the annual *Disability Support Services* bulletin, are published and are available on the AIHW website where they can be downloaded without charge. Additional disaggregation of data may be requested via a customised data request. The length of time it takes to complete a request depends on several factors and a charge might apply to recover costs. General enquiries about AIHW publications can be made to the Digital and Media Communications Unit on (02) 6244 1032 or via email to info@aihw.gov.au.

Interpretability:

Information on the DS NMDS is available on the AIHW website. This includes the DS NMDS collection materials.

The main counts of the DS NMDS collection are service users and service type outlets. A service type outlet is a statistical counting unit of an agency that provides a particular NDA service type at, or from, a discrete location. Data are collected, usually by agencies, for each service type outlet.

Data on service users are collected against the service types (service type outlets) over the collection period. Note that service user data are not collected in relation to two of the seven service groups—'advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication' and 'other support'. Further, the level of information required to be collected varies according to the particular service type. For more information on what information is collected against each service type as well as a description of each service type, see the associated METeOR entry or the DS NMDS data guide.

The scope of services included in the DS NMDS can vary in terms of the programs that are provided under the NDA across jurisdictions as well as in what programs are included in the data collection (see 'Coherence' for further details).

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was launched in trial sites from 1 July 2013. It is expected that many NDA service users will transition to the NDIS and hence exit from the DS NMDS collection over time. This affects data from 2013-14 onwards. Some service type outlets may be less responsive because of the complexities associated with the changeover to the NDIS.

Relevance:

All states and territories and the Australian Government supply data on the disability services provided under the NDA to the AIHW annually. These are compiled into the DS NMDS.

The publication *Disability Support Services* and associated online data cubes are released annually. The present version of the DS NMDS contains data on disability support services provided under the NDA in 2014–15.

The DS NMDS is highly relevant for reporting on the use of disability support services under the NDA. The data are used for many purposes, including by policy-makers to evaluate and plan disability programs.

The DS NMDS also contains a statistical linkage key for each service user. This enables researchers to link their database to the DS NMDS (noting that such data linkage can only be done after receiving approvals from various ethics committees).

Metadata information for the DS NMDS are published in METeOR, and the DS NMDS data guide.

Accuracy:

Each year, when all the jurisdictions' data are compiled into the DS NMDS, a national validation and data linkage process is undertaken.

To form service user counts, a statistical linkage key is used. The statistical linkage key enables the number of service users to be estimated from data collected from service type outlets and agencies. During any given financial year, a service user can receive services from:

- more than one service type outlet
- more than one agency
- multiple jurisdictions—across state/territory borders, and/or a combination of Australian Government and state/territory services.

In each of these cases, service user counts can be estimated by using the statistical linkage key. All counts of the number of service users depend on the accuracy of the statistical linkage key. A linkage key is considered to be invalid if any, or all, parts of the key are missing (excluding sex). To link records within the DS NMDS, the statistical linkage key components of each record for a service received are compared electronically with the statistical linkage key components of all other records. Records that have matching statistical linkage keys are assumed to belong to the same individual service user and are linked.

As with all collections that use a statistical linkage key to identify service users, a small degree of mis-identification is expected. That is, because the statistical linkage key is not a unique identifier, there is a small probability that some of the linked records do not belong to the same individual, and, conversely, that some records that did not link do belong to the same individual. Records with missing or invalid statistical linkage keys cannot be linked to other records, and so must be treated as belonging to separate individual service users. This might result in the number of service users being slightly overestimated.

Service type outlet and service user participation rates, as well as the response rates to various data items, need to be considered when interpreting data. These vary across years and jurisdictions. Data can be considered more reliable as participation and response rates increase.

Jurisdictions report their service type outlet participation rates—the number of outlets that contributed to the DS NMDS collection compared with the total number of outlets in the jurisdiction. While every effort is made to incorporate responses from all service type outlets provided under the NDA, each year a small number are not included.

Likewise, it is recognised that some outlets do not report on all service users, due to administration or other errors, and it is not possible to accurately estimate the number of service users who might be missing from the data as a result. Some service type outlets have a large number of service users who have minimal contact, such as information and referral services. These service types are not required to submit service user information to the DS NMDS, and, as a result, users of these services are not included in totals. All service type outlets are required to estimate the number of service users they helped over the year; however, analysis of these estimates and comparison with jurisdictional reports indicate that such estimations can be of poor quality.

Non-response rates to data items can vary across jurisdictions and years. High levels of non-response reduce the validity and reliability of data, and items with high proportions should be considered with care, especially when comparing data across jurisdictions and collection years. These generally occur when a service user or service type outlet does not provide/collect information on a service user, or when information cannot be derived by statistical linkage processes. In some instances, particular service types are not required to submit data for all measures.

Tabular information on the response rates, participation rates, and the validity and completeness of the statistical linkage key are provided in the supplementary tables to the annual DS NMDS bulletins.

Coherence: DS NMDS data are reported and published annually by the AIHW.

The scope of services vary in terms of the programs that are provided under the NDA across jurisdictions. For example:

- in most jurisdictions, specific mental health services are provided under health, rather than disability, portfolios. However, in Victoria and Queensland, specialist psychiatric disability services are included under the NDA
- early intervention services for children with disability, fall within the disability support system in some states but are administered under the education portfolio in others.

The scope of services also vary in terms of what programs are included in the data collection. In particular, from 2012–13, the Northern Territory DS NMDS data includes people using Basic Community Care services. Other jurisdictional data does not.

There is also variation in how programs are classified in the DS NMDS. For example residential rehabilitation services within Victoria's psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support sector (PDRSS) are classified by Victoria as non-residential accommodation support services in the DS NMDS, rather than as residential accommodation support services.

Service type outlet and service user participation rates as well as the response rates to various data items vary across years and jurisdictions (see 'Accuracy' for further detail).

While there have been some changes in the collection over the years, some meaningful comparisons can be made over time, particularly from 2007–08 onwards.

Some major changes to the collection over time include:

- changes in collection period/method—from 1994 to 2002, data were collected under the Commonwealth State Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set (CSDA MDS) which was run as a 'snapshot' collection. Data from the snapshot collections are not strictly comparable to that from the annual data collections (the CSTDA NMDS for 2003–04 to 2008–09 and the DS NMDS from 2009–10 onwards)
- changes to service type codes—
  - from 1 October 2008, targeted support services (5.04) previously delivered by the Australian Government and included in the service group 'employment services' were transferred to state/territory governments and are now distributed across various state and territory service type codes
  - the use of a combined open and supported employment service code (5.03) was discontinued on 1 December 2004
- changes to linkage processes to estimate service user counts occurred in 2007–08. For more information see Chapter 1 in *Disability support services 2008–09*
- the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was launched in trial sites from 1 July 2013. It is expected that many NDA service users will transition to the NDIS and hence exit from the DS NMDS collection over time. This affects data from 2013-14 onwards. See associated DS NMDS bulletins and supplementary tables for more information.

Data products

Implementation start date: 01/07/2014

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: AIHW

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes Disability Services National Minimum Data Set (DS NMDS) - Data Quality Statement
AIHW Data Quality Statements, Superseded 15/04/2020

Has been superseded by Disability Services National Minimum Data Set 2015-16; Quality Statement
AIHW Data Quality Statements, Superseded 04/06/2018