WHAT IS THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)?

The NDIS is a major social reform offering a new way of providing support and services for people living with disability or significant impairment under the age of 65.

WHAT IS THE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL’S ROLE?

As a health care professional, you may be asked by one of your patients to assist them to complete the Supporting Evidence section of an Access Request Form. The Access Request Form is the first form they need to complete to determine their eligibility for entry into the NDIS, and can have a major impact on the level of support they can receive from the NDIS.

WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU NEED TO SUPPLY?

You will need to provide information relating to your patient’s primary disability (the disability that has the greatest impact on their life), as well as any other disabilities that affect them. Providing copies of reports or assessments which illustrate your patient’s level of functional impairment is also paramount. Given the fluctuating nature of multiple sclerosis, we encourage you to make your recommendation and supporting evidence based on your patient’s worst day managing their multiple sclerosis symptoms.

The NDIS wants to know how someone’s disability results in substantial function impairment in six key areas.

- **Mobility** – their ability to walk around the home and community; do they have home modifications, use walking sticks or other mobility aids, does their fatigue or lower body strength limit their ability to walk any distance before needing to rest, is their balance or strength compromised, do they experience tremor or spasticity, are they affected by heat intolerance, do they need a physiotherapy assessment to build their strength and mobility?

- **Communication** – their ability to speak and write, and whether they can express their needs adequately; do they have trouble with their speech or finding the right words in conversation?

- **Social interaction** – their ability to interact within the local community. This section also includes the ability to manage emotions and make and keep friends. Questions to ask include are they socially isolated because of the disease? Do symptoms such as fatigue, cognition, heat intolerance or incontinence limit their ability to maintain family and community connections?

- **Learning** - their ability to remember, learn and practice new skills. Is their cognition affected by multiple sclerosis?

- **Self-care** – their ability to be independent for example in terms of showering, getting dressed, eating and caring for their own health. Some questions to ask; do they have continence issues and therefore need a continence assessment or equipment, do they have difficulty swallowing, are they able to clean their home, prepare and cook meals, look after other family members?

- **Self-management** - their ability to make decisions, manage their own finances and remember to complete everyday tasks such as paying bills or getting to appointments.

- If you have any questions call **MS Connect** on 1800 042 138 or email msconnect@ms.org.au