

# 5 Data item history and development

## 5.1 Possible data items for the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS

The CSTDA NMDS redevelopment project plan included a 'short list' of data items to be investigated for the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS. This 'short list' had been prepared by the AIHW following the preliminary redevelopment work in 1999, including the work on indicators for costs, outputs and outcomes. The 'short list' thus reflected the articulation by Disability Administrators across the country of what their key information needs were.

This chapter presents each of these initially proposed data items and details:

- whether they were included in the final CSTDA NMDS;
- for those that were excluded, when and why they were excluded from the final CSTDA NMDS; and
- any variations or major issues that arose for each data item during their testing and refinement.

The following sections present the final CSTDA NMDS data items according to whether they are 'service type outlet' data items (Section 5.2), 'service user' data items (Section 5.3), or 'services received' data items (Section 5.4). The final data items are presented in the same order as they appear in Table 2.1.

Further detail on a number of special data development areas is included in Chapter 8 (e.g. organisational units, support needs, and individual participation).

From August 2001 it was agreed by Disability Administrators that the terms 'client' and 'consumer' should be replaced with the more generic term 'service user' in all CSTDA NMDS documentation. The terms 'service type outlet' and 'funded agency' were agreed in late 2001.

## 5.2 Service type outlet data items

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Funded agency ID	Unique agency identifier	Concept included from Round 1 field testing onwards. Early discussion focused on the purpose of unique agency identifiers (i.e. whether the identifiers would be unique at a national level, unique within jurisdictions, or unique to the CSTDA funding sector). Development benefited from the work conducted for the Data Transmission Strategy. See Chapter 8 on organisational units for further details.
Service type outlet ID*	–	Concept included from Round 1 field testing onwards. Early discussion focused on the purpose of unique service type outlet identifiers (i.e. whether the identifiers would be unique at an agency level, a national level, unique within jurisdictions, or simply unique to the CSTDA funding sector). Development benefited from the work conducted for the Data Transmission Strategy. See Chapter 8 on organisational units for further details.
Service type*	Service provided	Included from Round 1 field testing. The definition and classification of ‘Service type’ also relate to work on indicators (i.e. in relation to outputs and outcomes). Initially there was discussion about classifying each service type delivered rather than each funded service type. See Chapter 8 on service type for further details.
Service type outlet postcode*	Location of agency/outlet	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Service type outlet SLA		Included from Round 1 field testing onwards. This item is provided by jurisdictions, based on address details of service type outlets. It was agreed that all jurisdictions would aim to provide this data item over time.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Funding jurisdiction*	Funding source category	<p>Funding source category was excluded from Round 1 field testing onwards. Funding source category would have collected information about whether funding was from CSTDA, HACC or other sources. However, it was considered that the funding source category may vary for service users for different service events. As the new collection would not be designed to support reporting of service events, funding source category was excluded.</p> <p>Funding jurisdiction was included from Round 1 field testing onwards.</p>
Agency sector*	Agency sector	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
CSTDA funding*	Provision of funding	Included from Round 1 field testing. This item is generally provided by jurisdictions rather than service type outlets. The goal is for funding to be provided for every funded service type (i.e. service type outlet).
Full financial year operation*	Whether operated for full financial year	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Weeks per year of operation*	–	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Days per week of operation*	–	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Hours per day of operation*	–	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Staff hours (reference week)*	Staff profile	A measure of staff hours was included from Round 1 field testing onwards (and has been included in the CSTDA MDS snapshot collection since its inception). Following Round 3 field testing it was agreed to include the two data items 'Staff hours (reference week)' and 'Staff hours (typical week)'.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Staff hours (typical week)	–	A measure of staff hours was included from Round 1 field testing onwards (and has been included in the CSTDA MDS snapshot collection since its inception). There was discussion of the most appropriate counting methods (e.g the interest of some jurisdictions in information about total hours over the reporting period, the difficulty experienced by agencies in estimating staff hours per CSTDA service type, the issue of direct vs indirect staff hours). Following Round 3 field testing it was agreed to include the two data items ‘Staff hours (reference week)’ and ‘Staff hours (typical week)’. ‘Staff hours (typical week)’ enables agencies to indicate that the reference week staffing profile may not be typical. This method also follows accepted survey principles. That is, more accurate data will be provided by asking agencies about an immediate period than by asking agencies to calculate an average over a whole reporting period. Even though the week preceding data collection may not be typical for all agencies, over the CSTDA agency population better averages will be available.
Number of service users*	–	Included from Round 3 field testing onwards. A key purpose of collecting this data item is to enable an estimation of the number of service users who ‘opt out’ of the CSTDA NMDS.
–	Agency role (funder, provider, purchaser, broker)	Refer to ‘Individual funding status’ and ‘Service type outlet ID’, ‘Funded agency ID’.
–	Care coordinator	Initially listed for consideration but dropped following the November 1999 AIHW –DSSC workshop.
–	Receipt of funding	Excluded following Indicators Workshop, where it was suggested that individual service event information would not be required in the redeveloped collection.
–	Capacity (of service type outlets/funded agencies, e.g. places)	This item was excluded following the Indicators Workshop as it was agreed that capacity was not an appropriate output indicator. The Victorian and Queensland 2000 snapshots also trialed this data item with little success.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
–	Location of service event	Excluded from Round 1 field testing onwards. This information is considered too onerous to collect. In addition, following the Indicators Workshop it was agreed that service event information would not be required from the redeveloped data collection (i.e. the collection would not be event-based).
–	Organisational level	The organisational level is identifiable at the service type outlet and funded agency level by using 'Service type outlet ID' and 'Funded agency ID'. Organisational levels are reflected in the data model that underpins all collection materials, particularly the Data Transmission and Technical Guide. See Chapter 8 on organisational units for further details.

\* Data item included in the existing CSDA MDS.

## 5.3 Service user data items

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Record ID*	–	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Letters of surname *	Statistical linkage key	Second, third and fifth 'Letters of surname' for statistical linkage key. Placed before 'Letters of given name' to align with the HACC MDS.
Letters of given name*	Statistical linkage key	Second and third 'Letters of given name' for statistical linkage key. Placed after 'Letters of surname' to align with the HACC MDS.
Date of birth*	Age (date of birth)	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Birth date estimate flag	–	Included from Round 2 field testing onwards to resolve issues around missing parts of 'Date of birth'. The flag enables an estimation of age and enables analysts to distinguish actual from estimated dates of birth.
Sex*	Sex	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Indigenous origin*	Indigenous status	Amended from Round 3 field testing onwards to adhere to ABS and NCSDDv2.0 standards for collection. These standards state that the response option for 'Not stated' should not appear on any primary data collection material.
Country of birth*	Country of birth	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Interpreter services required		Introduced from Round 3 field testing onwards.
Communication method*	Method of communication	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Living arrangements*	Living arrangements	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards. Proposals by some FIG members to include additional information on whether or not service users were able to choose their own house mates, and whether or not they live with other people with a disability, were not supported by the NDA.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Service user postcode	Location of client	Included from Round 3 field testing onwards. Collection of further geographic detail (e.g. suburb, town, etc.) was considered for Round 2 field testing but excluded due to its sensitive nature.
Residential setting*	Type of accommodation	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards. The data response options relating to tenure (i.e. owner, renter, etc.) were removed following Round 3 field testing. There was considerable discussion about the definition of domestic scale dwelling. It was agreed that a maximum of six people indicated a domestic scale dwelling such as a group home.
Primary disability group*	Disability grouping	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Other significant disability group*		Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Support needs*	Activity limitation (support needs)	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards. See Chapter 8 on support needs for further details.
Carer – existence of	Carer – existence of	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Carer – residency status	Carer – co-resident status	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Carer – primary status	–	Included from Round 2 field testing onwards. This data item enables information collected about informal carers to be related to population data collected by the ABS.
Carer – relationship to service user	–	Included from Round 2 field testing onwards as a result of AIHW work on service level outcome indicators. Although there was resistance from some service providers there was considerable interest in this data item from service users and administrators (e.g. funding directed to ageing carers) and it was agreed that the inclusion of this item would significantly enhance the outcome information available from the collection.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Carer – age group	–	Included from Round 2 field testing onwards as a result of AIHW work on service level outcome indicators. Although there was resistance from some service providers there was considerable interest in this data item from service users and administrators (e.g. funding directed to ageing carers) and it was agreed that the inclusion of this item would significantly enhance the outcome information available from the collection.
Receipt of Carer Allowance (Child)*	Main income source	Following Round 3 field testing, the data item ‘Main income source’ was more clearly split into two separate data items (compared to existing CSDA MDS question). ‘Receipt of Carer Allowance (Child)’ is asked of service users aged under 16 years. ‘Main source of income’ is asked of service users aged 16 years and over.
Labour force status	Labour force status	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Main source of income*	Main income source	Following Round 3 field testing, the data item ‘Main income source’ was more clearly split into two separate data items (compared to existing CSDA MDS question). ‘Main source of income’ is asked of service users aged 16 years and over. ‘Receipt of Carer Allowance (Child)’ is asked of service users aged under 16 years.
Individual funding status	–	Included from Round 2 field testing onwards. This item was initially included partly as individual outcome indicator. Following Round 2 field testing it was agreed that this data item should not be used for this purpose. It is included to enable an examination of, for example: what types of services individualised funding is being used to purchase; how service users with individualised funding differ from other service users (e.g. in terms of disability group, support needs, age, etc.); and trends in the use of individualised funding over time.
–	Status in employment	Excluded from Round 2 field testing onwards as this data item was only considered relevant to Commonwealth employment services.
–	Full-time/part-time employment status	Excluded from Round 2 field testing onwards as this data item was only considered relevant to Commonwealth employment services.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
—	Main language spoken at home	<p>Excluded from Round 3 field testing onwards. In 2001, the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee on Multicultural Affairs (a committee managed by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) produced <i>The Guide: Implementing the Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity</i>. This Guide notes that there are four Minimum Core Set variables recommended by the ABS in order to collect consistent, comparable and accurate information on cultural and language diversity in Australia (Country of Birth of Person, Main Language Other Than English Spoken At Home, Proficiency in Spoken English, Indigenous Status). Not every variable is relevant to every data collection system. The Guide noted that one practical means of generating aggregate information about users and potential users of government services is to use the English Proficiency (EP) Country Groups, developed by DIMA (1996). EP Country Groups were developed based on two of the four Minimum Core Set variables (Country of Birth of Person and Proficiency in Spoken English). People can be assigned to an EP Country Group on the basis of the variable Country of Birth of Person. NDA therefore agreed to exclude the variables Main Language Other Than English Spoken At Home and Proficiency in Spoken English. It was also agreed to include a question to reflect whether or not a service user requires interpreter services.</p>
—	Proficiency in spoken English	<p>Excluded from all field testing, see 'Main language spoken at home'.</p>
—	Who assessed support needs	<p>Excluded from Round 2 field testing onwards. There was inadequate demand for national data given the extra burden on data providers and the current assessment framework in which they operate, agency record management practices and data development in this area. A data item to record assessment type was also considered but excluded from testing for the above reasons.</p>
—	Date of last assessment	<p>Excluded from Round 2 field testing onwards. There was inadequate demand for national data given the extra burden on data providers and the current assessment framework in which they operate, agency record management practices and data development in this area.</p>

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
–	Participation restriction	Excluded from Round 3 field testing onwards. It was agreed that further development should be undertaken (outside the redevelopment project timeline) to develop and introduce the concept of a participation module for use by service providers and jurisdictions at various stages of normal service administration. See Chapter 8 on indicators for further details.
–	Impairment/condition /diagnosis	Excluded from Round 2 field testing onwards. Data items ‘body structure’, ‘body functions’ and ‘impairment extent’ were considered for inclusion. However, there was inadequate demand for national data given the extra burden on data providers and the current assessment framework in which they operate, agency record management practices and data development in this area. A data item for ‘Health condition/diagnosis’ was also considered but did not proceed to Round 2 field testing. ‘Health condition/diagnosis’ was considered too complex, unreliable and irrelevant in the CSTDA NMDS context. The concept for ‘health condition’ is also reflected in the data element for ‘disability group’.
–	Unmet needs	Excluded from Round 3 field testing onwards. It was agreed following Round 2 field testing that the CSTDA NMDS did not appear to be an appropriate vehicle for collecting this information, particularly given the lack of shared assessment and eligibility procedures across and within jurisdictions. There was scepticism about the value of the data that would result from the proposed unmet need question. The NDA acknowledged the value in improving understanding of unmet need for disability services.
–	Critical needs	Initially listed for consideration but dropped following the November 1999 AIHW-DSSC workshop.
–	Household structure	Initially listed for consideration but dropped following the November 1999 AIHW-DSSC workshop.
–	Family	Initially listed for consideration but dropped following the November 1999 AIHW-DSSC workshop.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
-	-	<p>Environmental/equipment modification flag</p> <p>Following the Indicators Workshop it was agreed to trial an 'environmental/equipment modification flag' in Round 2 field testing. The basis for its inclusion was that equipment is often provided as a part of services such as early childhood intervention, therapy, etc. It was suggested that there could be a 'flag' to indicate whether the consumer received equipment or environmental modifications that cost more than a specified amount (e.g. \$100), paid for by CSDA funding allocated to that provider. This could be included as a 'tick box' on the consumer form and would apply to all service types. The information provided by such a 'flag' might help explain why some consumers receive very few hours of service (i.e. assistance for some is mainly in the form of equipment/modifications).</p> <p>Excluded following Round 2 field testing because the complexities of asking for this information were considered to outweigh the benefits of having national information of this nature. This is considered an important area for further data development and jurisdictions should be encouraged to collect useful information on equipment and environmental modifications.</p>
-	-	<p>Service level outcomes</p> <p>As part of its data development work, the AIHW developed a set of service level outcome indicators. It was agreed that the development of the proposed service level outcome indicators had been a useful exercise in terms of highlighting a number of important data items for inclusion in Round 3 (e.g. reason for cessation of services, carer data items were subsequently included in the CSTDA NMDS). However, official endorsement of the service level outcome indicators was not seen as appropriate or necessary. It was agreed that the service level outcome indicators (e.g. trends over time in community vs other living arrangements, reasons for transition out of CSTDA-funded services) would not be included in any collection documentation. See Chapter 8 on indicators for further details.</p>

\* Data item included in the existing CSDA MDS.

## 5.4 Services received data items

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Service start date	Client entry and exit	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards. Prior to Round 3 field testing it was agreed that agencies would not be required to provide historical data for this item (i.e. all existing clients could be recorded as having the new collection's start date as their service start date). Final collection materials provide agencies with a number of options for recording 'Service start date'.
Date service last received	–	<p>During Round 2 field testing agencies were asked whether they could identify clients who had been 'active' or 'on the books' during a given reporting period. This concept was designed to support the reporting of information about the number of active clients over time (i.e. given that jurisdictions have varying reporting periods, and the national collection is annual). This concept was excluded from Round 3 field testing.</p> <p>'Date service last received' was included from Round 3 field testing onwards. This data item allows 'active' status to be generated according to rules set by jurisdictions and/or nationally. It therefore avoids rigidly defining active status for all service types and reliance on artificial end dates (i.e. requiring service providers to enter a stop date if a service user has not received a service for three months).</p>
Snapshot date flag*	–	Included from Round 3 field testing onwards. This data item is essential to ensure continuity of data interpretation in years 2001, 2002 and 2003, despite the fact that each year's data will be collected on a different basis. It also enables comparability with (trends) data for previous snapshot day collections and an evaluation of the success of the redeveloped collection by, for example, allowing the extent of improvement in data to be documented.
Service exit date	–	Included from Round 1 field testing onwards.
Main reason for cessation of services	–	Included from Round 3 field testing onwards as a result of AIHW work on service level outcome indicators. That is, it was agreed that the inclusion of this item would significantly enhance the outcome information available from the collection.

CSTDA NMDS data item	Shortlist data item	Data item history
Hours received (reference week)	–	Service quantity measures were included from Round 1 field testing and discussed extensively at forums such as the Indicators Workshop. Round 2 field testing explored the possibility of collecting CSDA-funded hours per outlet for a service type or CSDA-funded hours per service user for a service type. It was subsequently agreed to test varied output quantity measures in Round 3 field testing. The proposed output quantity measures varied according to service type (e.g. number of people and duration of support for residential/institution, hours of service per service user for in-home accommodation support, and number of outlets funded for advocacy services). Following Round 3 field testing it was agreed to retain service quantity measures for a restricted set of service types. These service types would be asked about 'Hours received (reference week)' and 'Hours received (typical week)'. See Chapter 8 on indicators for further details.
Hours received (typical week)	–	As above for 'Hours received (reference week)'. This data item was included to enable agencies to indicate that the hours received by a service user in a reference week may not be typical. See Chapter 8 on indicators for further details.
–	Service purchase by client	Initially listed for consideration but dropped following the November 1999 AIHW-DSSC workshop.

\* Data item included in the previous CSDA MDS.