

## NDIS Fact Sheet

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was developed to assist people with significant and permanent disability under the age of 65 years, including their families and carers. The NDIS is about giving funding directly to the person with disability. They will be able to choose what services they want and how, when and where they are provided.

The Commonwealth Parliament passed the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 in March 2013. To learn more about the Act [click here](#). The NDIS is partly funded by an increase in the Medicare levy as well as funding commitments from the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

This level of flexibility, which Australian citizens without disability take for granted, has previously been either extremely limited or unimaginable for those living with disability. This will enable them to move anywhere across the country and be able to take their funded plans with them.

The first stage of the NDIS commenced across various trial sites in July 2013. The NDIS is now being progressively rolled out across Australia. Information about the rollout in South Australia can be found on the NDIS website:

<https://ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/SA.html>

Contact with the NDIA can be via website [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) or 1800 555 677, Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727, for people who need help with English TIS 131 450 or via the telephone on 1800 800 110.

It is anticipated that the full rollout will be completed for some 32,300 eligible South Australian participants by 2019.

### **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)**

The NDIA is responsible for implementing the NDIS. Its responsibilities include:

- Delivering the NDIS including employing NDIS planners who work with the person with disability and their family carers to develop and individualised plan
- Appointing Local Area Coordination (LACs) in various areas who act on behalf of the NDIA and take on the planning role
- Maintaining the responsibility for approving eligibility and individual funding allocation,
- Increasing community awareness of disability
- Ensuring the NDIS is financially sustainable.

## What do these terms mean?

There are a number of terms that are important to understand as you and your family member with disability begin the NDIS journey.

## Checking eligibility by using My Access Checklist

You can find the My Access Checklist from the NDIS website<sup>1</sup>: [click here](#)

To be eligible for the NDIS the person with disability must:

- a) Be an Australian citizen and live in Australia, or a permanent resident or hold a Special Category visa
- b) Live in an area where and when the NDIS becomes available
- c) Provide evidence that they have a permanent and significant disability
- d) Be under 65 years of age at the time they access the NDIS
- e) Do usually **need support** from a person or equipment to do everyday things for yourself because of an **impairment** or **condition**

To find out more information on becoming an eligible participant you can:

- Go to the NDIS website [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)
- Call on **1800 800 110** (8am to 11pm eastern standard time weekdays)
- Email: [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)

**Please note:** The My Access Checklist tool is a guide for your information only and is a way of checking eligibility, it is **not** an Access Request Form to the NDIA.

## Access Request Form

Once the first part of the eligibility process is met, then you can request an Access Request Form from the NDIA. You can do this via email [NAT@ndis.gov.au](mailto:NAT@ndis.gov.au) or via phone on **1800 800 110**.

## 2. Permanent and significant disability

To be eligible for the NDIS, the person must have a disability that is permanent and significantly reduces their ability to function in one or more of the following activities:

- communication
- social interaction
- learning
- mobility
- self-care
- self-management

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ndis.gov.au/ndis-access-checklist.html>

The person's disability can be intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical or a combination of more than one of these.

Examples of disability can include cognitive impairments such as intellectual disability; genetic disorders such as Down Syndrome and autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Other examples include, physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, paraplegia; neurological conditions such as muscular dystrophy, motor neuron disease, multiple sclerosis and stroke.

Other disabilities can include hearing and/or sight impairment, acquired brain injury and younger on-set dementia.

A disability that is likely to vary in intensity or occurs episodically but is expected to continue over a person's lifetime, is considered to be permanent and significant e.g. [psychosocial disability](#)

### 3. Early Intervention

According to the NDIS, early intervention is intended to “*alleviate the impact of a person's impairment, upon their functional capacity by providing support at the earliest possible stage*”.

There are two pathways to early intervention in the NDIS environment.

One of these is the early childhood early intervention pathway or ECEI. The other pathway is early intervention for participants from 7 years of age.

Each pathway is outlined below:

#### a) Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)

The NDIA has appointed Early Childhood Partners to deliver the ECEI approach.

The ECEI caters to children up to six years of age diagnosed with developmental delay in more than one area. Your Early Childhood Partner will tailor support for your child's individual needs.

They may also:

- connect you and your child with the most appropriate supports in your area, such as the community health centre, educational setting and playgroup
- help you to request NDIS access if your child requires longer term early childhood intervention support.

Some of these children will be able to access NDIS funding. The focus will generally be on specific therapies such as physiotherapy, speech pathology and occupational therapy which is aimed at improving a child's functioning capacity.

For some children, at their planning review meeting, the early intervention approach has increased capacity and ability to such an extent that they no longer require an NDIS plan.

For more information visit the NDIS website [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) or [find here](#)<sup>2</sup> or speak with your Early Childhood Partner, a Local Area Coordinator or the NDIA on **1800 800 110**.

#### **b) Early intervention for participants from 7 years of age**

Early intervention is also a term used under the NDIS for any person with disability when there is good evidence that an intervention would improve an area of functioning or delay, or reduce a decline in functioning.

In conjunction with therapies, equipment, aids, specialised and behavioural interventions and home modifications may also be funded.

Similar to the ECEI approach, some participants may at the time of the planning review, may transition from the NDIS due to an increase in their independence and a decrease in their dependency from additional support. In both approaches, a person may re-enter the NDIS at a later stage, if their support needs change or increase.

#### **Steps in the NDIS process**

A person can check their eligibility through the [NDIS Access Check List](#).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/hae/h72/8799577505822/ECEI-How-the-NDIS-can-help-your-child.pdf>

## The NDIS Journey



More information about eligibility and access to the NDIS can be [found here](#). If a person is already receiving support or services from a disability service provider, they can request the provider's support in finding out more about how to access the NDIS.

### 4. Reasonable and necessary supports

The NDIS will fund things that are related to the person's disability that will increase their independence, enhance their quality of life and promote social and economic participation.

Things that the NDIS will pay for include: Assistance with self-care

- Assistance with finding and maintaining employment
- Therapies relating to the person's disability such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech pathology
- Social participation
- Mobility equipment
- Assistive technology
- Continence aids
- Vehicle and house modification (has to be directly related to the participant's disability)
- Transport involved in social, community and employment activities

The NDIA planner may also support people with disability to connect with mainstream services. The NDIS does not replace services and supports already accessible via mainstream services.

Things that the NDIS will not pay for include:

- Rent
- Household bills
- Medical costs
- Education
- Transport costs that are normally paid for by the general community and are unrelated to the person's disability support needs.

More information about reasonable and necessary support can be [found here](#).

The NDIS is NOT means tested and does not affect a person's Disability Pension. If a carer is receiving a carer's payment this is also not affected unless their caring role is substantially reduced due to NDIS funding for the person they are caring for.

## Getting ready for the NDIS

The NDIA has developed a number of resources to assist people with disability and their families to prepare for the NDIS. These can be found at:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/> or by contacting them on 1800 800 110.

Once the NDIA has confirmed that the person is eligible for the NDIS, they will contact the person or their carer or nominated person (depending on individual circumstances) to set up a time to meet and develop the first plan. This can be done in person or over the phone depending on what suits best.

One of the most important parts of the NDIS process is the pre-planning activity. Being well prepared for the meeting with a NDIA planner will enable the person with disability and their family carers to be clear about what they want and need today and into the future.

*Note: The following information below are extracts from the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion fact sheet 'Transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in South Australia Information for Clients'.*

To get ready for a first NDIS planning conversation, the person with disability needs to start thinking about what their current and necessary support are.

On the "First Plan" page (<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/firstplan.html>) you can download more information including:

- Developing your first NDIS plan  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YALPHRYaNps>
- A Planning Conversation Checklist to help you get ready for your first planning conversation.<sup>3</sup>

There is a video about getting ready for your first planning conversation with the NDIS on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Jt9XGa\\_sA&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Jt9XGa_sA&feature=youtu.be)

The first NDIS plan will provide each person with individualised funding and will generally be for 12 months. If a person's circumstances or needs change they can talk to the NDIA about having their plan reviewed at any stage.

### **Who can attend the first plan meeting?**

Participants are able to have a support person with them during their discussions with their NDIA representative. This could be a family member, friend, carer or support worker. The needs, strengths and capacities of carers are also considered as part of the planning and assessment process.

### **What if I can't participate in a conversation over the phone?**

If you are not able to complete your planning conversation over the phone or are not in a position to do so, the NDIA will make alternate planning arrangements. The best outcome for the majority of people and preferred option of carers, is through a face to face conversation with a planner. It is your choice how the planning meeting is conducted either face to face or via the telephone, at a place or venue where you feel comfortable.

Things that are essential before meeting with a planner:

- Having copies of all the information that was previously submitted to the NDIA
- Collecting any relevant information (evidence) from healthcare professionals and others, such as support staff, teachers and aids, that support any request for funding
- Developing a participant statement that describes what a person's life is like now. For example: their current living arrangements, current support provided now, whether this is paid or informal support, their relationship with others, and what future support needs may look like.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/h1e/h67/8800549863454/Checklist-planning-conversation.pdf>

The NDIS plan is for 12 months. It can be reviewed at any time, if there is a significant change to a person's circumstances. A change of circumstances is an event or change in a participant's life that may affect:

- disability support needs
- family care arrangements change significantly
- moving (or have moved) house
- moving (or have moved) permanently into aged care residential accommodation.

[Change of circumstances form](#)

## **The planning meeting**

People who may be present at the planning meeting will include the planner, the person with disability and family carers (if appropriate). If the planning meeting is for a child, the child may not always attend and this will be at the discretion of the family carers.

Planning meetings can be stressful for some people, particularly if they have not been part of such a process before. Therefore it is often a good idea to have a support person/advocate attend the meeting with them. The support person may also take notes of the meeting on behalf of the person with disability and/or family carer.

The planner will take into account the person's informal supports (family and friends) and access to mainstream services.

Each NDIS participant will have their own plan which reflects their needs and may look quite different from another person's plan, even though they may have similar disabilities.

The plan will set out agreed goals, what supports will be funded and how much money will be provided. The completed plan may include:

- General supports
- Reasonable and necessary supports which may include therapy, training and support to learn new skills, aids and equipment, communication devices and support to access social and recreational activities
- Respite and in-home support

It will also state when the plan will be reviewed.

The next step is putting the plan into action.

## What happens once I have an approved plan?

Once your first plan is finalised you will be contacted by an NDIA representative to discuss how to put it into action.

The NDIA will work with you to implement your plan. This support could be provided by a Local Area Coordinator, a Plan Support Coordinator or another party who will help you to connect with community and mainstream or funded supports.

It will be important that you tell your current provider that you have met with a NDIA representative and have an approved plan in place. It will also be important to tell them whether you want to continue getting services from them or choose another provider.

For more information and factsheets at the “Starting your NDIS Plan” page on the NDIS website: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/startingmyplan.html>

## Plan management

A number of options are available to the NDIS participant and/or their family carer about how to manage the plan.

Financial management options are:

1. **Self-managing** – this means the money from the NDIS is paid directly to the person with disability or family (depending on circumstances) and payment for services will be made by the person or their family
2. **Nominating another person to manage the funding and pay providers** – this is called a plan nominee
3. **Using a plan management provider** – the planner will help find one. Payment for this service does not come out of a participant's support funding, but is an additional amount of money which is earmarked for this activity
4. **The NDIA can manage the plan**
5. There can be a **combination** of two or more of the above options

The Managing Your Plan section on the NDIS website outlines the various options available to people with disability and their family carers.

This can be [found here](#).

## Support coordination

Support coordination is a capacity building support to implement all supports in a participant's plan, including informal, mainstream, community and funded supports.

Support coordination is included in a participant's plan if it is reasonable and necessary for the individual.

As the NDIS is rolled out, the majority of participants will have a Local Area Coordinator who will provide capacity building support to implement and review all supports in a participant's plan.

For children aged 0-6 and their families, Early Childhood Intervention Partners provide assistance with plan implementation.

Where either a Local Area Coordinator or Early Childhood Intervention Partner is assisting with plan implementation, support coordination is not funded in the participant's plan.

## **Carers and the NDIS**

The NDIS is primarily for people with significant and permanent disability. Family carers receive no funding in their own right unless it is to improve their ability to support a family member with disability.

When preparing for the NDIS planning meeting, it is important for you as a carer to provide the planner with information about your caring role. A Carer's Statement will outline the aspects of the caring role, including (but not limited to):

- their ability to continue to provide support at the current level
- if the carer is able/willing to continue caring in the same capacity and the sustained impact this has on the carer
- any information about the carer and family life that the carer wants the planner to know.

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/families-carers.html>

A Carer checklist and template of a carer's statement can be located on the [Carers Australia website](#).

For carers supporting a family with psychosocial disability (mental illness) a useful resource is the Guide for Mental Health Carers on the National Disability Insurance Scheme which can be found at the Mental Health Australia. <https://mhaustralia.org/>

Another carer statement [resource](#) for psychosocial disability.

It is worthwhile to keep a note book close by while you are waiting to meet or speak with the planner and jot down your daily routines and caring responsibilities. It is often difficult to remember all the things you do each and every day because it is something that you just do!

Depending on the circumstances, a carer can request a separate meeting with the planner. This can be either a face-to-face meeting or via a phone call.

## The role of parents, carers and guardians

Family carers of children and young people up to 18 years of age are considered their legal guardians. After a person's 18th birthday, they are considered by law to be able to make decisions on their own behalf.

In general terms, family carers of people with disability are actively involved in the planning process. This can be speaking on behalf of the person and attending planning meetings, or supporting their loved one through the NDIS process.

The Office of the Public Advocate's office is a useful reference point if a carer has any queries related to decision making on behalf of the person with disability. Email [opa@agd.sa.gov.au](mailto:opa@agd.sa.gov.au) or phone on (08) 8342 8200, Toll free 1800 066 969.

## Review of decisions

There may be times when a person with disability and/or their family member(s) do not agree with what is in a plan. There are a number of things that can be done to appeal a decision.

1. **An internal review** – this is undertaken by an authorised person in the NDIA. The reviewer is a person, who was not involved in developing of the plan. But before going through this process the person with disability and/or their family carer(s) will be encouraged to discuss their concerns with the original planner; particularly if they believe that an important matter was overlooked or ignored or if new information is now available. The NDIA must provide written notice of its decision. The person with disability and/or their family carer(s) then has up to three months to request a review of the decision. The reviewer can confirm, vary or set aside the original decision.
2. **External review** – is an application to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for an external review of the decision. The application must be made within 28 days after you receive the appeal decision. This can be extended if the AAT deems it reasonable to do so.

The person with disability and/or their family carer(s) can receive support with this process from the NDIS Appeals ([link](#))

This service is a free service that helps people who have grievances with the decisions made by the NDIA. This service also provides impartial and confidential help and can also assist once an appeal has been lodged with the AAT.

Contact can be made by calling on (08) 82177600 and country callers on 1300 733 049.

This fact sheet is only a snapshot of the NDIS. Visit the NDIS website to learn more and to familiarise yourself with the NDIS. There are numerous other websites that also contain important information about the NDIS.

A good example is this website for people with psychosocial disability is:

<http://reimagine.today/step-2/what-is-the-ndis/>

Your own support groups, networks and service providers will also be able to provide you with information and useful links.