

Disability related health supports

Information for providers

Introduction

The Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments - as the funders of the NDIS - are working hard to deliver on the promise that every Australian with a significant and permanent disability and their families are supported to participate fully in their communities.

There is a commitment from all governments to deliver a Scheme that gets it right for participants today, while ensuring its ability to keep meeting the needs of all Australians into the future.

The Disability Reform Council (DRC) have endorsed a new policy about the roles and responsibilities of the NDIS and health system for funding disability-related health supports.

The new policy outlines a series of changes focussed on ensuring NDIS participants receive the disability-related health supports they need as part of their daily life. The new position aims to remove uncertainty and delays, increase confidence and provide clarity for participants needing disability-related health supports.

What is changing?

From 1 October 2019, additional disability-related health supports will be available to purchase using NDIS funding. The need for these supports must directly relate to an NDIS participant's functional impairment, where the support need is ongoing and is and most appropriately funded or provided by the NDIS.

The health system will continue to be responsible for the diagnosis and clinical treatment of health conditions, ongoing and chronic health conditions not related to a participant's disability, time limited (non-ongoing) and palliative conditions and acute/post-acute care (e.g. hospital and Hospital in the Home).

To approve funding for disability-related health supports, the NDIA must be satisfied that the funded supports in the participant's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan meet each of the reasonable and necessary criteria outlined in section 34(1) of the National Disability Insurance Agency Act 2013 and the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Supports for Participants) Rules 2013*.

Disability-related health supports can be delivered by a suitably qualified and competent worker, which may include nurses and allied health practitioners.

New health-related supports under the NDIS

The typical types of support available can be grouped into eight 'support type' categories.

The following list of fundable supports is not exhaustive, and supports may be delivered in a range of ways.

1. Continence supports including:

- An NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to undertake insertion, removal or change of indwelling urethral catheter, suprapubic catheter and/or clean intermittent catheter.
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to provide catheter maintenance and care.

- Provision of daily catheter maintenance and care by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- All continence consumables (for example catheter, bags, pads, bottles, straps.)

2. Respiratory supports including:

- Development and periodic review of clinical care and daily maintenance of tracheostomy (insertion, removal and change) by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent clinician
- Implementation of daily maintenance of tracheostomy (insertion, removal and change) by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to provide tracheostomy maintenance and care.
- Provision of tracheostomy equipment and consumables.
- Provision of a Constant Positive Airway Pressure machine (CPAP) machine and consumables.
- Provision of a Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure (BIPAP) machine and consumables.
- Provision of a ventilator, air humidifier, portable suction machine and/or cough assist machine and consumables.
- Assistance with the use of all respiratory medical equipment as well as the training of a suitably qualified and competent worker to use the equipment.

3. Nutrition supports including:

- Dietetic consultations and the development and periodic review of a nutritional meal plan by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent clinician.
- Implementation of a nutritional meal plan by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to implement the nutritional meal plan.
- Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) Stoma Changes (to assist feeding.)
- Provision of PEG maintenance and care by a suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to provide PEG maintenance and care.
- Home Enteral Nutrition (HEN) and (PEG) and equipment and consumables excluding food.
- HEN formula/nutritional supplements (to meet participant's nutritional needs).

4. Dysphagia supports including:

- Development, implementation and periodic review of a meal time management plan by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent clinician.
- Implementation of a meal time management plan by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Development, implementation and periodic review of an oral eating and drinking care plan (OEDCP) by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent clinician.
- Implementation of an oral eating and drinking care plan (OEDCP) by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to implement the meal time management plan and OEDCP.
- Swallowing therapy associated with dysphagia provided by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Consumables such as thickeners to enable a participant to swallow more easily and reduce their risk of aspiration/choking.

5. Wound and pressure care supports including:

- Wound care and pressure care (including pressure injury management) by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Wound care and pressure care consumables (e.g. dressings, gauze, bandages, tape, lymphedema garments and pressure wraps).
- Lymphoedema machines as well as assistance with the use of the equipment and the training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to use the machine.

6. Diabetic management supports including:

- Development and periodic review of a diabetic management plan by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent clinician.
- Implementation of a diabetic management plan and daily maintenance and care by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to implement a diabetic management plan.

7. Podiatry supports including:

- Assessment, development, implementation and periodic review of a podiatry care plan by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent clinician.
- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to implement the podiatry care plan and perform any required daily maintenance and care related to the plan.

8. Epilepsy supports including:

- Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to implement the participant's Epilepsy Management Plan (EMP) and/or Emergency Medication Management Plan (EMMP).
- Epilepsy seizure monitoring by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker including the application of assistive technology.

A non-exhaustive list of approved supports can be found on the [Department of Social Services webpage](#), through the [Disability Reform Council Communiqué](#) dated 28 June 2019, and the associated [fact sheet](#).

What is a reasonable and necessary support?

The NDIS funds a range of supports and services. In order to be considered reasonable and necessary, a support or service:

- must be related to a participant's disability,
- must not include day-to-day living costs not related to a participant's disability support needs,
- should represent value for money,
- must be likely to be effective and work for the participant,
- should take into account support given to a participant by other government services, family, carers, networks and the community, and is
- most appropriately funded by the NDIS.

A participant's reasonable and necessary supports take into account any informal supports already available (informal arrangements that are part of family life or natural connections with friends and community services) as well as other formal supports, such as health.

These supports will help participants to:

- pursue their goals, objectives and aspirations,
- increase their independence,
- increase community and workplace participation, and
- develop their capacity to actively take part in the community.

How will people access disability-related health supports?

Depending on an individual's situation, the way they access disability-related health supports immediately may be different.

If a participant already has disability-related health supports included in their NDIS plan there is no change – they will continue to purchase these supports as usual.

If they have recently become eligible for the NDIS, or if their plan is being reviewed, additional disability-related health supports can be included during the planning stage. Once they have these supports included in their plan, they will be able to purchase these supports like any other item in an NDIS plan.

Existing NDIS participants who need to add these supports into their plan do not need to request an unscheduled plan review to begin accessing disability-related health supports. Over the coming months, the NDIA is contacting participants who are likely to be eligible by letter, email, SMS or phone call over the coming months to discuss their options.

If an individual already has a NDIS plan, to access these supports immediately they have two options:

1. They can use the unspent core supports budget in their NDIS plan flexibly to purchase disability-related health supports with the exception of Assistive Technology valued over \$1500. Supports can only be purchased this way until an individual has a plan review. At the plan review, the NDIA will discuss their needs and if reasonable and necessary, funds for disability-related health supports will be included in the plan.
2. Continue to receive support from the State and Territory health service. Participants are being encouraged to inform health services they are an NDIS participant. The health service can offer support to escalate a participants needs with the NDIA or support them to seek a plan review. This will help a participant get supports included in their plan quicker and allow them to choose the providers they want to deliver these services.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have committed to ensuring NDIS participants continue to receive disability-related health supports while the funding arrangements transfer to the NDIS.

Access to disability-related health supports will not stop during this period.

When it is time for a participant plan review, they can discuss their need for these supports and they will be included in their plan if they are reasonable and necessary.

Remember:

- People with disability must meet the NDIS eligibility requirements to access disability-health related supports through the NDIS. If someone is not an NDIS participant, they can check if they are likely to be eligible for the NDIS by using the [Eligibility checklist](#) or calling 1800 800 110.
- The NDIA is contacting participants who are likely to be eligible by letter, email, SMS or phone call over the coming months to discuss their options.
- Many State and Territory health services are already registered NDIS providers and some are considering becoming registered providers. This means they may be able to purchase their supports from their existing provider from their NDIS plan.
- If someone is self-managing their NDIS plan, they will continue to have the flexibility to use their funds to achieve their NDIS goals.

Urgent and priority cases

Some participants will require urgent attention due to the complex nature of their needs. State and Territory health services will ensure critical services are maintained for clients in the short term as funding is transferred to the NDIS.

State and Territory governments are supporting the NDIA to identify these participants to expedite their cases and prioritise an early plan review.

Updated Price Guide

The Price Guide is a key reference to help participants, providers and intermediaries discuss and prepare for inclusion of disability-related health supports in eligible NDIS plans.

The new disability-related health supports pricing structure and support levels will be included in the [2019-20 Price Guide and Support Catalogue](#), which also contain helpful policy information and guidance for providers, including:

- line item numbers for each support and how to identify what's claimable against each line item – there are specific items for when a participant is using their funds flexibly and when they are included in an NDIS plan,
- maximum price limits,
- conditions to deliver supports, and
- clarification about NDIA's billing policies.

Providers and participants must develop service agreements and service bookings to make aware they can be paid through the NDIS myplace portal. Updated step-by-step guides on processing payments will be available on the NDIS website.

For information and updates about pricing:

- Download the updated Price Guide and Support Categories,
- Learn more about the funding categories and new registration groups,
- Find out how to register for as a Provider, or
- Read more about disability-related health supports.

Funding categories

The disability-related health supports funded by the NDIS can be grouped into three main categories:

1. Consumables

- Consumables consist of supports that are meant to be consumed through eating, drinking or using. Examples of consumable disability-related health supports are items such as thickeners, wound care dressings, and catheter bags.
- Consumables for disability-related health supports can immediately be paid for out of any unspent funds from existing core supports category in an NDIS plan, without the need for a plan review. Funding for these supports will be included at the next scheduled plan review if reasonable and necessary.
- In most instances, there is no need for a participant to ask for an unscheduled review to purchase disability-related health supports consumables. However if they do not have enough unspent funds in their core supports, they will need to request a plan review through the NDIS contact centre, Local Area Coordinator or NDIA planner.

2. Assistance

- Assistance consists of supports provided by another human being.

- Assistance is when a suitably qualified and competent worker, nurse or allied health professional is required to assist in the provision of a support that the participant is unable to administer themselves. For example, when a participant requires a suitably qualified and competent worker to operate a ventilator.
- If a support worker, nurse or allied health professional is needed, their services can be paid for out of any unspent funds from existing core supports budget in an NDIS plan, without the need for a plan review.
- When it is time for a participants next plan review, they can then discuss the need for disability-related health supports and they will be included in the plan if they are reasonable and necessary.
- Participants using their plan flexibly prior to a plan review, need to initially pay for a registered nurse through the core support budget until their next plan review. After a plan review, these assistance supports will be funded through the capacity building budget in a plan.
- In most instances, there's no need for a participant to ask for an unscheduled plan review. However if they don't have enough unspent funds in their core supports category, they will need a plan review.

3. Assistive Technology

- Assistive Technology (AT) is 'any device or system that allows individuals to perform tasks they would otherwise be unable to do or increases the ease and safety with which tasks can be performed'. Examples of disability-related health supports AT includes equipment, such as a ventilator, and epilepsy monitoring devices such as seizure monitoring alarm systems.
- The NDIA has made changes to deliver a better AT experience and outcomes for participants and providers, including improvements to the planning process and quoting requirements.
- For AT purchases over \$1500, participants will need to have a plan review to add funding to the capital supports budget in their NDIS plan.
- More information:
 - [Factsheet for Participants on Basic and Standard AT supports](#)
 - [Factsheet for Participants needing Specialised and Complex supports.](#)

Registering as an NDIS provider

The number of participants funded for disability-related health supports is expected to grow significantly in the next 12 months. As demand increases, opportunities will also grow for individuals and organisations - including health sector and community health services - to provide these supports as a registered NDIS provider.

Individuals and organisations in all states and territories except WA can get more information about how to register as an NDIS provider by visiting the [NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission](#) website. For WA providers they can register through the [NDIS Provider Toolkit](#)

Clinical governance

The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, together with the NDIA, are committed to ensuring disability-related health supports required on a regular and ongoing basis are delivered in a safe and responsible way nationwide.

To ensure this happens, the NDIA is working hard to ensure that the process of funding disability-related health supports is guided by the best available evidence and by a robust understanding of what health professionals and disability supports workers can safely deliver.

The NDIS Clinical Governance Working Group is informing this work with representatives from the Commonwealth, State and Territories, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, relevant experts and industry representatives.

This group will help guide the clinical governance for the delivery of disability-related health supports through the NDIS.

How do I know who's eligible for disability-related health supports?

During the transition of disability-related health supports being funded by the NDIS, some supports may continue to be delivered by the State and Territory health services until a participant has a plan review.

Prior to a plan review, participants will be able to purchase most disability-health related supports flexibly within their existing NDIS budget, including nursing and allied health services. For Assistive Technology valued over \$1500 this will need to be specifically included in a participant's plan at their review.

Specific pricing arrangements and service levels are being developed that guide how disability-related health supports will be funded.

A participant or their nominee will be able to work with the provider and explain what supports are funded and at what level. The provider should then create a service agreement and service booking in the NDIS myplace portal so they can start delivering services.

How do providers of disability-related health supports get paid?

NDIS participants will be able to pay for disability-related health supports through their plan budget. This means they can choose who from and when these supports are provided.

Registered providers are listed on the NDIS website under [Find a registered provider](#) or in the Provider Finder on the myplace portal. Check their details to ensure they are up to date.

Participants looking for a new provider will be referred to this list as well as the Provider Finder in the myplace portal.

For more information

- A list of NDIS funded disability-related health supports can be found on the [Department of Social Services website](#) and by referring to the DRC Communiqué of 28 June 2019 and associated fact sheet. This list is not exhaustive.
- Visit the NDIS website for access to the Participant, Provider and Health sector information packs, along with case studies, pricing information and easy English translations.
- Further information about [What is a Service Provider](#)
- How to register as a provider [NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission](#) (all states expected WA)
- For WA providers they can register through the [NDIS Provider Toolkit](#)
- Phone the NDIS National Contact Centre on **1800 800 110**
- Email enquiries@ndis.gov.au