

A GP's guide to the NDIS

What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the new way of providing support for Australians with disability, their families and carers.

The NDIS will provide about 460,000 Australians under the age of 65 with a permanent and significant disability with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to live an ordinary life.



As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people with disability early to improve their outcomes later in life.

The NDIS supports people with disability to build skills and capability so they can participate in the community and employment.

What is a GP's role in the NDIS?

General Practitioners and other health professionals may be asked to provide evidence to support a request to access the NDIS.

This may involve:

- completing the Supporting Evidence section of the NDIS Access Request Form;
- documenting that the person has or is likely to have a permanent disability; and
- providing copies of reports or assessments relevant to the diagnosis, that outline the extent of the functional impact of the disability.

GP's don't have to send a prospective participant to specialists for completion of the Access Request Form. GP's can summarise existing medical reports so that they describe not just the diagnosis, but as well as the impact of the disability on the person's function.

What is a disability and impairment for NDIS purposes?

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will assess that a disability is present if there is a loss of an ability to perform an activity due to an impairment. The term 'impairment' commonly refers to a loss of, or damage to, a physical, sensory or mental function.

An impairment is, or is likely to be, permanent only if there are no known available and appropriate evidence based treatments that would be likely to remedy the impairment.



How do I bill for a consultation in which I complete an Access Request Form for a patient?

GP's are expected to complete an Access Request Form during a consultation paid through Medicare. You don't need a different Medicare item number.

How do I provide evidence of disability?

The Evidence of Disability requests information relating to the primary disability (the disability that has the greatest impact on their life), as well as any other disabilities that affect them.

It is important when filling out this section to summarise the effect of disability **without support**. The more comprehensive the information provided in each of these sections, the less likely the persons access request will be delayed due to further information being requested.

It is important to include information regarding treatments completed or planned, permanency of the impairment and the impacts the impairment has on the person's functional capacity.

Including copies of existing specialist reports may also help. **You will find some examples of how to describe functional impairment at the end of this guide.**



We do ask if the applicant has received compensation for any injuries which form part of their application to join the NDIS. If they have received compensation including funding for NDIS like supports, then they will be requested to provide additional documentation.

Receiving compensation does not exclude a person from being a participant, but their compensation may include supports for daily living, which will be taken into consideration when determining the amount of support we provide. Compensation for pain and suffering or income replacement will not affect any support the NDIS provides.

This section of the Access Request Form requires information around the individual's mobility, communication, social interaction, learning and self-care or their ability to self-manage.

For **Mobility**, we want to understand about their ability to move and walk around their home and community. As well as knowing whether they have any existing home modifications or use walking sticks as an example.



For **Communication**, we are wanting to learn more about their ability to speak and write, and whether they can express their needs and comprehend information.

For **Social interaction**, we are wanting to know about their ability to interact with others, whether they can manage their emotions and whether they can make and keep friends.

For **Learning**, we are after information which allows us to understand their ability to remember, learn and practice new skills.

For **Self-care**, this refers to showering, dressing, eating and their ability to care for their own health.

Self-management is not applicable for children under 8 years of age. But if they are older, provide details relating to their decision making ability, and whether they manage their own finances.



How do I complete an Access Request Form?

To become a participant of the NDIS, most people will need to complete an Access Request Form. However in some states and territories people who are currently receiving supports will transition into the NDIS first.

If they are already receiving supports from such a program or service, they will receive a letter followed by a phone call from an NDIS representative when it is time to transition.

The Access Request Form is split into the following 8 areas:



1 The individual's details

Their full name, date of birth, address details.



5 Carer's details

If the person has a carer or a family member who they would like to be involved in the planning process, please provide their details here.



2 Privacy consent

Outlines the NDIA's privacy obligation and request for their DHS Customer Reference number (CRN) to verify their age and proof of address.

If they don't provide consent for us to use their CRN, they will need to provide us with certified copies of the relevant information before we proceed with their application.



6 Disability or Early intervention supports

This part is arguably the most important section of the Access Request Form as it is the evidence of disability, please include relevant specialist reports and evidence of diagnosis.



3 Contact information

Contact information such as their preferences for emails or letters, need for an interpreter, etc.



7 Change of circumstances

Outlines the obligation the applicant has to notify the NDIA of a change of their circumstances, such as moving address, change in their support needs, etc.



4 Parent, legal guardian details (if applicable)

If a person is under 18, this section will need to be completed by their parent or legal guardian. You must also make note of their relationship to the applicant, e.g. son or daughter.



8 Signature (Declaration)

Essentially a declaration that the form and all details provided are true and correct. If the Access Request Form is completed by another person, they will need to note this here, and identify their relationship.

How do I describe functional impairment?

Fred, 34 years old, has a significant physical disability and moderate intellectual disability, and requires support to get out of bed, complete his morning routine and travel to his part-time job in supported employment where he has some support during the day. Following is an example of how Fred's situation could be described for an Access Request Form.

Mobility: Fred requires physical assistance with all aspects of daily living including toileting, transfers from bed to wheelchair and pushing of wheel chair both at home and out in the community. He is unable to transfer independently. He has an old wheel chair which often results in pressure sores. His mother, 62 years old, cannot continue to do this demanding physical work and Fred says he would like a male support person his own age to assist him. Equipment to reduce the effort of physical support and enable Fred to be more independent would be useful.

Self-care: Fred requires at least 1 person assistance for all aspects of personal care, hand over hand support with showering, brushing teeth and total support getting dressed. He is unable to independently prepare or eat meals.

Learning: Fred has a moderate intellectual disability and has a part-time job in supported employment. He requires assistance learning new skills.

Are copies of plans automatically supplied to GPs?

No. GPs should ask participants to bring a copy of their plan to a subsequent consultation. It may be useful to be aware of what services can be purchased by the Participant with NDIS funds, as these may compliment those available through Medicare.

What happens after a plan is approved?

Once a plan is approved, a Local Area Coordinator or a funded Support Coordinator will assist the

participant to link with mainstream and community services; to select providers for funded services and develop service agreements with them and to understand how to track expenditure of NDIS funds throughout the life of the plan.

What is the process after a person is granted access?




Once a person is granted access to the NDIS, a Local Area Coordinator or an NDIA planner will contact the participant to gather information to develop a plan. Plans are built in accordance with outcomes and funding categories. Funds will be approved to assist a person to have an ordinary life under the heading of Daily Life. The plan will detail how the funding is expected to assist the person towards an ordinary life.


NDIS places great emphasis on capacity building and many plans will specify supports that build a person's skills to manage independently. Equipment, house or vehicle modifications are considered an investment in a participant's increased independence and are funded as capital expenditure items.


All expenditure must meet a "value for money" test.

More information

www.ndis.gov.au

 1800 800 110
8am to 11pm (local time)
Monday to Friday

 Follow us on Twitter @NDIS


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For people with hearing or speech loss

 TTY: 1800 555 677

 Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727

For people who need help with English

 TIS: 131 450

*1800 calls from fixed lines are free.
Calls from mobiles may be charged.