**Supporting people to prepare for NDIS first plans – Information for Victorian service providers**

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) [rolls out across Victoria](https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/our-sites/NDIS-Victoria-roll-out-Participant-pack.pdf) people with disability will enter the scheme through the development of a [*first plan*](https://ndis.gov.au/news/Developing%20your%20first%20NDIS%20plan%20news.html). In many instances this plan will be intended to provide continuity of current supports for the first 12 months.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has appointed [Local Area Coordinators (LAC)](https://www.ndis.gov.au/communities/local-area-coordination) to assist people entering the Scheme, through the facilitation of planning conversations and support to implement first plans. Children aged 0-6 years will be assisted by [Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)](https://ndis.gov.au/ecei) partners. NDIA will continue to facilitate planning conversations and support for some people.

People entering the scheme will have a lot of new information to navigate, and disability service providers are well-placed to provide information and support during this time.

**Who is this for?**

This information is for staff who will be working directly with people with disability and families prior to their planning conversation with a Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) planner.

**Why has this information been developed?**

* The NDIS planning process is new for everyone
* The introduction of phone planning for many people with disability comes with new challenges and considerations
* Effective pre-planning is important to ensure that people understand the supports they are currently receiving and what supports they require as they prepare for their *first plan* through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
* Although pre-planning is not a funded support, providers may choose to assist people as an important part of maintaining relationships and building good will

This information has been developed to assist staff of service providers who will be working with people with disability and families to support them during transition to the NDIS.

This guide addresses:

* support during NDIS transition
* preparing for the planning conversation
* the planning process
* understanding support categories
* understanding plan management
* understanding coordination of supports
* starting a new plan
* other resources and information

NDS will continue to update information to assist service providers during transition and welcomes feedback. Some organisations have already incorporated the following tips and material into their pre-planning.

**Support during NDIS transition**

In many cases, people may not be aware of the details of their current funding and supports. Providers have an important role in assisting people to understand current and planned/regular supports. They can also assist people to understand the [NDIS pathway](https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/My-NDIS%20-Pathway.pdf), including eligibility, access and the development and review of plans.

**Your approach**

* Remember that people may be experiencing anxiety and stress and may require additional support
* Provide a range of options for giving information to people and their families
* Tailor your approach as some people will not respond to written material or feel comfortable participating in large group discussions
* Offer options for small groups and 1:1 conversations where possible
* Frontline staff have an important role during transition. They will need to be informed and confident to talk about the NDIS

**What needs to be covered in discussion with individuals and families?**

* What is the NDIS?
* What steps are involved for new participants of NDIS?
* What new organisations might be involved in a person’s life, e.g. the NDIA or the local LAC or ECEIS partner?
* What are the NDIS support categories (core, capital and capacity-building)?
* What is support coordination and plan management?
* What are the likely changes which will impact on people accessing supports?
* Information about advocacy and other relevant supports
* Information about workshops and forums that are happening in the local area

**Preparing for the planning conversation**

Ensure that people with disability and their families have the appropriate level of support to:

* Identify if they will require support during the planning conversation, and if so, who will be available to provide such support, e.g. Advocate, friend or service provider
* Clearly document all current formal and informal supports. Service providers may take on this responsibility or it may be undertaken by the person and their family or others (e.g. An advocate, friend or another service provider)
* Collect documentation, including weekly schedules, plans, assessments and reports that will assist people to demonstrate the level of support they require. It is preferable for these to be in electronic format, but the NDIA will also accept hard copies
* Identify any gaps in the supports they currently receive
* Identify areas where changes to support are needed (eg. where families are no longer able to provide the same level of support)
* Document goals in a broad way that allows for flexibility in the implementation of the plan (e.g. goals formulated around ‘exercise’ rather than ‘horse-riding’, or ‘gaining employment’ rather than focusing on a specific job or TAFE course)
* Identify what the person would like life to look like in the short, medium and long term, and the broad steps required to achieve this
* Decide whether they will self-manage their plan, or have the Plan managed by the NDIA or an intermediary plan manager
* Set up a myGov account, which will be required for the person to access and activate the plan

**The planning process**

Discuss the planning process with people with disability and their families and carers so they feel confident and prepared. Encourage them to have the information collected in the pre-planning phase ready at the time of the planning conversation, including documentation of their existing supports and identified gaps and goals.

* The majority of planning conversations will be conducted on the phone
* People are entitled to request a face to face meeting. Due to the high volume of plans being developed, the capacity of the NDIA to provide this is limited
* Planning conversations will be facilitated by LAC or NDIA planners
* Where people already have funded supports in place through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), this information will be used by planners in the development of the person’s first NDIS plan
* An NDIA representative will contact the person to gather further information; copies of documents can be emailed or posted to NDIA
* When people are contacted about the NDIS, encourage them to ask:
* Are you from the NDIA?
* Is this conversation to develop my first plan?
* Let people know they are able to request an alternate more convenient time for a planning conversation, when they have appropriate supports available and relevant documentation in reach, including personal information, a summary of their current supports and identified gaps and goals
* Encourage people to let the planner know about evidence that demonstrates their level of need (i.e. behaviour support plans) or relates to specific interventions (speech pathologist reports)

**Understanding Support Categories**

Understanding the NDIS support categories will assist people to understand how they can use their plan and where flexibility exists. Supports are funded under three broad categories: Core, Capital and Capacity-building. For more information about these support categories and how people can exercise choice and control with their NDIS plans, read the [NDIS fact sheet on Choice and Control](https://www.ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/hce/h5b/8799507939358/Factsheet-Choice-and-Control-A4-v0.5.pdf).

**Understanding Plan Management**

During the NDIA planning conversation, people may be asked to choose how they want to manage their plans; either via self-management or through the NDIA. Here is some information about [self-managed budgets](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participant/self-managing-budgets.html) that people should understand before making these decisions.

**Understanding Coordination of Supports**

During the NDIA planning conversation some people may be offered support coordination. Encourage people to think about what sort of support they will need to implement their plan and who they would like to provide this support where applicable.

For more information about coordination of supports, refer to the [NDIS price guide](https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/Provider/201617-vic-nsw-qld-tas-price-guide.pdf).

If your organisation offers support coordination, ensure that you understand your responsibilities regarding [conflict of interest](https://ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/Provider/Module%203%20TOB.pdf).

**Starting a new plan**

Once the plan has been approved, it will be sent to the new participant by mail and a copy will be available online.

Ensure that people with disability and their families understand the importance of letting current service providers know promptly when they receive their plan and/or following a plan review.

NDIS participants will need a myGov account to access their plan on the NDIA participant portal. Information for participants about the portal and starting a plan can be found here:

* [NDIS participant portal user guide](https://ndis.gov.au/participant-portal-user-guide.html)
* [NDIS starting my plan](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/startingmyplan.html) fact sheets

Useful information for providers about the implementation of a plan can be found here: [NDIS Provider Portal Updates](https://www.ndis.gov.au/Provider-Portal-Updates.html)

**Other resources and information**

People may wish to continue using the planning tools they are familiar with to gather information prior to planning, or use the format provided and adapt to your needs.

For information about person-centred planning: [Helen Sanderson Associates](http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/)

NDIS information specific to planning for people with a [psychosocial disability](https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/Completing_the_access_process_for_the_NDIS_Tips_for_communicating_about_.._.pdf)

**For participants**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) website provides up to date information about all aspects of the NDIS, including:

* [Developing your first NDIS plan](https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/Developing%20your%20first%20NDIS%20plan%20news.html)
* [NDIS: Getting ready for your planning conversation checklist](https://www.ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/h68/h80/8798779670558/Checklist-Getting-ready-for-your-planning-conversation-21.10.16-accessible.pdf)
* [Reasonable and necessary supports](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/reasonable-and-necessary-supports.html)

[Disability loop](http://www.disabilityloop.org.au/index.html) is a website run by [Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)](http://www.afdo.org.au/) to provide information about the NDIS to people with disability and their allies

**For providers**

For information about how current supports translate to NDIS supports, use this link: [Matching existing support categories](https://www.ndis.gov.au/document/matching-existing-support-categories-2.html)

The [NDIS price guide](https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/Provider/201617-vic-nsw-qld-tas-price-guide.pdf) is being revised annually. The NDIA has simplified the information and merged similar supports under the same support line item.

The guide also contains clarification about the different levels of support (for both direct support and support coordination), which may assist during pre-planning.

Further information about pricing can be found here: [NDIS: Pricing and payment](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-and-payment.html)

*National Disability Services January 2017*