# New NDIS Participants aged over 7

## Benefits we are working to deliver

### Joining the NDIS

#### Learning about the NDIS

* You’ll have access to more consistent information about the NDIS, including the website, our contact centre and your Local Area Coordinator (LAC).
* You’ll be able to contact an LAC who can help connect you to community and mainstream supports.

#### Apply for the NDIS

* You can work with your LAC to apply for the NDIS.
* Your LAC will explain the process and guide you through, providing information on timeframes, the assessment, and next steps.
* Throughout the access process, your LAC will make sure you are connected to mainstream supports.

#### Independent assessment

* Independent assessments will be free and easy to access.
* Everyone will get access to high quality assessments that will inform more consistent and fair NDIS decisions.
* You will get your assessment results.

### Reviewing your plans and goals

#### First check-in

* We’ll have a first check in with you following your access decision so you know what to expect from the NDIS and prepare for your planning meetings.
* You will be able to talk about the mainstream and community supports that can also help you pursue your goals.

#### Draft plan

* You will get a draft plan with your draft Personalised Budget before your plan approval meeting.
* Your plan will be easier to understand and use – with a flexible budget and a fixed budget.

### Creating your plan

#### Plan approval meeting

* You will meet with the person approving your plan.
* There will be no need to negotiate each support as you will have much more choice and control over how you use your plan.
* You will have an opportunity to discuss what should be in your flexible and fixed budgets, how you would like to access and manage your budget.

### Using your plan

#### Plan implementation meeting

* Plan implementation meetings will focus on helping you to pursue your goals and get the most out of your plan.
* Your LAC will be able to provide greater support to help you use your plan.
* Plans can be in place for up to 5 years, where this suits your circumstances.
* You can update your personal statement and goals in your plan at any time.

#### Using your plan

* You plan will be much more flexible.
* It will be up to you how you spend your flexible budget – you can save, buy and negotiate the services and supports that you need to get the most out of your plan.
* There will be more information and evidence on supports that work best for participants like you.

## Tailored approaches for:

* Participants from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
* Participants with complex support needs
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants
* Participants in rural and remote areas
* Early Childhood Early Intervention

## Problems we are working to solve

**Joining the NDIS**

* It can be difficult to find consistent information.
* To understand what supports are available through both the NDIS, mainstream services and in the community.
* Completing the NDIS Application Form can be time consuming and confusing.
* You’ll speak to multiple people and don’t know how your request is progressing.
* You have to collect (and pay for) your own evidence.
* Plans are often less than 2 years long and plan reviews usually happen each year.

**Creating your plan**

* Planning meetings feel like a negotiation for support.
* If you can’t afford expert assessments it is harder to get the right funding.
* There can be delays with approving plans and long quote approval processes.
* You don’t see a draft plan before it is approved.
* Approved plans are not always explained.

**Using your plan**

* Current plans have limited flexibility which means you can’t decide how best to use your plan.
* It is difficult to make changes to your plan and often this means you need a whole new plan approved, which can take time.

## New NDIS Participants aged over 7 – detailed overview

### Learn about disability supports, including the NDIS

If you think you might be eligible for the NDIS, or want to know more about the NDIS, you can go to our [website](https://www.ndis.gov.au) or call us on 1800 800 110. Our contact centre can give you general information about the NDIS and refer you to your [Local Area Coordinator](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-each-state) (LAC) if you want to discuss your individual situation more, including if the NDIS is right for you.

LACs are our NDIS partners in the community. Your LAC will talk to you about your:

* living arrangements
* informal, mainstream and community supports
* social connections and work commitments.

Your first conversation with your LAC will help to connect you to the community and mainstream supports available to you, and help you understand whether you might be eligible for the NDIS.

### Apply for the NDIS

After connecting with an LAC and identifying that funded supports and services may be needed you can submit an application to access the NDIS.

You can do this by:

* Working with your LAC to complete your NDIS application form.
* Making a request to access the NDIS through our contact centre.

Your NDIS application form will ask for information about your:

* Age
* Australian citizenship or residency
* Disability.

Your treating health professional will need to provide evidence to show your disability is lifelong, permanent and significant.

Once you submit your NDIS application form, your LAC will explain to you what happens next, including what to expect in an independent assessment.

### Complete Independent Assessment

If we think you might be eligible for the NDIS, we’ll refer you for an independent assessment.

You will be able to choose a local assessor organisation for our panel to complete your assessment with.

The assessor organisation will make any reasonable adjustments to the process to make sure you can actively and safely participate.

You will also need to choose someone who knows you well to answer part of the assessment.

We will use the information from your independent assessment to check you are eligible for the NDIS.

We’ll let you know if you are eligible, and give you a copy of your independent assessment results.

If you are not eligible for the NDIS, your LAC will talk to you about the community and mainstream supports available to you.

### Have First Check-in (if required)

If you are eligible for the NDIS, your LAC will check-in with you and explain what happens next.

We’ll ask you to do a short questionnaire, so we can track your progress and get feedback on our processes.

Your LAC will also show you how to access the participant portal so you can keep track of where your plan is up to, and be able to manage your funding, once your plan is approved.

Your LAC will also book a planning meeting with you.

### Receive Draft Plan

Using the information from your independent assessment, we’ll develop your draft plan.

This draft plan won’t include details about the supports you might like to purchase. Instead, it will include your:

* Personal details
* Nominee’s details
* Mainstream and informal supports
* Draft Personalised Budget (fixed, flexible)

We’ll also talk to you about how you can prepare for your planning meeting.

### Hold Plan Approval Meeting

You’ll meet with an NDIA delegate to review your draft plan and Personalised Budget.

Ideally, your plan will be approved in this meeting.

You will discuss:

* Plan management options
* When the plan will be reassessed (up to 5 years)
* When you’d like the NDIA to check in with you
* How frequently you’d like funds released

In this meeting you can also raise any additional high cost support needs not previously identified – things like high cost assistive technology or home modifications. The delegate will provide guidance on what supporting information will be required to finalise funding for these support items.

You won’t have to negotiate each service or support you need. Your plan will be much more flexible, so you will have much more choice and control over how you use your plan.

In the meantime, the delegate will approve your plan so you can get on with using your plan.

### Hold Plan Implementation Meeting

You will meet your NDIS contact or LAC to discuss how your new NDIS plan can be used to help you pursue your goals.

Your LAC or NDIS contact will explain how your flexible and fixed budgets work and will give you tools and resources to help you understand and implement your plan.

You might also like to discuss your goals and how your NDIS plan might support you to pursue these.

From here you can implement your plan and can get help from:

* LAC and NDIS resources (e.g. website)
* Family and friends
* Support coordinators and plan managers
* Providers
* Community

### Check-in

We will check-in with you at agreed timeframes, or as required.

At the check-in, we will talk to you about your current plan as well as your:

* living arrangements
* informal, mainstream and community supports
* social connections and work commitments.

This will help us connect you with the right community and mainstream supports if you need them.

Plans will be in place for up to 5 years, and most check-ins won’t result in a change to your plan. We will let you know ahead of time if it is time for a plan reassessment.

You might be referred to an independent assessment to inform a new plan if:

* This is your first time going through the new planning process
* Your circumstances have changed significantly
* It is time to reassess your plan, based on how long your last plan was for
* It has been more than 5 years since your last assessment

For smaller changes to your current NDIS plan (not increases to flexible budgets), a variation can be made.