# Background purple boxDisability-related health supports Information for health sector and practitioners

**Version 2, June 2020**

*V1 published October 2019*

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## Introduction

The Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments – as the funders of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (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) in June 2019 endorsed a policy about the roles and responsibilities of the NDIS and health system for funding disability-related health supports.

This policy focuses on delivering a high quality experience to eligible NDIS participants to ensure they receive the disability-related health supports they need as a regular part of their daily life. The policy was introduced to remove uncertainty and delays, increase confidence and provide clarity for participants needing disability-related health supports.

## What has changed?

Since 1 October 2019, additional disability-related health supports have been available for participants to purchase using NDIS funding. The NDIS will fund specific disability-related health supports where the supports are a regular part of the participant’s daily life, and the need for the supports results from the participant’s disability.

The health system will continue to be responsible for the diagnosis, early intervention 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, rehabilitation, convalescent care or acute/post-acute care (e.g. hospital and Hospital in the Home).

Where a participant’s disability prevents them from being able to self-manage certain health conditions that a person without disability would be expected to do themselves, the NDIS will provide funding for the care to be delivered by a support worker.

To approve funding for disability-related health supports, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) must be satisfied that the funded supports in the participant’s 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/or allied health practitioners.

## Support types

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. Note: this list was updated in June 2020.

#### 1. Continence supports

* + 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).
  + Training of an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to provide assistance to manage bowel care where needed.
  + An NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker to provide stoma care.

#### 2. Respiratory supports

* + Development and periodic review of a care plan for the 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 Bi-level 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.

**Note:** the necessary standards and safeguards for provision of respiratory supports is the subject of consideration by the Intergovernmental Clinical Governance Working group. Any requests to the NDIS are being considered on a case-by-case basis in discussion with local health services.

#### 3. Nutrition supports

* + 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) by a suitably qualified and competent clinician.
  + 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) if cost is in excess of PBS funding.

#### 4. Dysphagia supports

* + Development 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 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, if not available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

#### 5. Wound and pressure care supports

* + Development of a care plan by a suitably qualified and competent clinician.
  + Wound care and pressure care (including pressure injury management) by an NDIS-funded suitably qualified and competent worker.
  + Training of support workers/families in prevention of pressure areas and wounds.
  + Wound care and pressure care consumables (e.g. dressings, gauze, bandages, tape, lymphoedema garments and pressure wraps).
  + Provision of Assistive Technology as required due to a participant’s disability, to prevent pressure areas/wounds occurring.
  + 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

* + Development of a specific diabetes management plan where the participant’s disability complicates the management and care of their diabetes. This would build on the clinical plan developed by the General Practitioner.
  + 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

* + 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

* + 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.

## 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
  + 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
* develop their capacity to actively take part in the community.

## How do people access disability-related health supports?

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 a participant has 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.

Access to disability-related health supports will not stop during this transition period. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have committed to ensuring NDIS participants will continue to receive disability-related health supports while the funding arrangements transfer to the NDIS.

Many State and Territory health services are already registered NDIS providers and some are considering becoming registered providers. This means a participant may be able to purchase supports from their existing provider from their NDIS plan.

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 find out if they are likely to be eligible by using the [eligibility checklist](https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/am-i-eligible) or calling 1800 800 110.
* If someone is self-managing their NDIS plan, they will continue to have the flexibility to use their funds to meet their NDIS goals.

## Transition

To support a smooth and positive transition for participants, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have committed to:

* working closely together to make sure participants requiring disability-related health supports understand these supports will be built into their plans at their next scheduled review
* ensuring no NDIS participant is disadvantaged by this reform and all are supported appropriately until they can receive disability-related health supports through their NDIS plan.

During the transition to NDIS funding, some people may continue to receive disability-related health supports funded through their State or Territory health service.

State and Territory health services should ask clients, family or carers if they are an NDIS participant and make them aware of the DRC policy change. If they are not aware of the additional disability-related health supports, offer support to the participant to contact the NDIA to discuss their plan funding.

This will help participants get supports included in their plans and allow them to choose the providers they want to deliver these services.

## 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.

The NDIA is working hard to ensure 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 support workers can safely deliver.

The NDIS Clinical Governance Working Group is informing this work. The group has representatives from the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, 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.

## Opportunity for health providers

The inclusion of disability-related health supports into NDIS plans provides an opportunity for health providers to consider registering as an NDIS provider.

Many State and Territory health services are already NDIS registered providers. In many situations, participants may be able to select their existing provider to deliver these supports.

The number of participants funded for disability-related health supports is expected to grow significantly in the next 12 months. There are market opportunities for providers who are already registered or are considering registering to provide these types of supports.

For more information on registering as a provider, visit the [NDIS](https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/2351/download) or the [NDIS Commission](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/) websites.

## Frequently asked questions

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

NDIS participants are able to pay for disability-related health supports through their plan budget.

This means they can choose when and who provides these supports. Many State and Territory health services are already NDIS registered providers. In some situations, participants may be able to use their existing provider to deliver these supports.

To claim payment for services delivered, providers and participants must develop service bookings to ensure they can be paid through the NDIS myplace portal.

A list of registered providers is available on the [NDIS website](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers/find-registered-provider) or through the Provider Finder on the myplace portal.

#### How will the change work during the transition period?

During the transition to additional 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.

Specific pricing arrangements and service levels have been developed that guide how disability-related health supports will be [funded](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/price-guides-and-pricing).

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.

#### Does the NDIS fund self-care supports?

A NDIS participant’s disability may prevent them from being able to self-manage certain health conditions that a person without disability would be expected to do themselves.

In these circumstances, the NDIS will fund self-care supports. The NDIS will also fund self-care supports where it is necessary for the support to be delivered by a clinician.

## For more information

* Visit the [NDIS website](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/disability-related-health-supports) for disability-related health supports information, including:
* [health sector pack](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/disability-related-health-supports/disability-related-health-supports-health-sector)
* [participant information pack](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/disability-related-health-supports/disability-related-health-supports-participants)
* [provider information pack](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/disability-related-health-supports/disability-related-health-supports-providers)
* [case studies](https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/1669/download)
* [Easy Read translations](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/disability-related-health-supports/disability-related-health-supports-participants)
* [pricing information for providers](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/price-guides-and-pricing/delivering-disability-related-health-supports-guide-providers)
* Phone the NDIS National Contact Centre on **1800 800 110**
* Email [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)
* For provider registration (except in Western Australia), contact the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](file:///C:\Users\PDP212\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\T0NZF1OK\•%09The%20disability-related%20health%20supports%20policy%20announcement%20via%20the%20Disability%20Reform%20Council%20Communiqué%20dated%2028%20June%202019,%20and%20associated%20fact%20sheet), phone 1800 035 544. For WA, visit the [NDIS website](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/becoming-ndis-provider/how-register/registering-provider-wa) for more details.