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What is specialist support coordination?

Specialist support coordination is a higher level of support. The focus is on reducing complexity in the participant's support environment and helping the participant overcome immediate and/or significant barriers in plan implementation.

Specialist support coordination helps participants:

- address complex barriers that affect their access to supports
- design a service plan for their support needs, where appropriate.

Who provides specialist support coordination?

Specialist support coordination is delivered by a specialist support coordinator. Specialist support coordinators should be appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver the expert approach which is needed to address a participant's complex support needs and/or risks in their environment.

Further information about registering to provide specialist support coordination can be found on the [NDIS National Quality and Safeguards Commission website](#).

Specialist support coordination activities

Address complex barriers

Specialist support coordinators should help overcome complex barriers that affect participants' ability to access and maintain appropriate supports. They should work with participants, their families and carers to:

- identify and understand the barriers impacting the participant's ability to access, use and maintain their supports
- find and try solutions to address these barriers

- establish a process to overcome these barriers, including prioritising factors that need to be addressed first and what supports need to be in place immediately.

Design a service plan for complex support needs, where appropriate

Sometimes a participant may need a service plan to address significant complexities in their life.

Specialist support coordinators should work with the participant, their families and carers to identify a broad network of a supports – funded or other supports – that can help the participant use their plan.

Specialist support coordinators should design a service plan which:

- ensures all services can work effectively and cohesively together to help a participant to pursue their goals
- establishes processes to enable communication, cooperation and collaboration within the participant's network of funded and non-funded supports
- helps the participant, their family and carers to resolve issues and unexpected situations
- ensures a consistent delivery of service and access to relevant supports in a crisis or unplanned event.

Once a service plan is designed, a participant's support coordinator can help the participant and their support network put the service plan into action.

Example: Aaron's story

Aaron has cerebral palsy and lives in a small rural town. He has been receiving personal care supports from a local provider for the last three years.

Aaron has just been notified by the local provider that they will no longer be able to provide supports to Aaron after next year.

Aaron needs highly skilled support workers to meet his support needs and cannot find any suitable, local providers who can meet his needs.

Aaron's support coordinator informs the NDIA of Aaron's situation.

The support coordinator helps Aaron submit a request for a plan review and recommends that Aaron needs a more specialist approach to assist Aaron with finding a solution to meet his specific support needs.

NDIA considers the support coordinator's recommendations. NDIA decides that time-limited specialist support coordination is reasonable and necessary for Aaron in helping address this specific situation.

Aaron engages a specialist support coordinator who understands his specific needs and the challenges he faces.

The specialist support coordinator identifies other potential options for Aaron to consider.

These include: potential suitable providers who are located outside Aaron's area and are willing to travel, and local providers who were willing to spend time and effort to upskill their current support workers to meet Aaron's specific needs.

Aaron's specialist support coordinator works with Aaron and existing care provider to develop a process to trial these options while ensuring Aaron continues to get the support he needs.

Aaron's specialist support coordinator arranges for support workers from a local provider to do 'buddy shifts' with Aaron's existing support workers.

Aaron's specialist support coordinators works with Aaron to gradually transition from the existing to new support workers as the new support workers are trained to meet Aaron's specific needs.

Aaron now receives support from his new support workers. After the transition, Aaron no longer needs support from his specialist support coordinator.

Aaron and his support coordinator continue to work on making the best use of his other supports.

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