



# You said, we heard: Flexible NDIS plans and funding

What you told us

Easy Read report



**ndis**

[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

## How to use this report



The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wrote this report. When you see the word 'we', it means the NDIA.



This report is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We have written some words in **bold**. This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 51.



This Easy Read report is a summary of another report.



You can find the other report on our website at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au).



You can ask for help to read this report. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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## What is this report about?



We want to make the NDIS easier to use.

We also want to make sure it is:



- fairer



- **consistent.**



When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.



As part of this, we are going to change how some parts of the NDIS work.



But before we do this, we wanted to find out what the community thought.



This included:



- people with disability



- families and carers



- service providers



- disability organisations.



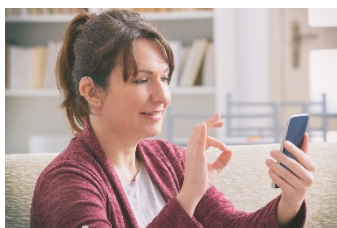
The community shared their ideas in different ways.



Some people wrote answers to our questions.



Some people visited our website to answer our questions.



Some people recorded their answers, such as in a video.



Some people talked to us at our events.



Some people talked to disability organisations.

In this report, we tell you what:



- we asked the community about



- people told us



- we will do in the future.

## What did we ask the community about?



To find out what the community thought, we wrote 3 papers.



One paper was about flexible NDIS plans and funding.

Another paper was about:



- getting an independent assessment



- applying for the NDIS.



The other paper was about supporting young children early.



We published these papers in November 2020.



These papers included questions for the community to answer.



You can find these papers on **our website**.



The Department of Social Services (DSS) also wrote an information paper about making the NDIS better.



You can find that information paper on the **DSS website**.



## Flexible NDIS plans and funding



This report is about the paper called *Flexible NDIS plans and funding*.

An **NDIS plan** is a document that includes information about:



- you and your goals



- what support you have now



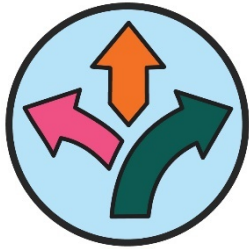
- what support you need



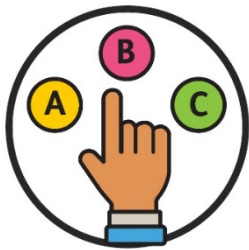
- your **NDIS funding**.



NDIS funding is the money from your plan that pays for the supports and services you need.



When something is **flexible**, it means you can use it in different ways.



If funding is more flexible, every participant can choose what services and supports best suit them.

At the moment funding has 3 budgets:



- Core Supports



- Capacity Building Supports



- Capital Supports.

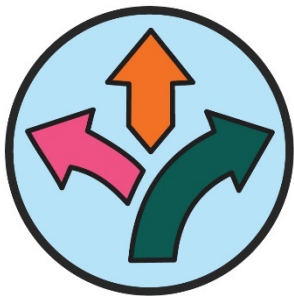


You can only use these budgets for set supports and services.

We want to change funding budgets to make them:



- easier to understand



- flexible for you to use in ways that meet your needs.

## What did we ask the community?

We asked the community how we can make it easier to understand:



- the information in your plan

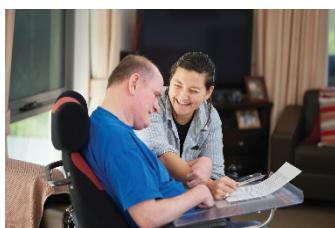


- how you can spend your funding.

We asked the community how we can support you to:



- use your plan and flexible funding



- make your own decisions.



We asked how we can make sure the NDIA and **participants** work well together.



Participants are people with disability who take part in the NDIS.



We asked how often we should check in with participants to make sure their plans work well.



We also asked how we can best support participants when we start to use this new way to plan.



You can find all the questions in the Easy Read paper on **our website**.



## What did people tell us?



Many people told us they want a consistent way of using the NDIS.



But some people also told us this new way to look after funding budgets made them feel:

- unsure
- worried.

They said:



- they weren't expecting things to change so soon



- the way we asked for the community's ideas felt rushed.



They said this made it harder to trust that we are changing things in the right way.



We explain what people told us on the following pages.

## Planning



Lots of people said they weren't sure what would happen in a planning meeting if funding is based on **independent assessments**.



Independent assessments are a new way for the NDIA to get information about:

- how your disability affects your life
- what supports you need from the NDIS.



People told us participants should get time to talk about their needs before their plan is written.

They also said when **NDIA Planners** are writing plans they should think about:



- what the participant needs



- participants making their own choices about what support they need.



An NDIA Planner is someone who makes new plans.



People told us that a plan must support a participant's:

- goals
- needs.

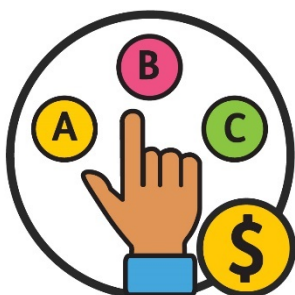


They also told us that we should respect a participant's **culture** when we include goals in their plan.



Your culture is:

- your way of life
- how you think or act because of how you grew up.



Lots of people were worried that participants will lose choice and control of their funding.

People told us information about making plans should be:



- clearer



- easier to understand.



People told us participants need more information about what supports they can spend their funding on.



People also said participants need more chances to change their budget before it is final.





This will make sure participants have budgets that match their:

- goals
- needs.



People said NDIA Planners need training about how to support people with different types of disabilities.



People also said we should have more people with disability working as:

- **Local Area Coordinators (LACs)**
- NDIS planners.



LACs help people with disability find and use services and supports.

## Personalised budgets



Lots of people wanted to know how we will use independent assessments to work out how much funding we give participants.



People told us there should be clear information about how independent assessments will affect a participant's funding.



People also said this information should explain what will happen if a participant's funding changes a lot.



Lots of people were worried about using **independent assessment tools** to work out how much funding a participant will have in their plan.



When people do independent assessments, they will use some documents.

We call them independent assessment tools.



People were also worried that using independent assessment tools won't:

- meet participants' needs
- match participants' goals.



Lots of people are worried about how independent assessments will affect how much funding we give participants.



These people were also worried that independent assessments won't give a clear picture of a person's:

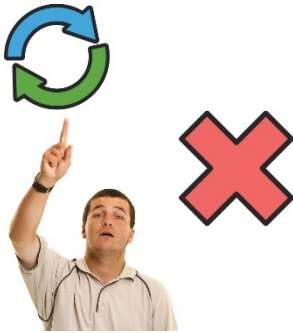
- life
- disability
- individual needs.



This means people with disability might not get the funding they need in their NDIS plan.



They also said participants should be able to make sure the results of the independent assessment are right before we use it to make decisions about their funding.



Some people were worried that participants won't be able to ask to change their funding if it is based on the results of their independent assessment.



Lots of people gave us ideas about better ways to work out funding.



One idea was to test the new way of working out your budget.



Another idea was to think about the important people in your life when we work out your budget.

# Your plan

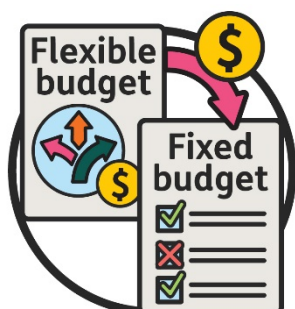
## Flexible plans



Lots of people told us they support using **flexible budgets**.



A flexible budget is funding you can use for the different types of supports and services you need.



But they also said participants should be able to move funding from their flexible budget into their **fixed budget**.



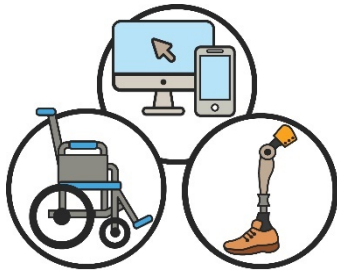
A fixed budget is funding for some supports only.



People told us what types of support should be included in fixed budgets.



This includes funding for:

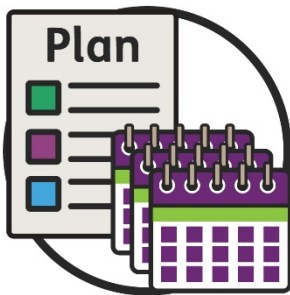


- assistive technology –equipment to get around and communicate



- home modifications –changing your home to make it easier for you to live in.

## Using your plan



People told us they like the idea of plans that last longer.



But lots of people were worried about how **personalised** plans will be used.



When something is personalised, it is made to suit your needs.



Some people told us how we can make plans easy to:

- understand
- use.



These people also said it's important that participants know how they can use their funding.



We wanted to give participants part of their funding over time.



But lots of people didn't support this idea.



They said it would limit how participants can use their funding.



They also said participants who **self-manage** their plans won't get their funding in the same way.

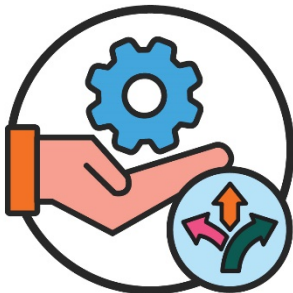


If you self-manage your plan, you:

- manage all or part of your funding
- choose what supports you use to reach your goals.



People were worried about what happens to funding they don't use.



They were also worried about what support participants will get to use flexible budgets.

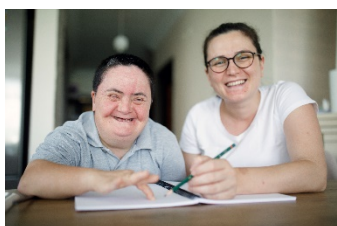
They said when we start using flexible budgets, participants will need:



- support



- information.



This will help participants keep using the supports and services they need.

People were worried there won't be a lot of information to help participants understand:



- their flexible budget



- how to use their NDIS funding.

Lots of people told us many participants will need support to understand flexible budgets from their:



- plan managers



- support coordinators.



They were worried these people might not be part of the new way to plan.



They also said they want more information about how these supports will be part of a participant's funding.

## New ways to use your budget



Lots of people told us that participants should be able to use their budgets in different ways.



But they also said participants could only do this if information about using budgets is:

- clear
- easy to understand.



People also said we should tell true stories about how other participants use their plans.



They also told us that participants want more support to use their plan so it meets their needs.

This support should be from:



- the NDIA



- support coordinators



- LACs.



People told us that there should be an app to help participants look at their budget.



People also said there should be clear information about how funding:

- can be used
- can't be used.



## Support for children and younger people



People told us we should support children and younger people when their life changes in a big way, such as when they finish school.



People also said there should be more **check-ins** to support children and young people when their life changes.



When we have a check-in with you, we talk to you about how your plan is going.



A check-in is not a plan **review**.



When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



People also said we should understand that some children and younger people need support on weekends.

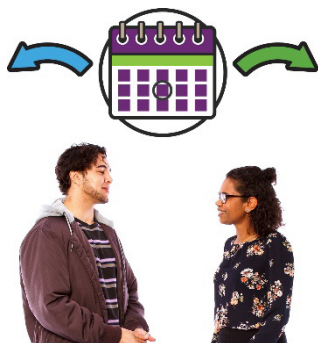


This means some providers might not be able to give children and younger people the support they need.

## Check-ins



People wanted to know how often participants will need to have a check-in.



They also wanted to know what information participants should get:

- before a check-in
- after a check-in.

Lots of people said it was important that participants can choose:



- who can be part of their check-in



- when they have their check-in



- where they have their check-in.

They also said we should talk to participants about check-ins:



- early



- in a way that suits them, like over the phone or by email.

People told us we need to explain:



- why we have check-ins



- what might happen to their plan after the check-in.



They also said we should share more information about who can do check-ins with participants.



People gave us ideas about who should take part in the check-in.

People were worried that check-ins will be:



- too short



- with someone who doesn't understand what the participant needs.



People said check-ins should be **accessible**.



When something is accessible, everyone can use it.

This could include sharing information about check-ins in different ways, like:



- Easy Read



- Auslan



- languages other than English.



Some people said that check-ins can make participants feel more stressed.



People told us that some participants might not need a check-in.

They also said participants should have a choice about:



- if they want to have a check-in



- having their check-in online.



People told us it's important for all participants to have a check-in with someone who knows what:

- their life is like
- they need
- should be in their plan.



They also said **First Nations** participants should have check-ins:

- face-to-face
- with someone they know and trust.



First Nations peoples are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





People said participant should have choices about how many times they have check-ins.

Some people gave us ideas about how many times there should be a check-in, such as.



- new participants should have a check-in every 3 months



- participants who need extra support should have a check-in every 6 months



- participants with longer plans should have a check-in every year.



Lots of people supported the idea of participants asking for a check-in when they need one.

## Moving into a new way of planning

Lots of people told us participants need information about independent assessments that is:



- clear and simple



- easy to understand



- accessible.

This can include sharing information in:



- Easy Read



- Auslan



- languages other than English.



People told us participants need more help to answer questions.

This help should be from:



- NDIA Planners



- LACs.

Lots of people said it was important to have clear and easy to understand information about:



- changes to planning



- how the changes affect participants.

They told us about other people who need information that's easy to understand, such as:



- service providers



- healthcare workers



- support coordinators.

## Other issues you talked about

### Independent assessments



Lots of people were worried about how independent assessments will work.



Some people said they support independent assessments being part of applying for the NDIS.



People told us they want clear information about independent assessments, including:

- what will happen during an independent assessment
- who will do the independent assessment
- what skills and knowledge they have
- who a participant can bring with them.



Lots of people told us we should think about how we will do independent assessments in **rural and remote areas.**



Rural and remote areas are places far away from cities or towns.

People told us we should support First Nations communities to:



- understand independent assessments
- take part in independent assessments.



Some people gave us other ideas about making independent assessments better for people with disability.



We will think about these ideas when we start using independent assessments.



## What will we do next?

We want to make sure the NDIS is:



- easier to use



- fair



- consistent.



We want to use what people told us to make the NDIS better.



Over the next 6 months we will keep talking to the community about how we are changing the NDIS.

We will support DSS when they:



- change the NDIS law



- ask the community what they think about how things will change.

We will ask what people think about:



- the **personalised budget approach**



- how independent assessments will be used to make budgets



- the rules to make sure independent assessments are good **quality**.

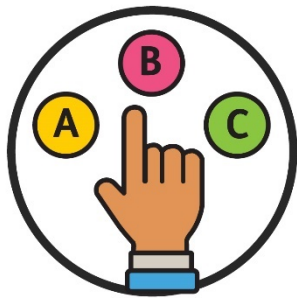


The personalised budget approach is a new way to help us work out how much funding you will get in your plan.

Quality is about receiving good services that:



- meet the needs of people with disability



- give people with disability choice and control.

We will also ask the community what they think about:



- home and living supports



- support for decision making.

## More information

For more information about this report,  
please contact us.



[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)



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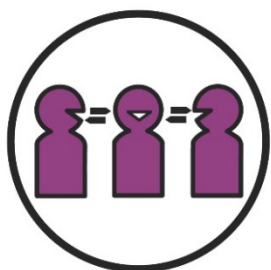
## Support to talk to us



You can use our webchat feature to talk to us online.

[www.ndis.gov.au/webchat/start](http://www.ndis.gov.au/webchat/start)

If you speak a language other than English, you can call:



Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

**131 450**

If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can call:



TTY

**1800 555 677**



Speak and Listen

**1800 555 727**



National Relay Service

**133 677**

[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

## Word list



### Accessible

When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



### Check-in

When we have a check-in with you, it means that we talk to you about how your plan is going.

A check-in is a casual conversation, not a plan review.



### Consistent

When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.



### Culture

Your culture is:

- your way of life
- the way you think or act because of the way you grew up.



### First Nations

First Nations peoples are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



### **Fixed budget**

A fixed budget is funding for some supports only.



### **Flexible budget**

A flexible budget is funding you can use for the different types of supports and services you need.



### **Independent assessment tools**

When people do independent assessments, they will use some documents.

We call them independent assessment tools.



### **Independent assessments**

Independent assessments are a new way for the NDIA to get information about:

- how your disability affects your life
- what supports you need from the NDIS.



### **Local Area Coordinators (LACs)**

LACs are help people with disability find and use services and supports.





## **NDIS funding**

NDIS funding is the money from your plan that pays for the supports and services you need.

## **NDIS plan**

An NDIS plan is a document that includes information about:



- you and your goals
- what support you have now
- what support you need
- the funding the NDIS will give you.



## **NDIS planner**

An NDIS planner is someone who makes new plans.



## **Personalised**

When something is personalised, it is made to suit your needs.



## **Personalised budget approach**

The personalised budget approach is a new way to help us work out how much funding you will get in your NDIS plan.

## **Quality**



Quality is about receiving good services that:

- meet the needs of people with disability
- give people with disability choice and control.



## **Rural and remote areas**

Rural and remote areas are places far away from cities or towns.

## **Self-manage**



If you self-manage your plan, you:

- manage all or part of your funding
- choose what supports you use to reach your goals.



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