

What is the Pathways Program?

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is making important changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2019. This will help people with disability get the support they need to achieve their goals. This is called NDIS pathway reform, or the **Pathways Program**.

The participant pathway is the way each person:

- first learns about the NDIS
- finds out if the NDIS is right for them
- confirms access (or learns how they can become a participant)
- builds a plan to support the achievement of their goals
- uses their plan to improve their lives.

Providers have a pathway too. The provider pathway supports people that deliver disability services to:

- learn about the NDIS
- register as a new disability service provider
- connect with and support participants to achieve their outcomes
- help them get paid through the NDIS portal.

We are working hard to improve the experience of participants and providers and how we work together.

To help you understand what is changing, when it is changing and how it might make your life easier, we have included the 2019 improvements below.

What is changing?

We have created three ways to better support people with a disability, their families and carers, providing a more consistent experience for participants.

- **Pathways:** the end-to-end experience of a participant when working with the NDIS.
- **Service streams:** targeted support for participants to provide an experience that is more suited to their specific disability needs.
- **Service enhancements:** delivering services to people from different backgrounds or areas that meet their location, communication and engagement needs.

Roll out across Australia

The NDIA is rolling out these changes across the country in different ways.

For some improvements, we are rolling out the changes everywhere at the same time. For others, we may roll them out area-by-area or state-by-state. Sometimes, we will test new ideas in a single location before looking at the results and deciding what to do next.

Pathways Program and roll-out

| Pathway, service stream or service enhancement | Feature | Details | Roll out |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Pathway changes to help most NDIS participants (New NDIS Participant Pathway) | Face-to-face planning | <p>We have always offered ECEI participants face-to-face pre-planning and plan implementation meetings. We will now offer face-to-face pre-planning and plan implementation meetings to LAC participants too.</p> <p>If a participant lives in a remote location, this may not always be possible. But we will talk to you about the best way to develop your plan.</p> | ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC complete WA underway WA ECEI from July 2019 |
| | Joint planning meetings | <p>You will have the option of a three-way, open discussion between your LAC and NDIA planner to finalise your NDIS plan.</p> <p>The joint planning meeting will allow you to discuss the supports that have or have not been included in your plan, and the reasons why. In many cases, the plan may be approved at this meeting. If a participant lives in a remote location, this may not always be possible. But we will talk to you about the best way to develop your plan. Soft launch has initially begun in Southern Adelaide to address and issues as they arise before we finalise the Joint Planning process.</p> | SA (Southern Adelaide) Soft launch underway ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, TAS, VIC and WA to be confirmed |
| | Participant booklets | <p>You can be guided through the NDIS experience using our new Participant Booklets. The booklets are a workbook so may be used to take notes, write questions, and prepare for important steps in the NDIS pathway.</p> | All areas complete |
| | Consistent NDIS point of contact | <p>Participants who have had their plan approved after 4 November 2018 will be given a consistent point of contact to talk to if they have questions about the NDIS plan.</p> | ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC, WA (LAC) complete WA ECEI from July 2019 |
| | New pathway staff training | <p>Staff are being trained to better understand different types of disabilities and how to connect participants to support options available in the local community.</p> | ACT, NSW, NT, TAS, WA complete QLD, VIC, SA underway |
| | New participant plan | <p>A new NDIS participant plan has been introduced. The new plan includes a clearer layout of how funds are linked to participant goals. The plan format also shows how other government, community, informal and NDIS supports help participants to achieve goals, whilst giving information on where to get help.</p> | All areas complete |

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| Pathway changes to help participants who have other challenges in their lives and require extra support (Complex Support Needs pathway) | Easy access and planning | <p>Some people have personal or situational factors that mean they need specialised support to work with us. For example, a participant might be leaving prison, they might not have anywhere to live or they are getting services from a number of government services such as mental health providers or local hospitals.</p> <p>For people with complex support needs, we have set up a team of dedicated planners to support participants to develop, implement and monitor an NDIS plan.</p> | ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC underway WA (Canning) from 1 July 2019 |
| | Connection to other services | We will work with participants to be better connected to other government and community supports. | ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC underway WA (Canning) from 1 July 2019 |
| | Support Coordination | To make it easier for you to use your plan, you will be connected to skilled support coordinators that will support you to implement your NDIS plan and achieve goals. | ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC underway WA (Canning) from 1 July 2019 |
| Pathway changes to help children from birth to six years old (Early Childhood, Early Intervention pathway) | ECEI prioritisation framework | Finding out that your child has a developmental delay or disability can be a confusing time for a parent or carer. The new ECEI prioritisation framework supports parents and carers to get the help they need faster. | All areas complete |
| | ECEI booklet | Early childhood partners will provide participants and their families with an information booklet and fact sheet. Both resources aim to help families feel confident to access ECEI supports. They also help early childhood partners with current information about the ECEI best practice approach. | All areas complete |
| | ECEI Practice Leads and Practice Officers | We have employed ECEI practice lead staff to work across Australia to build NDIA knowledge of the ECEI approach. Participants aged 0-6 years with developmental delay or disability and their families will receive a more consistent service from NDIA staff. | Underway in all states and territories except WA WA from July 2019 |
| Improvements to help participants with severe and persistent mental health conditions (Psychosocial disability service stream) | Better information | We will provide information for participants, carers, providers and health professionals to make it easier to understand how people can access the NDIS. This information can be found on the NDIS website or via the Reimagine.today website. | All areas complete |
| | More knowledgeable staff | The NDIA will provide training and support to NDIA staff and LACs so they have a better understanding of psychosocial disability. All new NDIA staff will receive this training too. | ACT, NSW, NT, SA, TAS complete WA, Vic and QLD underway |

Pathways Program and roll-out

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| Improvements to help participants with severe and persistent mental health conditions cont. (Psychosocial disability service stream) | Easier access | Moving from state, territory and Commonwealth mental health services to the NDIS will be easier for participants. We are working closely with mental health services to make this happen. The streamlined access process will help people with a psychosocial disability access the NDIA. | All areas complete |
| | Flexible supports | The NDIA will provide flexible plans, given the often changing nature of psychosocial disability. | Underway in all states and territories |
| | Episodic needs | The NDIA will support planners to make this change with greater planning guidance. | To be confirmed |
| Improvements to help people with hearing impairments (Hearing service stream) | Easy access | We continue to work with Australian Hearing to improve access to the NDIS for children from birth to 6 years old. We are also working with Australian Hearing to move people from current hearing services and supports to the NDIS (where this is appropriate). If you are not eligible for the NDIS, we will help you to access other government or community services. | 0–6 years, all areas complete 7–65 years, all areas progressively rolling out from March 2019 |
| Better customer service for participants from a range of backgrounds and locations (Service enhancements) | Interpreting services and resources | If you speak a language other than English, we have developed resources so that staff can connect you to interpreting services when working with the NDIA. | All areas complete |
| | Training staff | Our staff are receiving training to better understand you and your disability needs. This training includes contemporary disability in Australia and cultural awareness. | Contemporary Disability Rights training complete LGBTIQ+ first stage training complete LGBTIQ+ second stage training Progressively rolling out from September 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training First stage from 1 July 2019 . Second stage progressively rolling out from September 2019 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity training from September 2019 |

Pathways Program and roll-out

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| (Service enhancements) cont. | Extended community connectors | We understand that people in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need to receive services in different ways. Community connectors are trusted local people that connect local communities with the NDIS. | Underway |
| Improvements for all participants | Assistive technology | Changes to NDIA systems will make it easier to access assistive technology, such as adjustable chairs, vision aids, prosthetics, bathing devices or mobility items. Quotes are not required for assistive technology items under \$1,500. We are making it easier to replace assistive technology and reduce replacement wait times. | All areas from January–December 2019 |
| | Home modifications | We are making it easier for you to make adjustments to your home so you can increase your independence. We are continuing to make changes to our systems and processes to ensure it is easier to arrange home modifications. | Underway |
| | Participant portal upgrades | The NDIA myplace system will be reviewed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove any barriers, and make it easier for participants to use the online services provided by the NDIA, regardless of age or disability. Use additional online functions to support participants while using myplace. The myplace system will continue to be improved to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it easier for participants to access and understand NDIS plans. Make it easier for participants to understand NDIS funding and costs in NDIS plans. | Underway |
| Online improvements for all providers | Provider portal upgrades – 2018 and 2019 | Providers and participants benefited from a regular cycle of improvements to the NDIS myplace provider portal in 2018. We made it easier for you to interact with the NDIS and participants with the following changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider Finder search and mapping functionality – a tool that helps participants locate and connect with registered providers in their area. Ability to edit or delete service bookings and view service reports. Updated system error messages to help providers use the provider portal Enhanced user materials, including topic-based web pages and task cards Enabling providers to view the participant plan budget (where consent has been given). | Complete |

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| Online improvements for all providers cont. | Provider portal upgrades – planned delivery by June 2019 | We are delivering ongoing improvements to the provider portal in 2019, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quotations process and functionality • Easy to read user guides on the new NDIS website | Underway |
| | Provider portal upgrades – from July 2019 | In early 2019 we engaged with providers and the sector to prioritise and plan further improvements. We are committed to ongoing changes that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the provider portal easier to use • Improve communication • Improve system functionality and efficiency | Underway |

Glossary

Assistive Technology: Any device or system that allows individuals to perform tasks they would otherwise be unable to do or increases the ease and safety with which tasks can be performed.

Community Supports: Activities and services such as social, study, sporting or other interests, available from your community (local non-government groups and government entities). For example, sporting groups, churches and walking groups.

Local Area Coordinator (LAC): LACs support participants to develop their plans and connect participant to both funded and other government/ community supports.

Other Government supports: The range of services provided by government that might include education, health, employment, justice, and family support.

Participants: People who have been found eligible for the NDIS. Some other businesses call them customers or clients.

Partners: Partners in the Community are community-based organisations which work with us to deliver Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) or LAC services.

Plan: A document that sets out a participant's support requirements to help them achieve their goals. Every plan is created based on a participant's individual needs.

Planner: Planners work with participants (and sometimes families and carers) to work out what supports and services are needed to help participants to achieve their goals. Planners are NDIA staff who have delegation to approve NDIS plans.

Provider: Someone who provides products or services to participants to help them achieve the goals in their plan.

Systems: This includes things like the website, the participant and provider portals, and the computer system that we use to generate your plan.

NDIS

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ndis.gov.au

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 TIS National: 131 450

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