

# Support for National Disability Insurance Scheme participants and providers through COVID-19



People who have returned from anywhere overseas, or have been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19, are required to self-isolate for 14 days. If you develop symptoms, including a fever and cough, you should immediately and urgently seek medical attention.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with the 'What you need to know' and 'Isolation guidance' information sheets found at [www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources)

Further information on COVID-19 what people can do to protect themselves and people they are caring for is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or on 1800 020 080.

## New measures to support NDIS participants and providers

On 21 March 2020, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Stuart Robert announced new measures to ensure essential support is in place for NDIS participants and providers through the COVID-19 outbreak.

For **participants**, this means:

- face-to-face planning shifted to telephone meetings where possible ensuring continuity of support,
- NDIS plans to be extended up to 24 months
- action plan to ensure NDIS participants and their families continue to receive the essential disability supports they need
- more flexibility in core vs capacity building supports
- proactive outreach to high-risk participants.

For **providers**, this means:

- financial assistance to providers including advance payments
- 10 per cent COVID-19 loading on some supports
- more generous cancellation pricing
- PPE advice and training resources.

These measures are being put in place by the Department of Social Services, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission), working with the Department of Health and state and territory governments.

# NDIS participants

Participants should contact the NDIA on 1800 800 110 if they need to talk to a planner, make changes to their plan or are having trouble sourcing services due to COVID-19.

More information about COVID-19 for NDIS participants and their families and carers is available on the NDIS website: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

## How will these changes affect me?

NDIS participants can still start a new plan, request a review of their plan or ask for necessary changes to their plan by contacting the NDIA on 1800 800 110.

To allow NDIA staff to direct their focus on urgent changes to participant plans as a result of the impacts of COVID-19, we have allowed NDIS plans to be extended by up to 24 months, ensuring continuity of support.

Telephone meetings are being offered to all current and potential NDIS participants as a safer way to continue service delivery, including for new plans and plan reviews, during the current phase of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The NDIA will also take a flexible approach to amending plans and, where necessary, shift capacity building funding to funding for core supports, in consultation with special teams of planners in the NDIA.

Anyone who needs urgent changes to their plan as a result of the impacts of COVID-19 can call 1800 800 110.

## What if my provider is not able to provide my supports due to COVID-19?

If essential services cannot be delivered by a provider, the NDIA and states and territories will work together to source an alternative provider who can step in to provide the required essential services.

If a participant is having trouble accessing services, they can call the NDIA on 1800 800 110.

## What if I, or someone I care for, is at high risk of infection or has complex needs?

People with disability who have complex needs or run a higher risk of infection may need extra support during this time.

The NDIA will be contacting targeted higher risk NDIS participants to ensure these people continue to receive the essential disability related supports they need.

The NDIA will also share data with states and territories to assist them with their continuity of services and respond to people's needs.

# NDIS service providers

Disability support workers should not attend work if they have a fever or symptoms of a respiratory illness.

All NDIS service providers must notify the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission of any change to delivery of their services.

More information for NDIS providers and disability support workers is available on the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website: [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au). This includes provider obligations, how to reduce the risk to participants, and links to updates and resources.

## What advice is available for disability support workers and providers if they, or someone they care for, is at high risk of infection?

The Department of Health has developed specific advice on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when looking after people who are confirmed to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19. Information for is available at [www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources)

Further information on COVID-19, what people can do to protect themselves and people they are caring for is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or on 1800 020 080.

## How will the Government help with the increased financial burden of COVID-19?

The Government is putting in place some measure to give NDIS service providers some financial relief, to help providers remain viable and retain their staff.

Registered NDIS providers may receive a one-month advance payment based on a monthly average supports delivered in the previous three month period – to provide immediate cash flow relief.

To cover the additional costs of service delivery for existing supports, a 10 per cent COVID-19 loading will be added to price limits for certain supports for up to six months.

This includes:

- core supports (Assistance with Daily Life (excluding Supported Independent Living) and Assistance with Social and Community Participation)
- capacity building supports (Improved Daily Living).

Additionally, increased flexibility of the NDIA's cancellation pricing policy will allow providers to charge the full 100 per cent for the price of a cancelled service, and the definition of 'short notice cancellation' will also be broadened.

Providers can also continue to claim for the increased use of cleaning and personal protective equipment associated with COVID-19.

## Is there training available for workers?

The Department of Health has developed a free training module for support workers, including disability service providers, about infection prevention and control for COVID-19, available at [covid-19training.com.au/login.php](http://covid-19training.com.au/login.php)

The Department has also developed a webinar on COVID-19 preparedness for in-home and community aged care. This webinar (<https://publish.viostream.com/app/s-n3f4rpt>) is also relevant to all providers and workers in the disability sector.

Further work is currently underway to develop measures to source additional disability support workers to provide high quality care to NDIS participants should the need arise. This will include the upskilling of displaced workers from other industries and matching existing and new workers to areas where there is a demand for services.

## More information

### Information for the whole community

For the latest advice, information and resources on COVID-19, go to [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or call the national Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**. The information line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of each state or territory public health agency is available at [www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts](http://www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts)

### Information for participants

Information for NDIS participants is available through the NDIA at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) or on **1800 800 100**. NDIA's website includes comprehensive information and regularly updated FAQs for participants, families and carers.

### Information for providers and workers

Information and resources for NDIS providers and disability support workers are available through the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission at [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au) or **1800 035 544**.