# NDIS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information Pack

# Telephone planning

# May 2020

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## Introduction

During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our priority is to support NDIS participants so that they can continue to receive the disability supports and services they need. This includes helping participants make informed choices around how to manage their health and safety and minimise their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

In line with recent Government advice, we are reducing our face-to-face interactions. This means many planning and plan review meetings are being held over the phone or by email.

While our offices continue to open, it’s important to maintain physical distancing. If you would still like to visit an NDIS office you can, however, you can still contact us by phone, email or webchat if you choose.

If you are unwell or isolating, please do not attend an NDIA office.

This information pack is designed to help people prepare for, and get the most out of their phone planning meeting.

We are regularly updating the NDIS website with information, and will be complementing this by sharing [information packs](https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus/information-packs) such as this on specific topics.

You can support our communications throughout the pandemic by using the following links to the NDIS website:

* [NDIS Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and support](https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus)
* [Information for participants](https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus/participants-coronavirus-covid-19/using-your-budget)
* [Early Childhood](https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus/early-childhood)
* [What happens when](https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus/what-happens-when)

Please let us know which topics you would like information on in the future as well as any other feedback you have to communications@ndis.gov.au.

## Planning meetings

### Planning and plan review meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic

We’ve made some changes to the planning and plan review process, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If your plan is due to end soon, we will contact you by phone to organise a planning meeting at a time that suits you.

When we contact you, you can let us know how you would prefer the meeting to take place – by phone, email or face to face.

To ensure NDIS plans don’t reach their end date, on the day your plan is due to expire it will be automatically extended by 12 months. Your extended plan will have the same core and capacity supports as your previous plan. In some circumstances, you will also have a budget for things like repairs and maintenance to assistive technology equipment.

You will not receive a copy of your extended plan in the mail, but you can access the new dates and budgets via the myplace participant portal.

### Preparing for your planning meeting

To get ready for your planning meeting, think about your immediate support needs and your current and future goals.

We recommend completing [Booklet 2 – Planning](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants). You can choose to do it on your own or get someone to help, and we encourage you to have your completed booklet with you for your planning meeting, as well as any reports or assessments relating to your support needs.

Depending on your situation and support needs, there are different people to help you prepare for your planning meeting. You can talk to your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Partner for further advice, and to confirm where to send your reports and assessments. Contact details are available on our [website](https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/locations).

## About telephone planning

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 COVID-19 pandemic.

### Tips for phone planning meetings

Here are some tips to make sure that you get the most out of a phone planning meeting.

Make sure you know when your phone appointment is, and who it will be with.

Find a quiet place to have your call where you can focus. Planning meetings can take over an hour, depending on your situation.

Make sure you have your phone with you, it is charged and you're in a space with good reception.

If you want a friend, family member or someone to help you with the meeting, make sure they are available and make sure that only one person talks at a time.

Your planning meeting will be an opportunity for you to tell us about any changes to your support needs and goals.

To help us work with you on any changes, or to include different supports in your new plan, you can provide us with important information and evidence by email. If possible, send them to your ECEI partner, LAC or NDIA Planner before the call.

### During the phone planning meeting

We need to check we are speaking to the right person, so we'll ask you proof of identity questions.

If you have someone assisting you with the meeting, you can let us know when we call you. If the person assisting in your planning meeting will be in a different location in Australia, let us know their contact details and we can dial them in separately.

We will guide you through the planning process; you can take notes and ask any questions you have along the way.

We will ask you questions about how you are going in different areas of your life. This will help us to develop a plan that provides the right support for you.

The information you provide us will also be important for tracking the progress of the NDIS, and will help to improve the Scheme for everyone.

Some of the topics we will ask you to discuss in your NDIS planning conversation are:

* your community and mainstream supports;
* how to manage every day activities;
* your safety, including equipment, accommodation or help to take care of yourself or your home;
* the goals you want to achieve;
* ways to manage your plan; and
* the support you need to use your NDIS plan.

As part of this plan review process, we will discuss with you the option of having a plan in place for up to 24 months.

Your new NDIS plan will be based on the discussion you had in your planning meeting.

## Next steps

At the end of your planning conversation, we'll talk about the next steps, including plan approval and how to start using the funding in your plan.

If there is anything important that you didn’t let us know during the planning meeting, you can email or call your Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Partner, LAC or NDIA Planner on the number they gave you.

Once your new plan is finalised, it will replace your current plan and you will receive a copy of your new plan in the mail.

### Your ECEI Coordinator, LAC or Support Coordinator can help you use your plan

Your ECEI Coordinator, LAC or Support Coordinator will help you start your NDIS plan.

They can help you:

* understand your plan and what supports and services you can pay for with your NDIS funding;
* learn what is the responsibility of other services, such as the health or education systems, or your state or territory government;
* connect with community and other government services;
* find providers who meet your needs and will help you achieve your goals;
* put service agreements and service bookings in place with your providers;
* as point of contact if you have questions, concerns or something in your life changes.

### Using your plan

Your Core Supports budget is the most flexible. Participants who are either Plan or Agency-managed and have a Core Support budget, will be able to [use all four funding categories](https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/4802-plan-flexibility-and-auto-extensions-now-include-assistive-technology) flexibly.

If your support needs significantly change, or the disability supports and services you are receiving do not meet your immediate needs, we can make changes to your funding through a change of circumstances plan review.

You can call 1800 800 110 if you need to talk to a staff member about your plan. Select option 5 for plan enquiries related to COVID-19. Special teams of planners in the NDIA are available to help make urgent changes to plans.

It is important to remember that NDIS funding is for disability-related supports, not for everyday or ordinary living expenses

## More information

In a rapidly changing environment, it can be difficult to keep up-to-date with the latest information and guidance around COVID-19.

To stay up-to-date, we recommend you regularly visit the following websites to check for updates:

* [National Disability Insurance Scheme](http://www.ndis.gov.au)
* [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/)
* [Services Australia](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/)
* [Australian Department of Health](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources).

You can also sign-up to receive the [NDIS eNewsletter](https://ndis.us6.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=055092cc7e42efbfc41d80045&id=85b9cee0c8), follow us on social media or call us on 1800 800 100.

Additional resources about the planning process and how to use your plan are available on our website:

* [How the planning process works](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/how-planning-process-works)
* [Understanding your plan](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/understanding-your-plan)
* [Managing your plan](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/managing-your-plan)
* [Working with providers](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers)
* [Changing your plan](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/changing-your-plan)