

Provider FAQs: Hearing Supports

Accessing the NDIS

What are the disability requirements for a person with a hearing impairment to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

Access to the NDIS is based on a person's age, residency and impact of their disability.

People with hearing loss requesting access to the NDIS must demonstrate their hearing impairment results in substantially reduced functional capacity to undertake relevant activities.

The [NDIS Operational Guidelines](#) indicate that disability access requirements will generally be met where a person's hearing impairments are equal to or greater than 65 decibels, in the better ear.

The intended use of this audiometric criteria is to provide guidance on those who clearly meet the disability criteria. It is not intended to exclude people who do not meet this criteria.

Where a person experiences hearing loss less than 65 decibels, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will consider all evidence provided. The NDIA will seek to understand the impairment/s that arise from the person's condition, how this impacts their ability to carry out everyday tasks, and whether these impacts are likely to be lifelong.

The evidence must demonstrate that, as a result of their impairment, they're usually unable to function without support for most activities in at least one of the following six life skill areas:

1. Communication
2. Social interaction
3. Learning
4. Mobility
5. Self-care
6. Self-management

A person under the age of 26 with a hearing loss that does not meet the disability criteria may meet the requirements for early intervention. More information can be found at the [Early Intervention Requirements page](#).

I have a client whose daily activities are being affected by their hearing impairment. However, their hearing loss is less than 65 decibels. Are they able to access the NDIS?

All applications made to access the NDIS are assessed on their own merits based on evidence provided by the person.

While the audiometric criteria in the [NDIS Operational Guidelines](#) state that generally the NDIS will be satisfied that hearing impairments, equal to or greater than 65 decibels in the better ear, are likely to reduce functional capacity of the person in their daily activities, the criteria is not intended to exclude people from accessing the Scheme.

If a person has a hearing loss less than 65 decibels, the NDIA will consider all evidence provided, and if required, will request further information to determine if a person meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act 2013).

The NDIA will seek to understand the impairment/s that arise from the person's condition, how this impacts their ability to carry out everyday tasks, and whether these impacts are likely to be lifelong

Should an audiology report or audiogram be submitted with an Access Request Form?

Generally, an audiology report and audiogram can assist the NDIA in determining the person's hearing status. So if available, reports should be attached to the participant's Access Request Form to help support their request.

However, if an Access Request Form is completed by an audiologist and provides sufficient information to determine if the person meets the NDIS access eligibility criteria, further information, such as an audiology report and audiogram, won't be required.

If the evidence is deemed insufficient, an NDIA representative will contact the applicant to request further information.

All applications made to access the NDIS are assessed on their own merits based on evidence provided by the person.

As a provider, can I claim time spent completing an access form on behalf of a participant?

In general, the NDIA does not ask providers to complete access forms on behalf of potential participants.

However, once they become a participant, the NDIA may ask for the 'Hearing Devices and Technology Assessment' template to be completed. Audiologists or audiometrists can claim that time through the CB Daily Activity budget. It's important the participant be consulted if completing the assessment on their behalf, so they are aware funds will be claimed on this budget line from their NDIS plan.

We recommend that a [service agreement](#) outlining the hours planned for assessment and administration be completed before completing the assistive technology assessment form.

Hearing Services Program

Can a person with hearing loss access both the Hearing Services Program (HSP) and NDIS?

A person can access the HSP and the NDIS if they meet the eligibility requirements of both programs. The access requirements for the NDIS remain the same regardless of whether a person is eligible for the HSP.

Where a support is available to a participant through the HSP, equivalent supports will not be funded by the NDIS. Additional reasonable and necessary supports can be funded by NDIS based on the individual's support needs.

Is an NDIS participant eligible to receive hearing supports through the HSP?

The HSP has not changed as a result of the NDIS. While an individual may be able to access the NDIS and HSP at the same time, they're not eligible to receive the same supports at the same time, from both programs.

If an individual is aged 26 years or over, and is not eligible for the HSP, then the NDIS will consider funding hearing supports.

The NDIS will also consider funding additional reasonable and necessary hearing supports if they're unavailable to the participant through the HSP. This includes people under 26 years of age.

Is my client still eligible to receive a HSP voucher under the NDIS?

The HSP hasn't changed. However, the in-kind arrangements between the HSP and NDIS have ceased which means that being an NDIS participant is no longer part of the HSP eligibility criteria.

You can find more information about the [voucher component of the HSP program \(external\) page](#).

If a participant has a HSP voucher, can additional services and supports be funded by the NDIS? For example, TV devices, Roger devices, assistive listening devices, smoke detectors or baby-cry monitors, etc.

If a participant is also eligible for the HSP, they will not be able to receive equivalent support under the NDIS.

However, when supports aren't available through the HSP (i.e. smoke detectors, assistive listening devices, etc.), the NDIS will consider funding them if they are considered to be reasonable and necessary for the participant.

Can NDIS participants choose their audiologist/audiometrist?

Where hearing supports are included in an NDIS participant's plan, they can choose which provider they get those supports from.

Where a participant is eligible to access hearing supports from the HSP, equivalent supports will not be funded by the NDIS.

If a participant that is eligible for hearing supports under the HSP chooses to access a private provider that is not contracted through the HSP to deliver those supports, the participant will need to be self-funded.

Provider Registration

Which services are delivered under the registration category of ‘Hearing Services’?

The Hearing Services registration category is recommended for the delivery of hearing services delivered by an audiometrist or an audiologist that are not covered by Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) or the [HSP \(external\)](#) page.

What services are delivered under the registration category of ‘Specialised Hearing Services’?

The Specialised Hearing Services registration category is recommended for the delivery of specialist hearing services by an audiologist to NDIS participants deemed to have a profound hearing loss and/or an implantable device or additional communication needs.

NDIS participants may receive funding for Specialised Hearing Services when they:

- have a profound hearing loss (defined as three-frequency average of 80 decibels or worse in the better ear)
- use an implantable device
- have hearing loss and severe communication impairment which:
 - prevents the participant from communicating effectively in his or her daily environment such as significant visual impairment; or
 - is caused or aggravated by significant physical, intellectual, mental, emotional or social disability or mobility issues such as after a stroke.

I’m a private provider. Am I able to provide Specialised Hearing Services to NDIS participants?

Where hearing services are included in a participant’s NDIS plan, any appropriately qualified provider can deliver these services.

However, if the provider is not registered with the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission \(external\)](#) page, the participant must self-manage the relevant items in their plan, or have a plan manager to perform this function.

What services can be provided by audiologists under the registration category “therapeutic supports”?

Most disability related services provided by an audiologist can be claimed from either Specialist Hearing Services, Hearing Services or Therapeutic Support categories depending on where funding has been included in the participant’s plan.

Audiometrists can only claim for services provided under the Hearing Services category.

Audiologists and Audiometrists can claim for hearing related assistive technology under the registration group ‘Hearing Equipment’

Can a provider who is registered in “0122 - Hearing Equipment” supply a hearing aid without a script or consultation with the appropriate professional (i.e. audiometrist or audiologist)?

Generally under the NDIS, the provision of advice and assessment about assistive technology (including hearing devices) is separate to the supply of the device or product.

Hearing support items have varying levels of complexity and in some cases may only be supplied using funding from the NDIS following assessment and prescription by a suitably qualified professional (audiometrist or audiologist as appropriate).

In particular, a participant would require an assessment from a provider registered in “0134 – Hearing Services” or “0119 – Specialised Hearing Services” to support their request for a hearing aid support (Support item reference number commencing 05_220615xxx, 05_220618xxx or 05_220621xxx) to be included their plan or supplied.

Delivering services to NDIS participants

If a client is a NDIS participant, what services can they receive?

The participant’s plan will document the purpose of their funding as it relates to their goals. You should discuss with the participant what services they would like to receive from you.

We recommend that a [service agreement](#) page is completed prior to the service being provided to outline the hours/service to be delivered.

What happens if a participant with complex hearing requirements wants to change providers?

Where an NDIS participant is considered to have complex hearing or communication needs and they are not eligible for the HSP, these supports will be funded in the participant’s NDIS plan and they will choose the provider they wish to supply those services.

Where an NDIS participant is eligible for hearing services through the HSP, those services will not be funded under the NDIS.

Additional supports that are not available to a participant through the HSP can be included in their NDIS plan where those supports are considered reasonable and necessary.

When should a service agreement be put in place?

The NDIA recommends having a written service agreement in place before paid services or support begins. This gives transparency to both participants and providers on what has been agreed.

Read more information about [service agreements](#) page.

What should a participant do if they are not satisfied with a decision made by the NDIA?

If a participant is not satisfied with a decision considered to be a reviewable decision, they have the right to request an internal review of that decision.

The internal review will be conducted by a delegate not involved in the original decision.

If the participant is still not satisfied with the decision after the internal review, they can take the matter to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. [More information about reviews is available for participants.](#)

How will you safeguard participants to ensure they are receiving quality hearing services and supports?

The NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission has been heavily involved in implementing the NDIS Hearing Services from 1 July 2020 and will be monitoring the provision of NDIS funded supports to ensure providers are delivering the supports as intended.

Pricing

What are the price limits for hearing services?

The cost of hearing services and devices is found in the [NDIS Price Guide 2020-2021](#) and the [Assistive Technology, Home Modifications and Consumables Code Guide](#).

Price limits table

Item Number	Item Name and Notes	Unit	NSW VIC QLD ACT	WA SA TAS NT	Remote	Very Remote
15_501_0119_1_3	Audiologist hearing services	Hour	\$193.99	\$193.99	\$271.59	\$290.99

Item Number	Item Name and Notes	Unit	NSW VIC QLD ACT	WA SA TAS NT	Remote	Very Remote
15_502_0134_1_3	Audiologist hearing services	Hour	\$193.99	\$193.99	\$271.59	\$290.99
15_503_0134_1_3	Audiometrist hearing services	Hour	\$166.83	\$166.83	\$233.56	\$250.25

Where the support is a quotable item, funding will not be available in the participants plan until a quote has been received and approved.

Supports should not be provided until a service booking and service agreement are in place.

Read more information about [service bookings](#) page and [service agreements](#) page.

When would audiologists use 15_501_0119_1_3 – Audiologist Specialist Hearing Services and when would they use 15_502_0134_1_3 – Audiologist Hearing Services?

Audiologists are able to provide Hearing Services (registration group 0134) and Specialist Hearing Services (registration group 0119).

The cost of these services are the same when they're provided by an Audiologist.

Where a participant has complex hearing or communication needs (and the participant is not eligible for the HSP), Specialist Hearing Services will be included in the NDIS plan.

Where Hearing Services are included in a NDIS plan (under registration group 0134), the support can be provided by either an audiologist and/or an audiometrist.

For more information see the [NDIS Price Guide](#).

Can these support items be used for supports, cancellation, and non-face-to-face supports such as tele audiology?

These support items are for hearing services not covered under the MBS performed by a suitably qualified audiologist or audiometrist.

These support items can be delivered to individual participants subject to the rules set out in this Price Guide.

As well as direct service provision, these support items can be used to claim for:

- Non-Face-to-Face Support Provision
- Provider Travel
- Short Notice Cancellations
- NDIA Requested Reports

Providers of this support can also claim for the costs of Provider Travel - Non-Labour Costs using support item 15_799_0119_1_3 or 15_799_0134_1_3, depending on their Registration Group.

These support items are subject to price limits.

For more information see the [NDIS Price Guide](#).

How many times can 0134 Hearing services code be used? Is there a limit?

If Hearing Services or Specialist Hearing Services are included in a participant's plan, the total funding available or the hours included should be detailed in the plan.

It is important to note that there may be other capacity building supports included in the plan for a different purpose, so a service bookings will need to be created for each of these capacity building supports.

Will the NDIA fund the hearing device trial time and can providers claim for the time spent on completing assessments and helping participant's access the NDIS?

In general, the NDIA does not ask providers to complete access forms on behalf of participants.

In relation to trials of hearing aids, manufacturers provide devices free of charge for trial and it would be expected that providers enter into discussions with their suppliers to seek devices for trial.

In regards to the audiologists or audiometrists time spent with the participant during the trialling of a range of devices, hours can be claimed from CB Daily Activity Budget line.

Note this should be done in consultation with the participant so they are aware funds will be claimed from their NDIS plan. We recommend that a service agreement is completed prior to the service being provided, the agreement should outline the hours planned for assessment and administration.

Can a hearing device (e.g. Roger device) be categorised as a therapy device and therefore be funded under therapy services?

Rodger devices are available through the HSP.

For NDIS participants not eligible for the HSP, Roger devices may be funded following the assistive technology assessment process. Roger devices are no longer included in assistive technology levels one or two.

Where assessors are recommending the Phonak Roger system, the Hearing Devices and Technology assessment template may be completed to justify why a lower cost remote device that is already compatible with the participant's current hearing aids is not suitable. If the assessment template is not completed then clear written justifications should accompany the recommendation.

Is support code 05_220621111_0119_1_2 for Specialised Hearing Services (Equipment Special Assessment Setup) - Cochlear Implant Speech Processor and Coil - CSO - AH Only (In Kind) still in operation?

NDIS registered providers cannot use in-kind support items.

These have been decommissioned but are still listed until the plans that include these supports have reached their end-date.

All hearing devices are now within the Hearing Equipment (0122) registration group. The NDIA re-established a code for replacement processors for implanted devices on 5 August. The new code is: "External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing devices 05_220621211_0122_1_2"

How are the following items funded?

- **Custom earplugs**
- **Alarm, doorbell alert, phone alert**
- **Naida Link, AB SP (CIs), MedEI SPs (for BAHAs/ Sound bridges/ bone bridges and CIs) and Cochlear SPs – (BAHA and for CIs), Oticon Medical SPs**
- **Hearing aid batteries, chargers, accessories and maintenance**
- **Ongoing costs for ear moulds**

The [Assistive Technology, Home Modifications and Consumables Code Guide](#) covers a range of assistive technology items and includes guidance on claiming, particularly for low cost items and repairs.

The following hearing equipment items are listed in the [NDIS Support Catalogue](#):

- Low Cost AT For Hearing Related AT
- AT Rental - Hearing Devices and Accessories
- Standard level hearing device
- Intermediate level hearing device
- Advanced level hearing device
- Non-Standard Hearing device
- External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing devices
- Personal Amplifiers/Binaural Listener
- Remote Control For Hearing Aids
- TV Device For Hearing Assistance
- Music Devices
- Induction Loop Devices
- remote microphone system
- Adapted Landline Telephone
- Baby Cry Alerting Systems For Hearing Impaired
- Hearing Device processor and accessory repair

Alarms, doorbell alerts, consumables, etc. would be included in Low Cost AT for Hearing Related AT item.

Where an NDIS participant has an implantable device, specialist hearing services will be included in their NDIS plan where these services are not available to the participant through the HSP. Where an NDIS

participant is aged 26 or over and their speech processor has reached the end of its service life or is unrepairable, a recommendation and quote should be provided to the NDIS for consideration.

As per the Assistive Technology, Home Modifications and Consumables Code Guide, the appropriate item is quotable is 'External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing devices 05_220621211_0122_1_2'. This item is quotable and also includes speech processors for bone anchored devices.

What are the technical specifications for hearing aids funded by the NDIS?

As per the [Assistive Technology, Home Modifications and Consumables Code Guide](#), the current specifications for the hearing aids are:

Device level	Item numbers	Details
Standard level hearing device	05_220615111_0122_1_2	An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss (OSPL90 \geq 128 dBSPL) IEC RTF 1600 Hz. Includes 10+ channels, feedback management, adaptive noise control, option to add telecoil, directional microphone, and minimum bandwidth of 8kHz.
Intermediate level hearing device	05_220615211_0122_1_2	An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss and provides increased functions over and above what can be met with standard level devices. May include speech enhancement, sound management, ear to ear technology, and volume controls.
Advanced level hearing device	05_220615511_0122_1_2	An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss and provides increased functions over and above what can be met with intermediate level devices. May include one or more of the following features; 24+ channels, tinnitus reduction, smartphone connectivity, automatic programming, wireless, compatibility with accessories, remote programming.
Non-Standard Hearing device	05_220618111_0122_1_2	A device that offers specific technology to meet a particular functional requirement, which cannot be met by a Standard, Intermediate or Advanced hearing device.

Do the NDIS levels correlate to the levels used under the HSP?

The levels of technology were determined based on the features that are expected to address the functional impact of a person's hearing loss and they do correlate with devices provided under the HSP to some extent.

The standard level hearing device is equivalent to a device available under the voucher component of the HSP, the advanced level hearing device is equivalent to a device available through the Community Services Obligations (CSO) component of the HSP.

In exceptional circumstances, a non-standard device may be considered reasonable and necessary where an individual's circumstances required additional features that are not available from the advanced level device.

How can providers manage their expenses while providing the most advanced devices, which are quite expensive?

The NDIA set the prices for hearing devices based on market research and information about the cost of manufacture. There is evidence that the prices set for the technology level of each device is sufficient.

It is also determined that the level of technology available within the three levels of hearing devices will adequately meet the reasonable and necessary criteria under the NDIS Act 2013 and address the functional impact of a participant's hearing loss in most cases.

Assistive technology assessments

When should the Hearing Devices and Technology assessment template be submitted?

The assessment template should be submitted when requesting:

- new hearing devices for a participant
- a hearing device for a first-time user
- replacing or refitting the device.

When filling out form, please only complete the sections relevant to your needs. Completing the whole form is unnecessary.

At what stage should audiologists or audiometrists complete the Hearing Devices and Technology assessment template?

The template should be completed when either the NDIA or the participant requests the assessment and there is funding available for the assessment included in the plan and there is a service agreement in place between the provider and the participant.

In some cases, the funding will be included in the plan but the assessment may not be required immediately. In this case, it is most appropriate to complete the assessment and make recommendations prior to a plan review.

Where there has been no funding included for an assessment and the participant requires a replacement hearing aid prior to the scheduled plan review, a [change of circumstance request](#) may be required.

Are audiologists and audiometrists paid for completing the Hearing Devices and Technology assessment template? If so, what funding category/support code should be used?

Suitably qualified audiologists and audiometrists can claim from the following budget lines for the time spent completing the assessment template where funding for the assessment has been included in the Capacity Building budget of the participant's plan:

- 15_501_0119_1_3 specialised hearing services
- 15_502_0134_1_3 hearing services by an Audiologist
- 15_503_0134_1_3 hearing services by an Audiometrist

These support items provide for Hearing Services that aren't covered under the MBS, performed by a suitably qualified audiologist or audiometrist. These support items can be delivered to individual participants subject to the rules set out in the [NDIS Price Guide](#).

As well as direct-service provision, these support items can be used to claim for:

- Non-Face-to-Face Support Provision
- Provider Travel
- Short Notice Cancellations, and
- NDIA Requested Reports.

When a support is not directly provided (i.e. a Non-Face-to-Face Support Provision or NDIA Requested Reports) then the price-limit applied to the support is the same price-limit as for a participant receiving support at a support-person's place at the time of service delivery.

Further information is provided in the [NDIS Price Guide](#).

Please consult the participant if completing a form on their behalf so they are aware funds will be claimed from their NDIS plan. We also recommend that a [service agreement](#) is completed before providing the services, outlining hours planned for assessment and administration.

If a client has a HSP voucher does their audiologist need to complete the Hearing Devices and Technology assessment template?

The Hearing Devices and Technology assessment template is not required for supports available to the participant through the HSP.

If an NDIS participant is eligible for the HSP, supports available under the HSP will not be funded by the NDIS.

A participant who received a HSP voucher issued through the NDIS before 30 June 2020 under the in-kind arrangement can use it until it expires. However, they won't receive additional funding from the NDIS for supports available through the HSP while the voucher is valid.

If a participant chooses to cancel their voucher, the NDIS may fund hearing devices deemed reasonable and necessary.

What happens if the participant loses or damages the hearing devices while they're on trial? Who is responsible for any costs of repair or replacement?

Please consult with your professional association and refer to the formal agreement or arrangement made between the supplier and the provider. This may include involving business insurance.

Does every option and device evaluation require a client to wear the recommended technology for a set period of time?

Such decisions are based on the technology levels of devices being recommended.

If considering the lower two levels of technology, an 'in-clinic' comparison may be adequate.

The requirement for a client to wear recommended technology over a set period of time, would only be needed if a premium-level device was recommended. In such cases, it would be expected that a robust trial of lower-level technology would be delivered, including trials issued in community settings.

For hearing aid recommendations above the lower two levels, more robust trials would be expected to be completed – this would include trials delivered in community settings with remote microphones.

Where speech test results are difficult to obtain due to a degree of hearing loss or language barriers, what other types of objective evidence might be considered?

In such circumstance, best practice clinical judgement is appropriate. Where possible, it's helpful for an assessor to indicate if the device is being recommended for sound awareness or verbal communication.

Is it possible to discuss the assessment with the delegate making the decision to fund the assistive technology?

Where a delegate requires further information to make a decision, they may contact the provider with the consent of the participant. Where the participant is not satisfied with a decision, they can request an internal review.

Planners are provided with support, tools and training to assist with making reasonable and necessary decisions.

To assist in requests that pertain to higher level technologies, planners have access to internal NDIA subject matter experts.

NDIA delegates and subject matter experts can seek additional information if required and with the participant's consent.