Our Guideline – Plan Variations

Quick summary: A plan variation is when we make changes to your current plan. We can vary your current plan for minor changes that don't impact your support needs, or we can add short-term support. For example, we can change how your funding is managed.

A plan variation is one type of plan change. A plan change could also be a plan reassessment. This is when we create a new plan when your current plan no longer meets your disability support needs. To learn about plan reassessments, go to Our Guideline – Plan reassessments.

When we say 'disability support needs', we mean the NDIS supports you need that directly relate to your disability.

What's in this guidance?

This guidance covers:

- What is a plan variation?
- When can we vary your plan?
- When can we vary your plan after a support determination?
- How do we decide if you need a plan variation?
- What else do we think about?
- How to ask for a plan variation
- Information you can give us to support your plan variation request
- What happens during a plan variation?
- What happens after a plan variation?
- What if you don't agree with our decision?

You may also be interested in:

- Plan reassessments
- Reviewing our decisions
- Creating your plan
- Reasonable and necessary supports
- Your plan
- What principles do we follow to create your plan?

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

What is a plan variation?

A plan variation is when we make changes to your current plan. There are some changes we can make to your current plan without doing a plan reassessment. The laws for the NDIS tell us what these are.[1] If we decide to do a plan variation, we'll prepare your varied plan with you.[2] Learn more about how we decide if you need a plan variation.

If your plan variation is to change the funding in your plan, the varied plan must still meet the NDIS funding criteria.[3] Learn more about the NDIS funding criteria in Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary supports.

When can we vary your plan?

There are certain situations when we can vary your plan. NDIS laws tell us what these situations are. This guidance describes the situations where we can vary your plan, and the things we need to consider when making our decision.

We can decide to vary your plan if:

- you ask us for a plan variation
- we think a plan variation is needed. When we decide to vary your plan, we call this a **CEO-initiated plan variation**.

If a **support determination** is applied to your plan and you meet the high support needs criteria, you may be able to ask for a plan variation. This type of plan variation is only for participants who meet the high support needs criteria and need access to more funding to meet their 24-hour disability support needs.[4] Learn more about the high support needs plan variation pathway.

When you ask for a plan variation, the changes we make to your plan may be different to what you asked for. We'll talk to you about this when we're making changes to your plan.

You may need to give us evidence to support your plan variation request. Learn more about the information you can give us to support your plan variation request.

Sometimes, we may decide to do a CEO-initiated plan variation. We'll talk to you about why you need a plan variation and work with you to vary your plan. We might decide to vary your plan:

- if we think there's a risk to your safety
- if we think you're at risk of financial harm
- to make sure you can still access your NDIS supports
- to help you spend in line with your plan

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

- if you want to change your plan statement of goals and aspirations.

We may decide to do a plan variation if we know your plan isn't working for you.

For example, you may not have the right NDIS supports you need, or you may not be using your NDIS supports.

This information might come from:

- you or someone else in your life
- your local area coordinator, early childhood partner, or support coordinator
- our system, that shows how you're using the funding in your plan.

If we think you need a plan variation, we'll talk to you and explain why we need to make changes to your plan.[5] We'll also make sure you understand what this means for you and what happens next.

Spending in line with your plan

We can only vary your plan to add more funding in certain situations. We can't vary your plan because you spent your funding before the end of your funding period and your support needs haven't changed.

It's important you stay within the funding amounts in your plan, including any funding periods or funding components. Staying within your plan funding helps you manage your supports and continue to pay for the supports you need for the full length of your plan.

Usually, we're not allowed to pay for supports outside of your plan if you use up your funding before the end of your funding period.

Under the laws for the NDIS, there are some very limited circumstances when we may pay for supports outside of your plan. This might happen if:

- there's a serious risk to your life, health or safety
- you couldn't ask for a plan change because of your disability
- your plan funding was misused due to fraud.

We'll generally only consider paying for essential supports you rely on every day, like personal care, disability-related health supports or behaviour supports.

Learn more about what to do if you spend your funding before the end of the funding period in Our Guideline – Your Plan.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

When can we vary your plan after a support determination?

Under the new laws for the NDIS, the Minister can make a decision to reduce the funding you have available for some supports in your plan.[6] This is called a support determination.

Support determinations will be applied to your NDIS plan when we create a new plan from 1 October 2026. This could be when we create your first plan or reassess your plan. They will also apply to renewed plans from 1 February 2027.[7] Learn about support determinations in Our Guideline – Creating your plan.

If a support determination is applied to your plan and you meet the high support needs criteria, you might be able to ask for a plan variation.[8] You can ask us to vary your plan for this reason if all of the below apply to your situation:

- you meet the high support needs criteria[9]
- a support determination has been applied to your current plan
- the total amount of available funding in your plan has been reduced.

You need to ask us for a plan variation within **90 days** from when the support determination was applied to your plan.[10] In some situations, we can give you more time to ask us to vary your plan. If we do, we'll let you know in writing.

You don't need to give us any evidence to ask for this type of plan variation. If you think you meet the criteria for high support needs, you can contact us to ask for a plan variation.

When we make a decision on your request, we need to decide:

- if you meet the high support needs criteria. To do this, we look at your plan before the support determination was applied to see if you meet the high support needs criteria
- if you need a plan variation. We look at how the support determination impacted the funding available in your plan.

If we decide to vary your plan, we'll add funding to make sure you get the disability supports you need. We only look at the amount of support you need to continue to receive your 24-hour funded disability supports.[11]

This variation pathway is different to when you need to ask for a minor change to your plan or your situation has changed. If your ongoing need for NDIS supports has significantly changed since your plan was approved, you can ask for a plan reassessment.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

What are the high support needs criteria?

Under NDIS laws, this variation pathway is for participants with high support needs who receive **24-hour disability support**.

Before we can make a decision to vary your plan, we need to decide if you meet the specific criteria for high support needs. You have high support needs if you meet **all** criteria below:

- you receive 24- hour funded NDIS supports to meet your daily disability support needs.[12] This could be a combination of shared, individual and overnight supports.
- your total annual budget for Assistance with Daily Life, Home and Living, and Assistance with Social, Economic and Community Participation was $215,030 or more before the support determination was applied.[13]

$215,030 is the minimum amount for continuous funded supports over a 24-hour period. It's calculated from a shared support ratio of 1 support worker to 3 participants.

We have 21 days from the date we receive your request to decide if you meet the high support needs criteria, or to let you know we need more time to make our decision.[14]

If you don't meet the high support needs criteria, we can't make a decision to vary your plan. This type of variation is only for participants with high support needs who have been impacted by a support determination.

If you meet the high support needs criteria, learn about how we make a decision to vary or not to vary your plan.

How do we make a decision to vary your plan if you meet the high support needs criteria?

If we decide that you meet the high support needs criteria, we have another 21 days to make a plan variation decision.[15] We'll look at your plan to:

- decide to vary your plan[16]
- decide not to vary your plan[17]
- let you know we need more time to make our decision.[18]

We can decide to vary your plan if the funding available in your plan after the support determination is applied is both:

- not enough to safely meet your 24-hour disability support needs[19]
- not enough for the support ratio you need. For example, you need individual support most of the time and you only have enough funding for shared supports.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

If you meet both criteria above, we will decide to vary your plan.

We'll calculate the amount of funding you need to continue to receive your 24-hour disability supports. To do this, we look at the gap in your daily supports after the support determination was applied.[20] We'll add funding for specific supports to make sure you get your disability supports at the level and intensity you need them.

We can only add funding in your budget for:

- assistance with daily living[21]
- home and living supports.[22]

We can't add funding back into your budget for assistance with social, economic and community participation or improved daily living skills.[23]

The amount of funding we add to your plan may not be the full amount you had available before the support determination was applied. We also can't add more funding than you had in your plan before the support determination.[24]

You can use this funding to continue to receive the 24-hour disability supports you need every day. This may mean changing the way you get your supports to make sure your funding will meet your 24-hour support needs for the full length of your plan.

We'll send you a copy of your varied plan within 7 days.[25]

Example 1 – Ethan

Ethan is 22 years old and has Muscular Dystrophy. He lives in supported independent living with 2 other NDIS participants. The total funding in Ethan's plan includes $360,000 a year to make sure he has 24-hour disability supports. This includes:

- $210,000 for home and living supports and assistance with daily living supports
- $150,000 for assistance with social, economic and community participation supports.

Ethan's budget for home and living and assistance with daily living includes funding for **20 hours** of his usual daily support in his home. This is made up of:

- 10 hours at a support ratio of 1 support worker to 2 participants.
- 2 hours at a support ratio of 1 support worker to 3 participants.
- 8 hours for overnight supports, at a support ratio of 1 support worker to 3 participants.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Ethan's budget for assistance with social, economic and community participation includes **4 hours** a day for his support worker to support him individually. This is a 1 to 1 support ratio for Ethan to get support to participate in the community and socialise with his friends outside his home.

These supports mean Ethan is funded for **24 hours** of disability supports every day.

Ethan's plan was reassessed in October and a support determination was applied to his funding for assistance with social, economic and community participation. This funding change reduced the amount of funding available for Ethan's support in the community, from $150,000 to $75,000 per year.

This means his total budget for assistance with daily living supports, home and living supports and social, economic, and community participation supports changed from $360,000 to $285,000.

The support determination was only applied to his budget for assistance with social, economic and community participation, but he relied on this funding to meet his 24-hour daily support needs.

Because of this reduction in his available funding, he can only receive 2 hours of support in the community each day at the support ratio he needs. This means he only has enough funding in his new plan for 22 hours of disability supports a day.

Ethan's plan nominee asks for a plan variation within 90 days of receiving his new plan.

To decide if Ethan meets the high support needs criteria, we look at his current plan and see that he has funding for 24-hour disability supports. We decide that Ethan meets the high support needs criteria.

We then look at Ethan's plan and can see that the support determination has impacted his 24-hour disability supports. We make a decision to vary Ethan's plan and add funding to make sure he gets the 24-hour support he needs.

To calculate the amount of funding to add to his plan, we look at the gap in his daily supports:

1. During the day, when Ethan is at home, he usually gets support at a support ratio of 1 support worker to 2 participants most of the time.
2. The amount of funding Ethan needs to fill the 2-hour daily gap at a support ratio of 1 to 2 is $25,000 per year. This is the amount that is needed to safely continue Ethan's 24-hour daily disability supports. We can only increase his funding by the amount needed to meet the support gap of 2 hours per day.
3. We add $25,000 to his budget for home and living and assistance with daily living supports.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

4. This increases his total plan funding from $285,000 to $310,000.

We tell Ethan and his plan nominee about the changes we made to his plan and give them a copy of the varied plan. Ethan works with his support coordinator and providers to create a new support schedule, within his total plan funding. The new schedule makes sure his 24-hour disability support needs are met for the full length of his plan.

Example 2 – Aisha

Aisha is 28 years old and has complex support needs. She has 24-hour disability supports every day, including in-home supports, overnight supports and high intensity supports in the community. Her total plan budget is $380,000 per year. This includes:

- $240,000 for home and living supports and daily living supports to support Aisha at home. This support is usually for 12 hours during the day and 8 hours of overnight support. She usually gets shared support at home, with a support ratio of one support worker to 3 participants.
- $110,000 for high intensity social, economic and community participation supports. This is for high intensity, individual support when Aisha is in the community. She has an average of 4 hours a day for this support, where a support worker is only supporting Aisha.
- $30,000 in total for improved daily living skills supports. This includes $10,000 for her disability-related health supports.

In November 2026, Aisha's plan is reassessed and a support determination is applied to her plan. Aisha's budget for:

- assistance with social, economic and community participation doesn't change because her high intensity supports are excluded from the support determination.
- improved daily living skills does change. This is because some of her supports will have a support determination applied. Her funding for disability related health supports is excluded from the support determination and doesn't change. The other funding for improved daily living skills supports will have the support determination applied and the funding changes from $20,000 to $18,000.

Aisha gets her renewed plan that says her total plan funding is now $378,000. Her plan nominee asks for a plan variation because she is a high support needs participant.

We look at Aisha's plan and can see that she has funding for 24-hour disability supports. We decide she meets the high support needs criteria.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Then, we need to decide if we can vary her plan. Aisha's plan has enough funding to safely continue her 24-hour disability supports. The support determination was only applied to her funding for improved daily living skills.

We can't make a decision to vary Aisha's plan because there is no gap in her 24-hour disability supports. We tell Aisha and her plan nominee that we can't vary her plan and support her to use her current plan funding.

How do we decide if you need a plan variation?

NDIS laws tell us what we can change in your plan through a plan variation. Plan variations after a support determination is applied are only one of the reasons we can vary your plan. We can also vary your plan:

- to fix an error in your plan
- to change your plan statement of goals or aspirations
- to change your plan reassessment date
- to change how your funding is managed
- to change your funding periods or funding components
- to update who needs to provide a support or how it needs to be provided
- to add crisis or emergency funding because of a significant change to your NDIS support needs
- to make a minor variation to your plan to increase your funding
- if you've given us the information, quotes or reports we asked for

When we vary your plan, we'll work with you to understand how your situation has changed. We look at the information you've given us to make a decision about varying your plan.

We can decide to:

- vary your plan[26]
- not vary your plan[27]
- let you know we need more time to make our decision.[28]

We need to make our decision about your request for a plan variation within **21 days** of receiving your request.[29] We'll send you a letter to tell you our decision and the reason for our decision.[30]

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Sometimes, we need more time to make our decision. If this happens, we must either vary the plan or decide not to vary the plan as soon as we reasonably can.[31] What is reasonable will depend on whether we have asked you for more information or reports.[32]

We may ask you to give us more information to help us make our decision.[33] We may need you to get an assessment or examination from an appropriately qualified professional and give us their report.[34]

If we don't make a decision within **21 days** of receiving your request, NDIS laws say the plan variation request will be declined. We'll review this decision not to vary your plan automatically. We call this an automatic internal review. We'll let you know in writing if we do an automatic internal review. You don't need to do anything.

If we need more time to make our decision, we'll decide whether to vary your plan within:

- 28 days, or
- 50 days if we're addressing complex needs.[35]

Fix an error in your plan

If there is a minor or technical error in your plan, we can usually correct it through a plan variation.

A minor or technical error is where there is a small mistake in your plan. This could be a spelling mistake, a missing word or adding the wrong funding amount from a quote or cost estimate.

To be considered a minor error, it must be clear what the correct information should have been. For example, we added $3,600 for your assistive technology instead of $36,000 stated in your quote. We can fix this in your plan through a plan variation.

Change your plan goals

You can change your statement of goals and aspirations at any time, you just need to let us know.[36] We'll update your plan through a plan variation to include your new statement of goals and aspirations. We'll give you a copy of your varied plan within 7 days of changing your goals and aspirations.[37]

Only you can request a change to your statement of goals and aspirations. If there's an error in your statement of goals and aspirations, we'll contact you before we make any changes or corrections.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Change your plan reassessment date

Your reassessment date is specific to you and your situation. In some situations, we can change your reassessment date to a later or earlier date if we need to.[38] We'll talk to you and work with you if we need to make these types of changes.

For example, if your plan is working for you, we may change the reassessment date to a later date. We call this a plan continuation.

The NDIS rules say that a plan can't be longer than 5 years. This means we can only vary your plan for up to 5 years.[39]

We won't change your reassessment date if there are concerns about how your plan is working for you, or if you haven't been using the funding in your plan. If this happens, we'll check-in with you to make sure your plan is still meeting your support needs and that you have the help you need to access your supports. For example, we can help you understand your plan and connect with providers.

If we change the reassessment date in your plan, we may need to vary the statement of participant supports in your plan. We'll work with you to do this.[40]

If we extend your plan reassessment date, the NDIS supports in your plan will not change. As the funding will now be for a longer time, we'll adjust the funds in your plan to account for the longer timeframe.[41]

For example, if your plan is meeting your needs, we might change the reassessment date, so your plan goes for longer. If we do this, we'll adjust the funding for NDIS supports to cover the extra time.

If we bring your reassessment date forward, the NDIS supports in your plan won't change. As the funding is now for a shorter time, we'll adjust the funds to account for the shorter plan timeframe.[42]

Example of a change to your reassessment date

Fatima is a 27-year-old participant who lives with a mild intellectual disability. She speaks Arabic and uses an interpreter.

At Fatima's last check-in, she talked to her planner about her plans to move out of home within the next 12 months. Fatima's current NDIS supports are working for her, but she would like to try living independently. At Fatima's check-in, her goals were updated to show she wants to move out of home. No other changes were made as her plan was near its reassessment date.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

When developing Fatima's next plan, her planner suggests they can reassess her plan in 10 months. By then they will be able to include any additional supports Fatima might need when she is no longer living at home. Fatima's planner can see that she has found providers she is working well with to work towards her goals of moving out of home. Her current supports have been working well over the past 12 months and are likely to continue to meet her support needs.

Fatima and her planner discuss continuing her plan. Fatima would like to continue with her current supports. Fatima's planner approves a variation to her reassessment date. Fatima's plan will continue with the same supports for the next 10 months. Fatima's planner also tells her that if her situation changes, she can contact the NDIS.

Change how your funding is managed

We can vary your plan to change how your funding is managed.[43] You can ask us to do this, or we may decide to do this through a CEO-initiated plan variation. When we make a decision about how your plan funding is managed, we think about your preference for how you want to manage the funding in your plan.

We also think about if you,[44] your child representative,[45] your plan nominee,[46] or registered plan manager[47] are unlikely to spend your funding only on NDIS supports and in line with your plan.[48] If we think this is the case, we may not approve your request to change how your funding is managed.

There are some situations that mean we need to manage the funding in your plan for you. We'll need to manage the funding in your plan if we are aware you or your plan nominee:

- have been convicted of an offence that is punishable by imprisonment of 2 years or more[49]
- have been convicted of an offence that involves fraud or dishonesty.[50]

We'll also think about if there's an unreasonable risk to you if you, your nominee, child representative or registered plan manager manages your funding.[51] Learn more about how we decide who manages your funding in Our Guideline – Creating your plan.

If we change how your funding is managed, this may change how we group the funding components in your plan. For example, if you self-manage one part of your plan, and another part is Agency managed, we'll split these into separate funding components. Learn more in our Guide to self-management.

When self-managing plan funding, we understand that most people try to do the right thing but sometimes make mistakes. We want to help you do the right thing. This means if you do make a mistake, like spending your NDIS funds on something that's not an NDIS support, we'll work with you to resolve the issue.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

We'll also look at any supports and strategies we can include in your plan to help you manage your funding in the way you want. Find out more about spending in line with your plan.

If we think there's an unreasonable risk to you if you, your nominee, child representative or registered plan manager manages your funding, we may need to do a CEO-initiated plan variation. We might also do this if you don't spend your funding in line with your plan or on NDIS supports. Learn more about what we mean by an unreasonable risk to you in Our Guideline – Creating your plan.

If we change how the funding in your plan is managed, we may need to reassess your plan. This is so we can add or remove funding for plan management supports. To learn more about plan reassessments go to Our Guideline – Plan reassessments.

Change your funding periods or funding components

Your **funding period** is the time that a part of your funding becomes available and how long it needs to last. You can spend up to the amount of funding that is available in that time period. The amount of funding available in your funding periods can be for the total funding amount of your plan or each funding component amount in your plan.

You can ask us to change your funding periods. You can ask us to change:

- when we provide funding. For example, you need funding already included in your plan available sooner. We can decide to move funding to an earlier funding period. Learn more in example of changing your funding periods
- the number of funding periods
- the length of your funding periods
- how much funding you get in each funding period.[52]

If we vary your funding periods, it won't change the total amount of funding in your plan.

Funding components are funding for a specific support or group of reasonable and necessary supports. If your plan has funding components, we can change how we group your NDIS supports in your funding components. This will not change the total funding amount in your plan.

If there is evidence that you, your nominee or child representative isn't spending in line with your plan, we may do a CEO-initiated plan variation to make some changes. We might change the funding periods or funding components in your plan. This is intended to help you to access your funding when you need it and make sure your funding lasts for the length of your plan.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

We don't add funding component amounts and funding periods to plans through a plan variation if you don't already have them in your plan. We'll include them in new plans and plan approval decisions made through a plan reassessment.

Learn more about funding component amount(s) and funding periods in Our Guideline – Creating your plan.

Example of changing your funding periods

Jane is 40 and lives with cerebral palsy. She lives with her mum, Pauline, who helps Jane with her daily activities. For example, getting washed and dressed in the morning. Pauline is also Jane's plan nominee.

Pauline has surgery scheduled to replace her hip later in the year. When we first approved Jane's plan, we included extra funding in future funding periods for a support worker to help with daily activities while Pauline is in hospital.

Pauline's surgery is unexpectedly brought forward. She now has an earlier appointment in a few weeks. This means she won't be able to help Jane at home and Jane doesn't have enough funding in this funding period for a support worker.

Pauline contacts us to request a variation to Jane's plan. We look at Jane's current plan and see that she has funding included for supports when her mum is in hospital already. We vary Jane's plan to move the funding to an earlier funding period. This means funding is available to use sooner. This plan variation doesn't add extra funding to Jane's total funding amount.

Jane can now use this temporary funding during this short-term period for a support worker to help while her mum is in hospital.

Update who needs to provide a support or how it needs to be provided

If your current plan states that an NDIS support must be provided in a certain way or by a specific provider, and there is a change to this, we can vary your plan. We can update how a support must be delivered or who needs to provide it.[53] Learn more about how we include NDIS supports in your plan in Our Guideline – Creating your plan.

For example, your plan might say that a specific provider must provide your NDIS supports. If that provider closes down and you can no longer get supports from them, we can vary your plan to update to the new specific provider.

Add crisis or emergency funding because of a significant change to your NDIS support needs

If you experience a significant change to your need for NDIS supports, we may be able to vary your plan to add crisis or emergency funding. We can do this without creating a new plan in some specific situations.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

To vary your plan, the crisis or emergency funding needs to be for either:

- a once-off support.[54] For example, a sudden change in your mobility means you urgently need a wheelchair
- a specific period of time.[55] For example, a family member who usually supports you every day has suddenly gone into hospital. We could add funding for a support worker for one-month until the family member can support you again.

The significant change in your need for NDIS supports must be because of a significant change in your:

- functional capacity.[56] This means the things you can do every day without the assistance of other people, assistive technology or modifications.
- informal supports.[57] This means your family, friends, kin, neighbours and community members who provide unpaid disability related support and assistance to you.
- living arrangements.[58] For example, following a natural disaster you may need extra supports to live in temporary housing that doesn't meet your disability support needs.

We consider if you need an urgent change to your current plan to meet your disability support needs. If we're not sure your disability support needs will be met, we might decide to vary your plan. For example, we may need to add funding quickly to make sure you get the NDIS supports you need until we can do a plan reassessment. We may add funding for a specific period of time and bring your reassessment date forward.

We also need to think about if a plan reassessment is more appropriate to meet your disability support needs. We may need to reassess your plan if the change to your disability support needs is ongoing or you have made multiple requests to vary your plan.

When we add emergency supports to your plan, we'll let you know how you can use them and for how long. Generally, these NDIS supports won't be for the whole length of your plan. We'll check in with you regularly over this time. Near the end of this specific time period, we'll check in to see if your plan can continue without these emergency supports. If not and your need for the emergency support is an ongoing change, we may need to reassess your plan.

We might decide not to vary your plan if there are supports in your plan that you can use flexibly.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Example of a plan variation to add crisis or emergency funding

Leigh is 20 years old and lives at home with his dad, Geoff. Geoff is Leigh's only informal support and helps him with all his personal care needs. Leigh also has support workers to help him get around his house and the community.

Recently, Geoff had an accident and suffered a broken leg. Geoff needs rehabilitation and won't be able to help Leigh like he usually does. Geoff is expected to recover well and receive medical clearance to provide care to Leigh again in 10 weeks' time.

Because of Geoff's accident, Leigh needs urgent personal care support as he is unable to manage this independently. This is a significant change for Leigh because Geoff usually supports him with all his personal care needs. He needs an increase in his support worker hours for personal care and support with his mobility. He calls his local area coordinator and asks for a plan variation to get more NDIS supports to cover this. Leigh's local area coordinator completes the plan variation request form with Leigh so his planner can look at his plan and current situation.

Leigh's planner thinks about all the information and can see that his current plan won't cover his urgent support needs. Leigh's change in support needs is only for a short time, so his planner decides to vary his current plan.

Leigh's planner approves 10 weeks of personal care support to cover this specific period of time. Leigh's plan doesn't need to be reassessed because crisis or emergency funding can be added in a plan variation.

Leigh's local area coordinator checks in with him to see if he needs more help or linkages to supports in the community.

You need a minor variation of your plan to increase your funding

In some situations, we can make a minor variation to your plan which increases your funding. NDIS laws tell us when we can do this.

To add supports for work, study, capacity building or a life transition

Sometimes, we can make a minor variation to your plan to add a reasonable and necessary support.[59] We can do this if the support is:

- only needed for a specific amount of time
- a once-off support.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

We can add this funding when you need more support for:

- work or study.[60] For example, if you have an opportunity to start a job before there is time to do a plan reassessment. In this case, we may add specific employment supports that you need so you don't miss out on the opportunity. This gives us time do a plan reassessment to decide if you need ongoing employment supports in your plan.
- capacity building supports to help you build your skills. For example, you're moving away for university earlier than planned and need occupational therapy for a short time to help build your skills to live away from home.
- support through a life change.[61] For example, if your child is starting school a year earlier than planned. Now they may need more support for a short time to help build their capacity to manage this life change.

We must also make sure that the support is not the same or doesn't give you the same support outcomes as another support already included in your plan.[62]

To increase your existing Assistive Technology (AT), Home Modifications or Vehicle Modifications funding

We may decide to increase the amount of funding for a reasonable and necessary support in your current plan. We can only do this if the support is:

- assistive technology (AT)
- home modifications
- vehicle modifications funding.[63]

The variation to your funding should not duplicate other supports in your plan or that achieve the same outcome.

We can also add funding for a replacement, repair or maintenance of your assistive technology (AT). Your AT may have been funded in your current plan or your previous plan.[64]

This increase in funding also needs to be either:

- only needed for a specific amount of time
- a once-off support.[65] For example, a repair to your wheelchair.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

We can vary the funding for one of these supports if:

- you can't buy that support with the funding in your current plan.[66] For example, you have funding in your plan for vehicle modifications based on an approved quote. When you contact the provider the cost of materials has increased. In this case, you'll need more funding to cover the cost of the same vehicle modifications.
- the way the supports were agreed to be provided has changed.[67] For example, you're living in a remote area and a single physiotherapist travels to you regularly. They had agreed to fit your assistive technology on one of their regular trips. The provider shuts down and there are no other physiotherapists in the area who can fit your assistive technology. You now have to pay extra for another physiotherapist to travel and fit your assistive technology. In this case, you'll need more funding to cover the cost of the same supports.
- there is extra unexpected information needed such as quotes, assessments, services or materials.[68] For example, you're having home modifications completed. After work started, termites and rot were discovered in the floor. The floor must be repaired for the home modifications to be completed. So, you'll need more funding to cover the costs of the same home modifications.

Learn more about home modifications.

We may need to respond quickly if you need urgent supports before your plan reassessment date. In this case, we may need to do a plan variation. This is to make sure your disability support needs are met until we can do a plan reassessment.

Example of a variation to increase AT funding

Elijah is 5 years old and has cerebral palsy. Elijah requires an ankle foot orthotic (AFO) to improve his walking pattern and stability.

He has had a growth spurt and his current AFO is now too small and needs to be changed.

Elijah's mum Rose is his child representative. Rose asks their early childhood partner to help them request this change to Elijah's plan.

It is clear to Elijah's planner that Elijah still requires the use of an AFO. We said this was a reasonable and necessary support in his current plan.

Elijah's planner decides to vary his plan and approves funding for a new AFO. Elijah doesn't need any other changes to his plan.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

You've given us the information, quotes or reports we asked for

We can vary your plan if it relates to the information or report we requested.[69] We may have requested this information when we first created your plan or as part of plan variation or reassessment.

We can only vary your plan if the information shows the support:

- is still a reasonable and necessary support for you
- isn't the same or provide the same supports as others in already in your plan.

For example, we asked for an occupational therapist assessment and report when we created your plan. If we receive this report after we have already approved your plan, we may decide to vary your plan to include any assistive technology.

In some situations, we may need to approve your plan before you get an assessment or give us information. If this happens, we may then do a CEO-initiated plan change after we receive the reports. This could be a plan variation or a plan reassessment.[70]

For example, we might approve your plan, so you have funding for urgent self-care supports. We could then do a CEO-initiated plan reassessment or plan variation when you have the assessments and reports for other supports, such as assistive technology.

What else do we think about?

When deciding to vary your plan, we also think about if changes to your support needs can be met in other ways. For example, by:

- giving you information and support to use your plan. This could include more regular check-ins
- helping you connect with providers
- connecting you to mainstream or community services.

For First Nations participants, this may include referral to culturally safe supports such as, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) or Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

You can't ask for a change to your plan if your plan is suspended.[71] Learn more about plan suspensions and when can't you use your plan in Our Guideline – Your plan.

In some situations, we may decide to do a CEO-initiated plan reassessment instead of a plan variation.[72]

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

This might be because:

- we have varied your plan several times and your plan isn't meeting your needs
- we can't vary your plan without looking at the other supports in your plan
- your situation has changed significantly, and the change is ongoing
- you've asked for more funding to help with a new or changed goal, and the request is not minor
- your informal, community or mainstream supports can't meet your needs.

Learn more about plan reassessments in Our Guideline – Plan reassessments.

How to ask for a plan variation

You can ask for a plan variation at any time. You can request a plan variation by:

- completing the plan variation request form
- contacting us.

If your request is to add more funding to your plan, we may need evidence. Learn more about the information you can give us to support your plan variation request.

You can also contact us if you need help to ask for a plan variation or complete the form. If you're unsure which type of plan change you need, we can support you to understand the difference between a plan variation and plan reassessment. This means you can make an informed decision about the right plan change request for your situation.

Who can ask for a plan variation?

We can accept plan variation requests from:

- you
- your plan nominee
- if the participant is a child, the child representative.

You need to give your consent for someone other than you, your plan nominee or your child representative to ask for a plan variation for you.

If you want to give someone consent to ask for a plan variation on your behalf, you can:

- complete the consent for your NDIS information form
- contact us and we'll record your consent. You can choose to give consent verbally or in writing.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Learn more about How to give consent.

Before you decide to give consent for someone else to ask to vary your plan, you should think about if they have a conflict of interest. Learn more about conflict of interest.

Information you can give us to support your plan variation request

You may need to give us new information or evidence to help us decide if we can vary your plan. The type of information or evidence you may need to give us depends on the reason you're asking for a plan variation. For example, information or evidence could include:

- a letter or report from your treating health professional with appropriate qualifications
- a functional capacity assessment
- a behaviour support plan
- information from a specialist disability accommodation (SDA) or supported independent living (SIL) provider
- information or reports from mainstream services. For example, schools, tertiary education, allied health professionals.

If you have high support needs and are asking for a plan variation after a support determination was applied to your plan, you don't need to give us evidence or information.

You can give us any new evidence about your support needs when you get it. If you're not sure what to give us, you can talk to us, your my NDIS contact, support coordinator or recovery coach. You can also give us new evidence during your check-in.

What happens if we need more information?

Sometimes, we need more information about your disability support needs. It's important you give us this information so we can make a decision and make sure you have the NDIS supports you need in your plan. We must give you a reasonable opportunity to give us the information.[73] The sooner you can give us the information, the sooner we can make a decision about your plan.

If you need new or different NDIS supports, the information you give us will help us decide if the new or different supports meet the NDIS funding criteria for you. We'll need different types of information for different types of supports.

Learn more about the evidence we need to include NDIS supports in your plan.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

If you don't give us the information we need and we're unable to contact you, we may think about suspending your plan. We'll only suspend your plan if we can't make a decision without the information we've asked you for.

Learn more about plan suspensions in Our Guideline – Your plan.

The most important information we gather about what NDIS supports to include in your plan comes from you. We collect this information during check-ins. You can also give us this information anytime there's a change in your situation.

What happens during a plan variation?

We'll vary your plan with you. We think about all your information including your goals, situation, and disability support needs. We think about the information you have provided and work with you to make any necessary changes to your current plan.

All NDIS supports in your varied plan must meet the NDIS funding criteria. This includes the NDIS supports that were already in your plan.

We'll only fund a support if it relates to your disability.[74] This means there must be a direct link between your disability support needs and the NDIS supports we fund.

When we vary your plan, we'll let you know the date when the variation to your plan starts. This can only be on or after the day we decide to vary your plan.[75]

What happens after a plan variation?

After we vary your plan, we'll send you a copy of your new plan within 7 days.[76]

Your local area coordinator, early childhood partner or support coordinator can help you start using your plan. For example, they can explain the NDIS supports in your plan, help you connect with supports outside the NDIS, and help you find service providers.

Learn more in Our Guideline – Your plan.

What if you don't agree with our decision?

You can contact us if you'd like more detail about the reasons for our decision.

If you're not happy with your new plan, we can explain our decision, support you to understand how to use your funding, or help you fix any problems. If you'd like more details about the supports in your plan, we can send this to you. You can contact us and ask for a funding breakdown.

If you don't agree with our decision to vary your plan or not vary your plan, you can ask us to review our decision.[77] We call this process an internal review.[78]

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

You'll need to ask for an internal review within 3 months of our decision.[79]

Learn more about reviewing our decisions.

What if you're waiting for an internal review decision?

If your situation and support needs change while you're waiting for an internal review, contact us. Depending on the changes to your situation and support needs, we may decide to do a CEO-initiated plan change.[80] You can also ask for a participant-requested plan change.[81]

If we decide to change your plan while we're completing the internal review, our decision will form part of that internal review.[82] This will happen automatically, and you don't need to do anything. Learn more about internal reviews in Our Guideline – Reviewing our decisions.

What if you're waiting for an external review decision?

If you're a participant and your situation or disability support needs change during the external review process, contact your case manager. Your case manager is our staff member who helps us at the Tribunal. Your case manager will explain the options available to you. We may also need to let the Tribunal know what we think we should do if it might affect your external review.

You can still use the NDIS supports in your plan while the Tribunal considers your external review.

Learn more about external reviews in Our Guideline – Reviewing our decisions.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

Reference list

[1] NDIS Act s 47; NDIS Act s 47A.
[2] NDIS Act s 47A(1).
[3] NDIS Act s 47A(3).
[4] NDIS Act s 47B(12)(a); NDIS (Support) Determination 2026 ss (5)(2)(a).
[5] NDIS Act s 48(6).
[6] NDIS Act s 34A(1).
[7] NDIS Act s 34A(1); NDIS (Support) Determination 2026 ss 6, 11(1).
[8] NDIS Act s 47B(1).
[9] NDIS Act ss 47B(2), 47B(12)(a).
[10] NDIS Act s 47B(3).
[11] NDIS Act s 47B(12)(b)(i); NDIS (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 ss (6)(2).
[12] NDIS Act s 47B(12)(a); NDIS (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 ss (5)(2)(a).
[13] NDIS Act s 47B(12)(a); NDIS (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 ss (5)(2)(b).
[14] NDIS Act s 47B(4).
[15] NDIS Act s 47B(5).
[16] NDIS Act s 47B(5)(a)(i).
[17] NDIS Act s 47B(5)(a)(ii).
[18] NDIS Act s 47B(5)(b).
[19] NDIS Act s 47B(12)(b)(i); NDIS (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 ss (6)(2).
[20] NDIS Act s 47B(12)(b)(i); NDIS (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 ss (7)(3).
[21] NDIS Act s 47B(9)(a)(i).
[22] NDIS Act s 47B(9)(a)(ii).
[23] NDIS Act s 47B(9)(b).
[24] NDIS Act s 47B(8); NDIS (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 ss (7)(3).
[25] NDIS Act s 47B(11).
[26] NDIS Act s 47A(4)(a).
[27] NDIS Act s 47A(4)(b).
[28] NDIS Act s 47A(4)(d).
[29] NDIS Act s 47A(4).
[30] NDIS Act s 100(1).
[31] NDIS Act s 47A(8)(b).
[32] NDIS Act ss 47A(8),50.
[33] NDIS Act s 50(2)(a).
[34] NDIS Act s 50(2)(b).
[35] Participant Service Charter.
[36] NDIS Act s 47(1).
[37] NDIS Act s 47(3).
[38] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(a).
[39] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.2.
[40] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(d)(iii).
[41] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(d)(iii).
[42] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(d)(iii).
[43] NDIS Act s 47(1A)(b).
[44] NDIS Act s 44(1)(c).
[45] NDIS (Management of Funding and Plan Management) Rules r 6.5.
[46] NDIS Act s 44(2A).
[47] NDIS Act s 44(2).
[48] NDIS Act ss 44(1)(c), 44(2A)(c), 74(3C)(b).

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.

[49] NDIS Act s 44(1AA)(i); NDIS Act s 44(2AA)(i).
[50] NDIS Act s 44(1AA)(ii); NDIS Act s 44(2AA)(ii).
[51] NDIS (Management of Funding and Plan Management) Rules r 6.2.
[52] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(ae).
[53] NDIS Act s 33(3);NDIS Act s 47A
[54] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.3)(d)(ii).
[55] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.3)(d)(i).
[56] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.3(b)(i)
[57] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.3(b)(ii)
[58] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.3(b)(iii)
[59] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(d)(iv); NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.4(a).
[60] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.5(b)(ii).
[61] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.5(b)(iii).
[62] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.5(c).
[63] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(d)(iv); NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.4(a).
[64] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.5(b)(i).
[65] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.5(a)(i)-(ii).
[66] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.7(a).
[67] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.6(b).
[68] NDIS (Variation and Reassessment of Participants' Plans) Rules r 5.7(c).
[69] NDIS Act s 47A(1A)(d)(ii).
[70] NDIS Act s 50(3) Note.
[71] NDIS Act s 41(2)(c).
[72] NDIS Act s 48.
[73] NDIS Act s 50(3).
[74] NDIS Act s 34(1)(aa), NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 5.1(b).
[75] NDIS Act s 47A(10).
[76] NDIS Act s 47A(11).
[77] NDIS Act s 99(1) Items 6, 6A, 6B, 6BA, 6BB, 6BC.
[78] NDIS Act s100.
[79] NDIS Act s 100(2).
[80] NDIS Act s 48(2).
[81] NDIS Act s 48(2).
[82] NDIS s 101.

This document is correct at the date of publication.

Always visit ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au for the latest version.