7 May 2025

The Self-Management Advisory Group (SMAG) met for the third time on 7 May 2025.

The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The focus of the meeting was:

- An update on the new approach to planning.
- An update on the Self-Management Policy implementation.
- A presentation about the introduction of funding periods to NDIS plans.

New Planning Framework

The NDIA gave an overview of the proposed future planning experience for participants. The presentation included a comparison of old planning and new planning, including:

- Assessments – Currently, participants must pay for assessments and reports out of their plan. In the future, there will be a support needs assessment, conducted by the NDIA at no cost to participants. This was recommended in the NDIS Review.
- Budgets – Currently, budgets are based on individual reasonable and necessary supports. In the future, budgets will be based on support needs assessments that inform the total reasonable and necessary package of supports.
- Budget flexibility – Currently, funds are restricted to 19 support categories. In the future, funds can be used flexibly across different supports in a flexible budget.
- Allocation of funding – Currently, participants can access the total approved funding amount from plan approval. Plans are typically 12-24 months long. In the future, funds will become available to participants over different periods. The funds will rollover if unspent. Where appropriate, participants will receive longer plans (i.e. 3-5 years).

The NDIA wants to empower participants to have choice and control over their NDIS supports. This includes giving participants more flexibility, while making sure safeguards are in place to support participants to manage their budgets over longer plan periods.

Self-Management Policy implementation

The NDIA led a discussion on how the Agency will continue to implement the Self-Management Policy within the reforms to the Scheme over the coming years.

The NDIA completed a deep dive into the principles that sit behind the policy, focusing on a participant centric experience design, and considering different opportunities at different parts of the participant pathway.

The deep dive concentrated on three different areas of work:

- First, providing accessible communications.
    - Providing customer service basics, ensuring authentic, kind, and clear conversations with participants. Ensuring communication preferences are accommodated and we are well prepared for every participant conversation every time.
- Second, providing participants with targeted and tailored support, whether face to face, via phone and also introducing self-service.
- Third, increasing staff capability to understand the participant's situation.
    - To ensure participants feel supported by staff who understand what is going on for them and what they are trying to achieve with their NDIS plan.
- Funding periods are a new requirement under changes to the NDIS Act in October 2024.
- A funding period is the length of time that a part of a participant's funding is made available, and how long the funding needs to last.
- The purpose of funding periods is to help participants manage their supports over time and avoid running out of funding too early.
- Under the Act, funding periods can be no longer than 12 months.
- The NDIA sets the length and proportion of funds in funding periods in line with NDIS laws, taking into account a participant's individual needs and circumstances.

Introduction of Funding Periods to NDIS plans

The NDIA gave a presentation on the introduction of funding periods to NDIS plans, and specifically the proposed policy approach to funding periods:

The approach for old framework plans and the operational policy is due to be introduced from 19 May 2025 to allow for funding periods of less than 12 months to be included in participants plans. Funding periods for new framework plans will roll out from September 2025, when new framework plans become available.

SMAG next meeting

The SMAG's next meeting will be 25 June 2025.

Related articles

Category

- News

Supported Decision Making Advisory Group meeting summary April 2025

Date
29 April 2025
Category

- Self-Management Advisory Group communique

Self-Management Advisory Group meeting summary June 2025

Date
24 June 2025
Category

- Self-Management Advisory Group communique

Self-Management Advisory Group meeting summary April 2025

Date
3 April 2025
Read more news