Navigating the changes to the NDIS

TIP SHEET 1: October 2026

1. Don't get swamped – take control!

The NDIS says you are supposed to have 'control', but all the significant changes are in fact overwhelming people. However, you can decide to get informed and learn what you can, so you are not swept away in defeat by this bureaucratic tsunami.

Here are some ideas about how you can **learn the basics** if you need this:

- Look up terms you need to understand on the NDIS Glossary
- Key acronyms are listed in the NDIS Acronyms list
- There are many fact sheets on the NDIS website about each area, you can read up on different topics Booklets & Factsheets
- VALID has a range of tip sheets about basics of the NDIS list

Below are some ideas for **learning about the current wave of changes**:

- Subscribe to the NDIS email newsletter register here
- Inclusion Australia releases information on the changes in Easy Read link
- Disability Services Consulting has excellent information on each change subscribe
- Use the links in these newsletters to read more about each change as they happen
- Online training in specific areas of the NDIS is available through VALID, The Growing Space and Disability Services Consulting

2. Ensuring the basics are up to date

Why should you make sure that your contact details are up to date?

The NDIS will have the power to suspend your plan if they make five attempts to reach you over a few months and you do not answer them. If your plan is suspended for 90 days, they can take you off the NDIS all together. To avoid this happening, our tips include:

- Log into the NDIA Portal or the My NDIS App or ring the NDIS, and check that your address, phone and email are correct.
- From now on, it will be important that you look out for text messages informing you that the NDIS will call in the next 5 minutes and then pick up when they call, which will be from a 'No Caller ID' number.
- Find your/your family member's NDIS Plan and put a note of the end date of the Plan in your phone or wall calendar. Then put a reminder about four months before that to remind you to get assessments and letters ready for your plan reassessment.

3. Why do you need to find out your 'eligible impairment'?

Knowing the 'impairment' and/or diagnoses on a participant file will greatly help you prepare for your next NDIS Plan reassessment.

If the participant has two major diagnoses and only one is on their NDIS file, then it is likely that they will need to prove the second diagnosis also meets the 'eligible impairment' rules.

> For example, if a person has both an intellectual disability and a physical disability, the NDIS may only have decided the person is eligible under the 'intellectual impairment' category, but not the physical disability. So, they would not fund a wheelchair because it is needed due to the physical disability and is not related to an intellectual impairment.

Your best chance of getting a second impairment made eligible is to firstly know that it is missing from your file (so you need to find this out as explained below) and secondly, take proof to your next reassessment meeting of this impairment. Evidence could include:

- Letter from a doctor (preferably a specialist) confirming the second diagnosis and it's impacts on the ability to function in everyday life
- Therapist or psychologist reports
- If you have therapy funds available in your Plan, obtain a Functional Capacity Assessment by an OT (Occupational Therapist)

How to find out your 'eligible impairment'?

Participants and their approved representatives (nominee or child representative) can seek this information by contacting the NDIS by either:

- Calling the National Contact Centre (on 1800 800 110) or
- Making a Participant Information Access (PIA) Request using
  - the online webform or
  - **email:** information.access@ndis.gov.au

4. Getting on top of your budget

The NDIS has made a range of changes that will impact your budget and what supports you can purchase, these include:

- The 2024 NDIS laws introduced 'funding periods' where annual funding is not released all at once, but bit by bit usually in quarterly amounts.
- There will be no early plan reviews, so if your funds run out there will be no top ups
- The new rules mean that the NDIS will not do a plan reassessment unless there are exceptional circumstances and only a participant, nominee or child representative will be able to request a plan reassessment, not Support Coordinators or services
- The 'new framework' planning system starts on April the first, and eventually some plans will only be 'renewed' via a paperwork process with NO meeting at all.
- From the first of October 2026 the Minister for the NDIS has decided that every participant's Social & Community Participation budget will be cut in half. This will happen at the next reassessment of your Plan.

Things that you can do to manage your budget

Now is the time to get more familiar with your budget and what it is spent on now. Some basic things that you can do:

- If you aren't aware of what your budgets are for the different types of supports, such as therapy, community activities, in-home care, and equipment, then you need to be.
- If you use a Support Coordinator or Plan Manager, they may be able to assist you with developing a budget, or at least provide some advice
- In working out how many hours or 'sessions' you can have, don't forget that services also charge for transport, non-face-to-face support e.g. meetings and report writing
- Use these calculations to create a budget for all your supports, as this will enable you to monitor your expenditure each month and make sure you don't run out of money before the end of a 'funding period' or plan reassessment
- Ensure all your invoices are claimed, because from the 1st of December all invoices must be claimed within 90 days of the delivery date
- Sometimes services put clauses into Service Agreements that mean you may have to pay for services that the NDIS won't pay, so keep a look out for this and check your 'Service Agreements'. For example, some services are slow on billing for supports and may miss the 90 day window, and you don't want to get stuck with the bill.

The cuts to **Social and Community Participation** mean you should also:

- Check with your service providers - or use your Support Coordinator if have one - to make sure that all your supports are being 'billed' to the correct area of your Plan budget. For example, if a shift covers two areas such as in-home support and community activities, then make sure that each type of support is billed to the correct area.
- You need to be aware of what amount you have in your Core Supports - Social & Community Participation budget to prepare for the cuts. If you look at your NDIS Plan you will find a budget amount for this in the first section.
- In some circumstances there may be a chance to move funds from Social & Community Participation into SIL (Supported Independent Living) – also called Home & Living budget – because the person requires 24 hour support every day.

5. What is the Support Needs Assessment?

The NDIS hasn't released information on how everything will work with the new Support Needs Assessments (SNA). The key things that we do know include:

- The use of the SNA to create NDIS Plans will start from the 1st of April 2027
- All plans will be reassessed using the SNA from then on.
- This new assessment will be for people over 16 years
- The SNA aims to work out the types, frequency and level of supports a participant needs.
- It will have two stages, the Core assessment that is likely to take 2-3 hours to go through all the questions, plus a questionnaire about other areas

- Some people will need to also have a 'targeted assessment' for specific types of support such as disability-related health, AT (Assistive Technology), behavioural supports or Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)
- They say the assessment can be face to face or online
- The 'assessors' will be trained in how to conduct the assessment and most likely will have an allied health background
- Results of the assessment are 'turned into' an NDIS Plan – it is not clear how!
- Participants will have a chance to review the SNA report before their budget is developed
- However, the NDIS can ignore your request for changes or order a replacement assessment

How to prepare for the new SNA?

While we are not sure how 'other' information will be considered in the process, however the NDIS information is saying every support must be directly related to the 'eligible impairment' to be funded. So, you can gather evidence that clearly shows this, such as:

- Reports or letters, but they need to specifically highlight why the support is needed directly due to the 'eligible impairment'
- Carefully develop your goals and explain how the support you want from the NDIS relates to your goals. Tip: keep goals broad to cover a wide range of supports.
- The SNA has 12 areas (domains) relating to different areas of everyday functioning including mobility, communication, self-care, learning, relationships, behaviour, mental & emotional health, physical health, domestic life, community and more.
- Work out who the participant support person will be during the core assessment meeting, (e.g. nominee, family member or advocate).
- Participants and their support person will need to think about their support needs related to these 12 areas (domains) so that specific needs are not forgotten during the assessment. VALID will be releasing a separate tip sheet on preparing for the SNA.

The new rules expect families to do more, so as insulting as it is, families will have to provide evidence as to why they need support; some ideas to consider:

- Keep a record e.g. in a diary or exercise book, of all the support you provide that is 'disability related', that is, not just 'ordinary parenting', including during the night.
- For children, parents will have to show how the support needs are additional and different to a child of the same age
- If parent/carer is unwell or ageing, this impacts on the level of support they can provide for the person and the NDIS has to consider. So, take letters from doctor, specialist of therapist outlining any limitations or risks associated with your caring role.

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