

Measures to assist participants and providers through the COVID-19 pandemic



Delivered by the
National Disability
Insurance Agency

Introduction



COAG Disability Reform Council has approved a series of measures to assist participants and providers through the unprecedented situation that the COVID19 pandemic is creating.

This webinar will walk you through these measures and try as best we can to explain how further changes in response to the roll out of the virus will be managed.

Acknowledge that this is a time of uncertainty and anxiety and that we are all trying to make adjustments in our personal and work lives in responding to this pandemic.

On behalf of Minister Stuart Robert and NDIA Chief Executive Martin Hoffman, I pass on their thanks and appreciation for the amazing work and effort you are making in responding to the spread of the virus and planning contingencies for ensuring continuity of supports.

We are receiving and listening to feedback about people's concerns and hearing about the flexibility and ingenuity of participants and service providers in responding to this health crisis.

Government has, and continues to consult with disability and health stakeholders in the formulation of these and future measures.

Collaborating



The NDIA is working with the Department of Social Services (DSS), Services Australia and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NQSC), as well as health agencies and disability service providers, to deliver on our Pandemic Plan in line with the Government's Emergency Response Plan.



Financial Assistance



Advance payment for providers

- The NDIA has introduced a one-off advance payment for registered providers to assist in the expected temporary increase in costs to deliver supports due to the COVID-19 virus.
- All registered providers that received a payment in February 2020 and at least one other payment in December 2019 or January 2020 are eligible for the advance payment.
- This payment will be automatically paid.
Providers do not need to do anything to access this payment.
- The advance payment aim to assist registered providers with immediate cash flow and will be required to be repaid in the future. Providers can opt out of this payment.
- Eligible providers will be emailed with further details. If you haven't received an email and think you qualify, please send an email to Provider.Support@ndis.gov.au, and include your organisation's legal business name and ABN.

Financial Assistance

Temporary 10% increase in prices

- Effective 25 March 2020, price limits for some supports have been increased temporarily. These supports include:
 - Assistance with Daily Life (excluding Supported Independent Living)
 - Assistance with Social and Community Participation
 - Improved Health and Wellbeing (excluding personal training)
 - Improved Daily Living Skills

Financial Assistance



Changes to cancellations

- Effective 25 March 2020, participants will be required to give 10 business days' notice for a cancellation if they want to avoid paying the full fee for a cancelled service. Previously, participants were required to give two business days' notice.
- From 30 March, providers will also be able to claim 100 per cent of the agreed support price when a participant cancels a service at short notice (up from 90 per cent).

Increasing levels of support co-ordination

- Effective 25 March 2020, participants can flexibly use their Core or Capacity Building budgets for support coordination.
- Three new support coordination items have been introduced under Core Supports to allow participants to use their funds more flexibly. These are:
 - Level 1: Support Connection
 - Level 2: Coordination Of Supports
 - Level 3: Specialist Support Coordination

The new lines items duplicate items already claimable under Capacity Building Supports.

Plan extensions

- NDIS plans to be extended by up to 24 months, ensuring continuity of support and increasing capacity of NDIA staff to focus on urgent and required changes to plans.
- Face-to-face planning shifted to telephone meetings where possible.
- Action plan to ensure NDIS participants and their families continue to receive the essential disability supports they need.
- Proactive outreach to high-risk participants and sharing of data with states and territories to ensure continuity of supports.

Changes to plan review process



- If a participant has a scheduled plan review, the NDIA will contact them by phone or email to undertake their review.
- As part of this plan review process, a participant can discuss having a new plan in place for up to 24 months.
- To ensure participant plans don't end, on the day a plan is due to expire it will be automatically be extended by 365 days.
- Previously these automatic plan extensions were for 28 days, but will now will be 365 days.
- Participants who have plans that expire soon do not need to do anything to have their plans automatically extended by 365 days.

Help for participants



- Plans extended by up to 24 months
- Face to face planning shifted to telephone based planning
- Proactive outreach to high risk patients
- Financial assistance to providers to support retention of workers

Arrangements in remote communities



- NDIA is postponing trips to remote communities, based on health advice and wishes of many communities to reduce non-essential travel.
- Planning activities will continue, with meetings conducted by phone or through community connectors.

Further changes



DSS, NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safety Commission are working with Department of Health, State and Territories and NDIS stakeholders to monitor our response, and will make further recommendations if required.

Minister Stuart Robert:

“ I also want to be clear we can and will make further changes as required”

Resources



Further work is currently underway to develop measures to source additional disability support workers to provide high quality care to NDIS participants, should the need arise. This will include the upskilling of displaced workers from other industries and matching existing and new workers to areas where there is a demand for services.

The [Department of Health has developed specific advice](#) on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when looking after people who are confirmed to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19.

There is also a [free training module](#) for support workers, including those in the disability sector, about infection prevention and control for COVID-19.

Further information on COVID-19, what people can do to protect themselves and people they are caring for, is available at www.health.gov.au or by phoning 1800 020 080.

More information for NDIS providers and disability support workers is available on the [NDIS website](#) and the [NDIS Commission website](#) .