



National Disability Insurance Scheme

A guide to planning in the NDIS

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Welcome to the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a model of supporting people with disability to have more choice and control over their supports and services. This includes participating in the local community and building on natural and informal supports such as friendships, neighbours and local community groups.

This Guide to Planning in the NDIS is designed to explain the NDIS planning process and to help you begin thinking about planning for your / your family member's life and future.

Being part of the NDIS means you will have access to a Local Coordinator who will assist you through the planning process. This Guide is not meant to replace the conversations that you will have with your Local Coordinator during the planning process. It is simply to help you learn more about how planning works within the NDIS.

Your Local Coordinator is there to support and assist you as much or as little as you like. You can also include family members, carers or anyone else you consider important when thinking and talking about planning for your support needs.

Local Coordinators support you to:

- identify your strengths and needs, plus any goals or aspirations you would like to start working towards, to form the start of your NDIS plan;
- explore how you are going to reach the goals outlined in your plan;
- choose the supports and services that best suit your needs and goals;
- develop stronger links with your local community;
- build on natural and informal supports such as friendships, neighbours and local community groups;
- write your plan (if you need help with this).

NDIS Planning Principles

Planning is central to the NDIS approach. Planning assists individuals, along with their families, to consider possibilities, how they would like life to be now and into the future. The resulting plan should be flexible, responsive to challenges and changes in each person's life, and be as individual as the person it aims to support.

NDIS planning principles are as follows:

- The person with the disability is central to the planning and decision-making process.
- Planning is based on the person's wishes, capabilities and strengths, and will provide greater opportunities in the future.
- Planning leads to a more satisfying and secure life and includes safeguards to address vulnerability, enabling the person to take risks and make mistakes.
- Family, friends and other people who are important to the person are encouraged to be involved in planning.
- Planning is flexible, outlining realistic, achievable goals and strategies that are renewable and reviewable.
- Planning encourages the use of informal and local community connections ahead of formal, paid supports and services.
- Planning acknowledges the uniqueness and diversity of each person including culture, lifestyle and religious beliefs.

Thinking about your NDIS plan

The NDIS focuses on planning for current and future needs. Your existing connections, friendships and supports, and what is already working well will form part of your plan.

Your Local Coordinator can support you to:

- explore strategies (for example, by providing you with specific information and suggestions) which will assist you to achieve your goals; and
- develop some practical steps to help you with any or all of the strategies you have identified in your plan.

The NDIS planning takes place over time through a series of conversations, and there is no limit to the number of meetings which may be needed to develop your plan. Plans are individualised and likely to change over time, as your life, needs and goals change. In general, NDIS plans are reviewed every 12 months but can be reviewed earlier if required.

Essentially, NDIS planning is based on the answers to four questions:

- How would I like my life to be? (Vision)
- My story (What is your current situation?)
- What would I like to build on? (Goals)
- How can I make this happen? (Strategies)

You may not have complete answers to any or all of these questions straight away. If you are new to Disability Services, your Local Coordinator can help you explore a variety of options.

Goals, strategies and supports

Your Local Coordinator will ensure you, or your family member's plan, is individualised and takes into account all aspects of your life. You may have overall long-term goals; for example, you may wish to work towards living independently. Your plan however, will include 'plan goals' which you will work towards during the period of your plan, usually the next 12 months.

Your **plan goals** may include things like:

- a) I would like to learn how to maintain a clean house and tidy yard.
- b) I would like to improve my physical fitness.
- c) I will continue with my recovery and personal growth.
- d) I would like to improve my volunteering skills, try new things and make friends.
- e) Our family would like to support Charlie to express himself more effectively.

The **strategies** in your NDIS plan will be linked to your overall goals, and will be more specific in terms of highlighting the steps you will take towards achieving your plan goals. Some examples of strategies related to the plan goals above may be:

- a) I will help mum and dad with the chores around the house and learn how to do some simple gardening by assisting my neighbour with her front yard.
- b) I will attend swimming classes on Mondays and a session with a personal trainer on Thursdays. A support worker will take me to and from these sessions. The other days I will do 30 minutes of exercise of some sort. I can do this myself.
- c) I will regularly attend appointments with my mental health professionals. Support will be required to attend these appointments in Perth. My mum will support me to attend local appointments.
- d) I am going to approach an animal refuge and the local vet clinic to find out if I am able to do any voluntary work with them. I don't require support for this at the moment.
- e) We will work with a speech pathologist once a week to help Charlie develop his communication skills and techniques.

Some of these strategies may be funded through the NDIS, but some may not require any funding at this stage. Your Local Coordinator can help you to consider different options, and support you with ideas for building and strengthening relationships, community connections and skill development.

Don't worry about the detail of your plan at this stage. However, if you would like to do some preparation, just think about your life in general terms as described in Section 3: Thinking about your NDIS plan. You can also make notes under the headings below to assist you.

Guiding Questions

How would I like my life to be? (Vision)

Focus on the next few years.

- What would an ideal living situation be for you? (e.g. living on your own, with family, with friends)
- How would you like to spend your days and who with?
- What will you do during the day? (e.g. working, socialising, playing sports)

Notes:

My story (What is your current situation?)

Focus on what happens currently in your life and in your family.

- What sort of things are you good at? What do you enjoy?
- What is your family situation like and who supports you?
- What are some of the things you like to do?
- What sort of things do you find challenging?
- What would you like to build on/improve?

Notes:

What would I like to build on? (Goals)

- Are there particular skills that you would like to develop?
- What do you look forward to?
- What goals do you want to achieve in your future?
- Are there areas of your life you would like to focus on? (e.g. finding work, studying, meeting new people, getting fit, learning to cook)

Notes:

How can I make this happen? (Strategies)

- What can you start doing?
- What can you keep doing?
- What can you reduce or do less of?
- What parts of your life could use some guidance or extra support in, if any?
- What is needed to assist in building your skills or developing personal and community connections?

Notes:

Scenarios

Below are some examples to demonstrate NDIS planning in action.

Scenario 1 - Alison

Alison is 38 years of age and lives in her own home. She has an intellectual disability and autism. Alison has limited verbal communication skills, but she knows what she wants, likes and dislikes. Alison's behaviours can be challenging and unpredictable when people do not understand her choices. She also experiences frequent seizures which require additional medication to be administered to her.

Alison's goals are to continue to live safely in her own home near her parents, increase her fitness and keep enjoying a busy lifestyle in her local community. Alison's parents are both in their 70s but remain involved in Alison's life. They have provided her with a vehicle and a house. Alison likes to visit her parents to share a meal and play cards twice a week.

Through the NDIS, Alison has been supported by her Local Coordinator to develop a plan which enables in-home, around the clock support each day by a flexible team. 'Alison's team' consists of five permanent staff, two casual support workers, and an unpaid volunteer, Jane, who helps out once a week. With this support Alison is learning to be more independent, her personal care has improved, she is contributing with jobs around the home and doing her own grocery shopping.

Alison is well-known in the local community through her part-time employment at the leisure centre and she recently joined the local bowling club, which Jane attends. Alison enjoys regular outings with her support staff, including swimming at the local leisure centre and going for drives in her car to the beach.

Scenario 2 - Paul

Paul is 55 years of age and lives in a country town with his partner. Paul has a teenage son who lives nearby with his maternal aunt. Paul has a mild spinal injury and psychosocial disability, which have both impacted his ability to maintain regular employment. Paul experiences periods of social isolation, often remaining indoors for days as he becomes overwhelmed and anxious. He visits a clinical psychologist every six weeks to help him develop coping strategies. Paul also attends monthly physiotherapy sessions for his spinal rehabilitation, but does not exercise regularly. Paul's partner has a mild cognitive disability as a result of an accident – this is sometimes difficult for Paul to cope with and causes strain on their relationship.

Through the NDIS, Paul has been assisted to effectively identify his goals, and a number of strategies that will enable him to reach these. Paul identified that he has difficulty managing his in-home routines and maintaining a tidy home and garden. He also wants to spend more time with his son and would like to develop his computer skills so he can manage his bills independently; as well as expanding his skills in other areas so he is able to return to work.

Some months on, Paul is now achieving his goals. Paul has been supported to establish a routine that enables him to do things he enjoys, such as gardening and keeping his home orderly and attractive. Paul says that having some outside support with in-home routines has made a big difference to his relationship with his partner and to his overall wellbeing.

Paul now spends more time with his son. They attend local footy games once a fortnight, where they also mix with other football enthusiasts. Paul's Local Coordinator has supported him to link in with an employment coordinator who is working with Paul to explore employment options. Paul attends a local computer course once a week and has gained the skills and confidence to manage his bills online. He will continue to develop his computer skills to assist with his search for employment. Paul is now swimming twice a week with a neighbour who frequently goes to the local pool. The swimming has assisted Paul's gross motor movement and the social interaction has had a positive impact on his self-esteem.

Scenario 3 – Alex

Alex is eight years of age and lives at home with his family. Alex has severe cerebral palsy and a mild intellectual disability, and his behaviour is frequently challenging both at home and school. He has experienced medical complications which have resulted in frequent hospital stays and intensive post-operative therapy. Alex is a reluctant school attender and whilst his mother is very committed to achieving a great life for him, she finds it challenging to manage the demands of a young family as well as Alex's additional support needs.

Since engaging with the NDIS, Alex and his mum have been supported by their Local Coordinator to develop and implement a plan to meet the needs of both Alex and his family. Alex now enjoys staying overnight once a month with a neighbouring family, who have a son the same age as him. Alex also accesses one-to-one support to attend swimming lessons with this boy. These strategies have been beneficial to Alex's social skills and have enabled his mum to have regular breaks.

With support from his Local Coordinator, Alex's mum has negotiated with the school to make several changes, including the provision of an educational assistant to support with his personal care and learning. Alex's mother has also been connected with another family from the school who live nearby, and they are now sharing the school transport duties. Alex really enjoys this, and is happier to attend school.

Alex's vestibular balance and muscle strength have improved through the use of a trampoline and climbing frame. He uses PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) to communicate and the speech therapist has recommended using proloquo2go on an iPad to enhance his expressive communication.

Alex has weekly transdisciplinary therapy sessions with input from a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and speech pathologist. His therapy team have provided the school with strategies to ensure consistency and enhance his overall learning and development.

The individualised funding available through Alex's NDIS plan has enabled his mum to choose the therapy provider that she feels is best able to meet Alex's needs. She has also chosen to access support from a psychologist to assist her to develop her behaviour management skills.

Further information

If you would like to learn more about planning within the NDIS, there are a number of resources available on the Disability Services website:

- **NDIS Planning Framework**

www.disability.wa.gov.au > NDIS > Individualised planning

- **NDIS Operational Policy**

www.disability.wa.gov.au > NDIS > WA NDIS Operational Policies > Plan development and plan changes

- **Fact sheet: Individualised planning**

www.disability.wa.gov.au > NDIS > Fact sheets and publications > Individualised planning

If you are already connected to a Local Coordinator, you can also ask them more about the planning process or how to access the above resources.

Alternatively, you can contact your local office for more information. If you're not sure where your local office is, just go to the Disability Services website and follow the link: www.disability.wa.gov.au > Individuals, and then fill out the 'Your local support' section.