

Frequently Asked Questions about the NDIS



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The NDIS represents a major change in the way services are delivered to people with a disability. You might have a lot of unanswered questions about the NDIS. How will it affect me? What's going to change and when? Do I qualify for funding?

We realise this is a big change with the potential to transform lives - which is why understanding the system and how to get the most out of it is so important. At UnitingCare we're here to support you every step of the way - which is why we've provided answers to your most frequently asked questions in this brochure. If you can't find the answer to your query here, don't hesitate to pick up the phone and speak to a member of our friendly team on 1300 77 80 81.

What is the NDIS and how is it different to current funding systems?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a new government initiative which changes the way people with disability receive funding and support.

Historically, supports were provided by the Queensland Government through programs like QCCS and specialist Disability Services funding. The NDIS replaces this system and gives people greater control over and access to the supports they need to live their life and achieve their goals. These goals may include independence, community involvement, employment and wellbeing with tailored supports such as personal care, access to the community, therapy services and essential equipment.

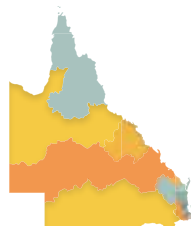
Under the NDIS, you'll have access to all the same services as the previous system, but with a few important differences. Instead of being allocated a support and service provider, you get to choose exactly how and when you spend your funding as well as who you spend it with. There's also a much bigger focus on planning and tailoring your program to suit you and help you achieve your individual life goals.

When is the NDIS coming to my area?

The NDIS will be slowly rolled out in stages across Queensland. The roll-out started in 2016 in the Townsville region and is expected to be complete by early 2019. Take a look at the timeline below to find out when NDIS is scheduled to arrive in your region.

Timeline: the rollout of the NDIS in Queensland

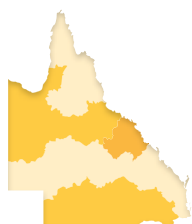
The NDIS was officially launched in Queensland in July 2016. It is planned to be rolled out across the state in stages right through until 2019, as follows:



Rollout stage 1

Stage 1 (2016/17)

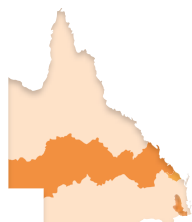
- 1 October 2016 Townsville region
- 1 November 2016 Mackay region
- 1 January 2017 Toowoomba region



Stage 2 (2017/18)

Rollout stage 2

- 1 June 2017 Ipswich region
- 1 September 2017 Bundaberg region
- 1 November 2017 Rockhampton region



Rollout stage 3

Stage 3 (2018/19)

- 1 July 2018 Brisbane North & South, Gold Coast, Logan, Cairns and Fraser Coast regions
- 1 January 2019 Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast regions



What is the NDIA?

The NDIA is the independent agency responsible for implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme. If you're eligible for the NDIS, the NDIA will work with you and your family to help you identify the supports you need to live your life and achieve your goals.

Is UnitingCare registered for the NDIS?

Yes – UnitingCare is a registered NDIS service provider. Whether you need help planning for your first NDIS meeting, creating your personal plan, choosing your supports or putting your plan into action, we can support you through the whole process.

What is UnitingCare's view on the NDIS?

We believe everyone has the right to live a rich and fulfilling life that is not defined by disability - a life where you're free to make your own decisions, however big or small. The NDIS is your opportunity to do exactly that.

We're excited about the NDIS because it opens up a whole new world of possibilities for people living with a disability, empowering you to shape your own future like never before.

Do I have to apply for the NDIS now?

The NDIS is currently only available in certain regions. It will be slowly rolled out in stages across the rest of Queensland over the next three years. Depending on where you live, it might take months or even years before it's introduced in your area. Take a look at the timeline on page 4 to find out when NDIS is scheduled to arrive in your region.

If you're currently receiving disability supports, a representative from the NDIA will get in touch with you when it's time for you to make the transition. If you're not currently receiving disability services and are entering the NDIS as a new participant, you'll need to contact the NDIA yourself.

How do I know if I can access the NDIS?

The following requirements must be met to be able to access NDIS funding:

Residency	Be either an Australian citizen, permanent resident or hold a Protected Special Category Visa
Age	Be under 65 years of age
Location	Live in an area where the NDIS is available. See timeline on page 4 to check if and when NDIS will be introduced in your region.
Support	<p>You must either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• require support from a person or equipment to carry out activities of daily living because of an impairment or condition that is likely to be permanent or;• require some supports now to reduce your support needs in the future

Another simple way of checking whether you can access funding is through the NDIS access checklist, which you can find online at www.ndis.org.au.

I'm over 65. Can I access the NDIS?

No. If you're over 65 when the NDIS is rolled out in your area, you can't access the NDIS - but that doesn't mean you won't receive support. If you're aged 65 or over and are currently receiving disability supports, you'll continue to receive the same level of support as before, just not through the NDIS.

What are the steps in accessing the NDIS?

If you currently receive specialist disability services, there are typically eight steps to the process:

1. Check whether you can access the NDIS.
2. Have your first contact with the NDIA (by letter or phone).
3. Talk to us to help you prepare and pre-plan for the NDIS.
4. Meet with the NDIA to develop your NDIS plan.
5. Receive your NDIS plan.
6. Choose your service provider(s) and decide on your support coordination.
7. Put your plan in action.
8. Review your plan (yearly).

Please check UnitingCare's 'NDIS step-by-step guide' for more details.

Will UnitingCare help me prepare for the NDIS?

Absolutely - as soon as the NDIS is about to be implemented in your region, we can support you preparing. How involved we are is entirely up to you. We can provide as much or as little support as you need, from big picture stuff like working with you to identify your life goals right through to the finer details like what documentation you'll need to take to your planning meetings.

We're passionate about the possibilities opened up by the NDIS and want you to get the most out of it. As well as providing dedicated one-on-one support for individuals and their families, we also have a range of NDIS resources available to make sure you're prepared, including pre-planning workshops and a 'NDIS Step-by-step guide' full of useful tips.

What is a pre-plan?

You don't have to wait until your first NDIA planning meeting to start thinking about your NDIS plan. To prepare, we recommend that you create a pre-plan, which describes your goals in life, how you'd like to achieve them and what supports you'll need to make it happen. It should also include all the supports you currently receive. Your pre-plan can be used as a guide during your meeting with the NDIA and ensure all the important points are covered off.

UnitingCare has a pre-planning booklet and workshops available for you to guide you through this process.

What happens in the meeting with the NDIA?

Together, you and your NDIA planner will discuss your life goals and the supports you'll need to achieve them. The meeting is your opportunity to make some important changes to your life, so try and be as specific as possible and don't be afraid to ask questions. Any information, pre-planning documentation, assessments or evidence you can provide will help support your requests.

Can I take someone with me to my meeting with the NDIA?

Yes, you can take anyone you like with you to the meeting. This could be a family member or support person, or you can ask us to come with you as well.

Will I have control over my funds?

Yes. Your NDIS plan will provide detail around the amount of funding you've been allocated for each support. You can choose to manage these funds yourself or nominate the NDIA, a registered provider or someone else you trust to do it for you.

Will I get more support under the NDIS?

Possibly. If your needs aren't currently being met, you may be provided with more support if additional supports are deemed "reasonable

and necessary" by the NDIA. What you can rest assured of is that, as long as you tell the NDIA about them, you'll continue to receive your current supports.

Will I get more funding under the NDIS?

Under the NDIS the focus is not on the amount of dollars allocated, but on making sure you receive the supports you need to help you achieve your goals.

Could I lose my current supports?

No. As long as your current supports are reasonable and necessary, they won't change - unless you want them to. Even if you don't meet the access requirements for the NDIS, you'll still receive the same level of support you receive now.

What is an NDIS Local Area Coordinator?

NDIS Local Area Coordinators are locally-based representatives who can support you in implementing your NDIS plan. This might include assisting you in finding community activities and mainstream services in your local area to help you achieve your goals.

Will the NDIA ask me to move house?

No. NDIS support relates to how you live, not where you live. However, after working with the NDIA to assess your needs, you may decide to move if you feel your current arrangements don't meet your needs. For example, you might decide that your current home isn't set up the way you need it, or you may wish to move from shared accommodation into a different environment.

What does the NDIS plan contain?

Your NDIS Plan includes information about you and your goals, the types of support you can receive under the NDIS and the amount allocated to each support category.

What if my needs change?

If something happens that affects the supports you need, just let the NDIA or your service provider know and they'll work with you to review your plan. Your NDIS plan is also reviewed every 12 months, providing an opportunity to establish how successful you've been in achieving your goals and help you set new goals for the year ahead. This in turn could lead to a change in your support requirements.

Can I change my NDIS plan?

Yes - if your circumstances change or at your annual review. Your needs and personal circumstances may well change over the year, so it's natural to have to make adjustments to your plan. Before your review, make a note of any changes you'd like made and explain as precisely as possible how and why those changes should be made. You can also request a review if you don't agree with any of the NDIA's decisions.

How do I know which organisations provide supports in my area?

Contact your local NDIA office, the NDIA on 1800 800 110 or your Support Coordinator (if you have one) for a list of service providers in your area. Alternatively, you can find a List of Registered Providers in Queensland on the website of the NDIA (www.ndis.gov.au).

What is a service agreement?

A service agreement is a legal agreement between you and your service provider/s which outlines the supports which will be provided for you under the NDIS. It includes things like what supports will be provided, how much they cost and how will be paid for, how long the supports will be provided, your obligations and the responsibilities of the service provider.

What is support coordination and how can I organise this?

The NDIS is all about putting you in control of your funding and supports. This means it's your responsibility to get started, shape your plan and find and connect with supports and services in your community. You may find it easier to ask a provider to help coordinate and implement your supports rather than doing it all yourself, particularly if you need multiple services. A Supports Coordinator can be funded as part of your NDIS plan, but must be a person or provider registered to offer this service with the NDIA.

If you need a Support Coordinator, the NDIA will provide a list of support coordinators in your area at your planning meeting. UnitingCare also offers support coordination in certain areas of Queensland.

I receive QCCS supports. Do I have to transfer to the NDIS?

If you're eligible for the NDIS then you'll no longer need QCC services. This is because all supports relating to your disability will be provided under the NDIS. When developing your NDIS Plan you'll have the chance to consider all your current services and identify which supports you need to achieve your goals..

If you're not eligible for NDIS, then there will be no change to your current services.

What happens to my NDIS plan when I turn 65?

If you've been receiving NDIS support, at the age of 65 you can choose to either continue with NDIS supports or transition to age care. However, if you do decide to transition to age care, you won't be able to return to the NDIS.

Can I keep my pension under the NDIS?

There are no changes to arrangements in relation to the Disability Support Pension as a result of the NDIS.

Do I have to manage my own funding under the NDIS?

No. The NDIS gives you the freedom to manage your own funding, but there are other options available too. You can choose between:

- Management by a nominee, for example a family member
- Using a registered Plan Management Provider
- Nominating the NDIA to carry out this role
- Self-management

Ultimately, it's your decision how funds are managed and you'll always retain control over how, when and where your supports are provided.

Will respite care still be available under the NDIS?

Yes, but the NDIS brings a new approach to respite care. The NDIS will look at what respite you currently receive and why. Does it contribute to achieving your goals? Are there other supports that might be more suitable? Respite that currently occurs in accommodation services, outside the family home is called Short Term Accommodation under the NDIS.

Will special schools remain open?

Yes. Because the NDIS is separate to the education system, it won't directly influence the status of special schools. The supports you receive under the NDIS are designed to complement the services the school system offers, not replace them. The NDIS will be available to eligible children, regardless of whether or not they attend a special school.

Will I still receive support from the health system?

Yes, if you need it. The supports you receive under the NDIS are designed to complement the services the health system offers, not replace them. The NDIS will fund supports for people with a disability or condition who need assistance to carry out activities of daily living where these supports relate to their disability.

Is getting a job expected of me under the NDIS?

Only if it's identified as one of your goals. A big part of the thinking behind the NDIS is that living a full life starts with being a part of your community and having the same opportunities as everybody else. Getting a job and participating in the economy can greatly improve your circumstances and your wellbeing, which is why it could potentially become a goal in your plan. In this situation, you would work with your NDIA planner and choose appropriate supports to help you achieve it.

Will there be changes to the numbers of support workers needed under the NDIS?

Yes. It's expected that the number of people accessing disability supports in Queensland will almost double under the NDIS. As a result, a lot of new workers will be needed to deliver these supports. Queensland alone will need an additional 13,000 workers by the time the system is fully rolled out.

At UnitingCare we make sure that we have enough people to support you once the NDIS is introduced in your area. We organise training for our people on working with the NDIS and supporting you through the process.

How does the NDIS acknowledge the efforts of parents of people with disability?

The NDIS fully recognises the important role you, as parents, play in supporting the lives of your children. Both UnitingCare and the NDIA consider your views and experience to be crucial to the planning process. Parents are actively encouraged to work in partnership with the NDIA and be vocal about their children's needs.

How can UnitingCare support me in transitioning to and receiving supports through the NDIS?

The NDIS means more choice for you - so it makes sense to work with a registered provider who understands just how important choice really is. We believe everyone has the right to make real decisions about their own lives and that living a full life starts with being a part of your community. We can assist with any or all of the following:

- Understanding the NDIS and what it means for you
- Planning for your first meeting with the NDIA, including developing a pre-plan and establishing your life goals
- Assistance with choosing and coordinating your support

Whatever your personal circumstances and individual needs, we can support you through the whole process. Find out how we can enable you to shape your own future at unitingcareqld.com.au or call our friendly team on 1300 77 80 81.

What if I move from an NDIS region to one that doesn't have the NDIS yet?

If you have an NDIS Plan and move to an area that hasn't transitioned to the NDIS yet you will still be able to take your plan with you and receive NDIS supports in your new location. You will need to let the NDIS know you are moving so they can update your contact details and if you have one, talk to your support coordinator about connecting with service providers in the place you are moving to. You can also contact service providers directly to see what they can offer you.

It's worth remembering that as the area you're moving to is yet to transition, service providers in that area will need to do a few things to meet the different requirements of the NDIS – so it would be good to contact them before you move.

Notes

To find out more about the NDIS and the services UnitingCare is offering,
please call our friendly team on 1300 77 80 81 or look at

www.unitingcareqld.com.au

