

In Australia, people with a disability under the age of 65 years are provided with support through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS is an entitlement system. That is, every person with a disability is entitled to support, including people with motor neurone disease (MND).

### Some important terms

NDIA	Is an acronym that represents the National Disability Insurance Agency. They are the government department that will provide you with access to the Scheme and will approve the contents of your NDIS plan after meeting with you.
NDIS	Is an acronym that represents the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the legislative instrument under which the NDIA operates.
Access request	This is the term used to describe the way in which people access the NDIS. An individual will lodge an access request which is then processed by the NDIA who provide approval after they are satisfied that you have met the criteria for support.
NDIS plan	The NDIS plan is a document that details your funded supports and support budget.
Funded supports	These are things such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietitian, direct care support, support coordination, speech therapy and assistive technology that the NDIS will fund within your plan. Not everything that you may need to access will be covered by the NDIS.
Support budget	This is the amount of money that the NDIA has assigned to you to be spent on your supports. This budget is broken down into categories of the types of supports you can access. Some part of the plan may include stated supports which mean that you can only use the monies to purchase the supports specifically identified.
Support coordination	Coordinators of Support (COS) are specialists in understanding NDIS Plans and how to access and use the supports provided. If you ask for this support in your NDIS plan, you may be funded for a COS to negotiate with providers about what they will offer you and how much it will cost out of your plan.

### An NDIS plan

No two NDIS plans are the same. This is because the intention of the NDIS is to provide each person with reasonable and necessary supports that meets their individual needs. An NDIS plan has two components. Firstly, it is a budget that outlines the \$ amount that the person with the plan has access to, to pay for the support they need. The second component is the detail of how the monies can be spent. This lets the person with the plan know what their budget is for specific items such as therapies, equipment or direct support staff. Participants also have choice in how they manage their NDIS plan. This means that they can self-manage, have an agency manage for them or elect to have the NDIA manage their plan. You can also choose a combination of the three options. Find out more about [ways to manage your funding](#) on the NDIS website, or speak to your MND Advisor or COS.

### How can MND NSW help you with your NDIS plan?

MND NSW works with individuals living with MND to help them understand what they might need from an NDIS plan and offers a range of resources to assist people with MND to access and implement their plan. If possible, we always recommend that you speak with your MND Advisor or the MND NSW Info Line before speaking with the NDIS so that we can assist you to prepare your documents and to navigate this process. MND NSW also offer a Coordination of Support Service and can assist with implementing your NDIS plan once it has been approved.

### How do I apply for an NDIS plan?

To apply for an NDIS plan you need to complete an **Access Request Form**. There are several options:

- Call the NDIA 1800 800 110 and complete a verbal access request.
- Download and complete/print the [Access Request Form](#) and email back to the NDIA.
- Email [NAT@ndis.gov.au](mailto:NAT@ndis.gov.au) and request a copy of the Access Request Form to be mailed to you.
- Contact your local NDIA office and ask for an Access Request Form to be mailed to you.

As part of your access request (over the phone or via the online form), you will be asked several questions and will be required to confirm your identity. The questions are to determine if you meet the NDIS eligibility requirements such as age, MND diagnosis and whether you are happy to provide consent for them to seek information from your health providers. You will also be asked if you have a My Gov account. This is because you will use your My Gov account to access your NDIS plan once it has been approved.

Find out more here: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis>

### **Supporting Evidence**

When you return your access request form you will either need your doctor to complete the supporting information section OR to provide supporting evidence such as letters or reports from your doctor. If you are providing reports/letters as your evidence, they should confirm your diagnosis and how it impacts your daily life.

More information about providing evidence of your disability can be found on the [NDIA website](#).

*Please note:* If you complete a verbal access request you will then be sent a [Supporting Evidence Form](#) (SEF) for your health professional to complete. You may also be asked for this information by the NDIA if they require more evidence to assist them with your request.

### **What should I do once I have submitted my access request?**

Once you submit your access request it may be several weeks before the NDIA contacts you to confirm that you have been accepted onto the scheme. They will also set a date and time for your NDIS planning meeting, this is the next step where your NDIS planner will discuss with you what level of supports and budget you will need.

### **What should I do before my planning meeting with the NDIA?**

Before this meeting you will need to think about what supports and [‘goals’](#) you would like to achieve from your NDIS plan, so you are prepared for your meeting. This includes what support you need, how often you need it and where you would like to receive those services. It is important to not only think about what you need right now but also what sorts of things you may need in the future.

Whilst waiting for your planning meeting, you may wish to arrange a pre-planning discussion with your MND Advisor to help you prepare for the meeting. Your MND Advisor can help guide you and discuss what supports others with MND have needed in their plan as their MND progresses. Your MND Advisor will also provide a letter of recommendation outlining the minimum requirements that should be included in your plan. They will also explain about the MND NSW FlexEquip Equipment Service and Coordination of Support Service.

Your MND Advisor may be able to join the planning meeting with you if you would like some extra support on the day. The planning meeting should be held in a location convenient to you. This may be in their offices, your home or a health setting if that is where you currently are. You have the right to ask for a face to face meeting or a phone meeting so do not be afraid to ask for an arrangement that suits you.

### **What happens after my planning meeting with the NDIA?**

Following the NDIS planning meeting you will receive written advice from the NDIA that your plan has been approved and the details of what has been approved. Take some time to read what is in your plan and call the MND Info Line or your MND Advisor if you need any help in understanding what your plan includes. If you are not happy with the plan or you think something important is missing, you can ask for this to be reconsidered. MND NSW is also able to provide you with information on how to do this.

### **Final thoughts**

The NDIS is still a relatively new way for people in Australia to access care and support. While there have been substantial improvements in NDIS processes since its inception, you may still experience some ‘teething’ difficulties. We know it is not a perfect system, but we also know that if we can get it right for you, the NDIS can, and does, deliver really significant benefits for people living with MND. If you have any further questions about the NDIS or how to access it, please do not hesitate to contact **MND NSW ph. 1800 777 715**.

If you need help with English, please call the TIS service on 131 450