

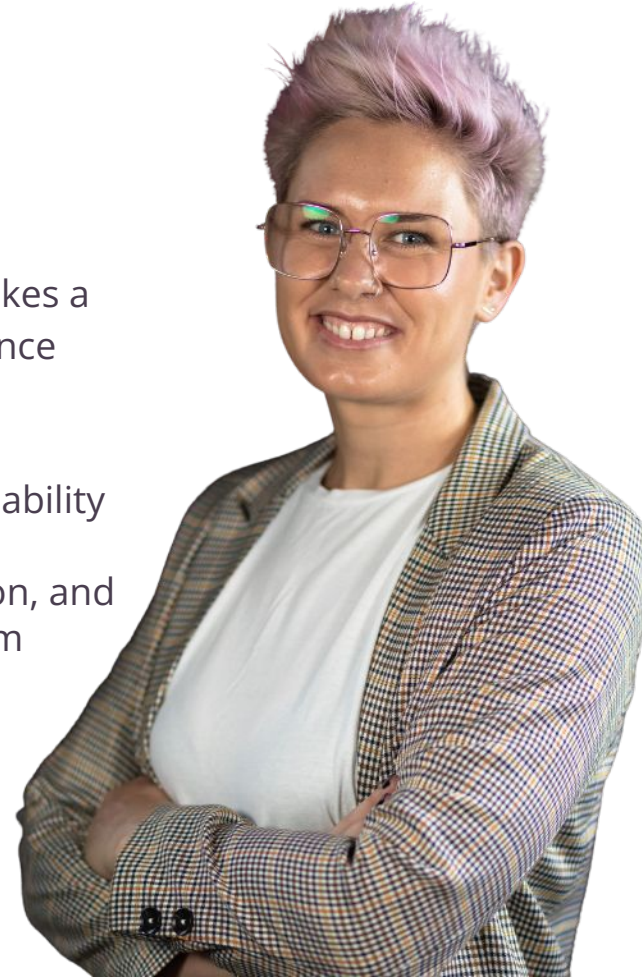
## How to apply for the NDIS as a teen or adult

Fighting Chance's Senior Support Coordinator, Alex Browne, takes a look at accessing (or applying to) the National Disability Insurance Scheme for the first time, including:

- the eligibility criteria for accessing the NDIS, including disability requirements
- what evidence you might need to support your application, and
- what to expect when you look at the Access Request Form (ARF).

Presenting tonight:

**Alexandra Browne** – Senior Support Coordinator/  
Psychosocial Recovery Coach/ Access Manager



## Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.



# Agenda

1. Introduction to the National Disability Insurance Scheme
2. Eligibility
3. Definitions
4. How to apply to the NDIS
5. Evidence of Disability
6. I've gained NDIS Access: what's next?
7. Questions

## What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

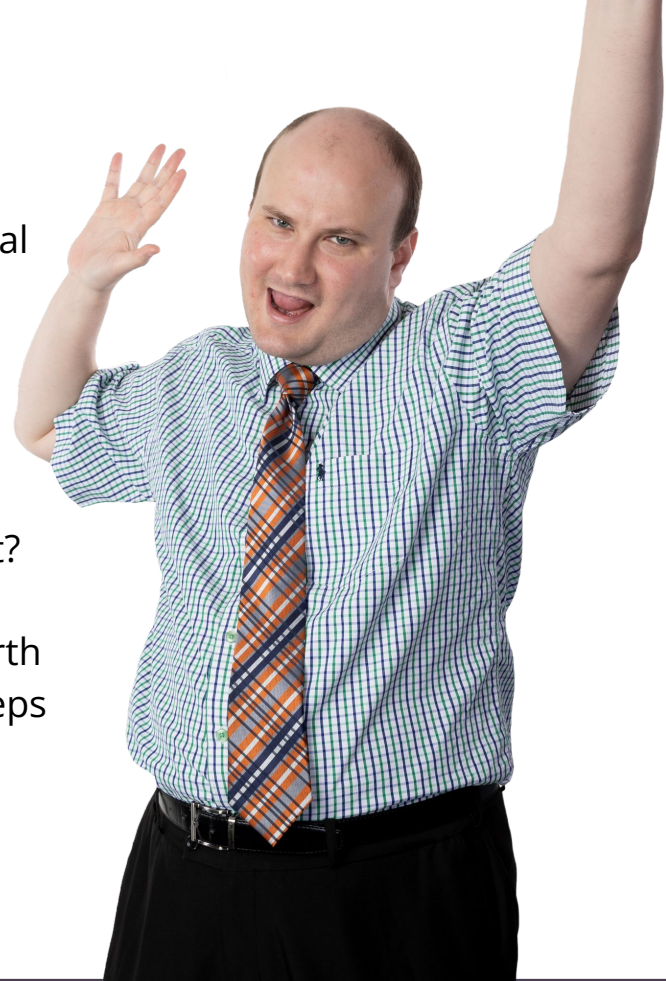
- The National disability insurance scheme ( NDIS ) provides support to people with disability who meet the eligibility criteria.
- The main part of the scheme is providing individualised funding packages of support to eligible people with a disability. It is NOT means tested
- The purpose of the scheme is supporting the independence and social and economic participation of people with a disability.
- This is done by providing reasonable and necessary supports for participants which allow people with disability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of those supports.
- Supports could include support workers at home and in the community, therapy supports, assistive technology and home or vehicle modifications.



## Firstly, are you eligible?

- Are you aged between 7 and 65?
- Are you Australian citizen, permanent resident or protected special category visa holder?
- Do you live in Australia?
- Do you have a disability caused by permanent impairment?
- Do you need disability specific supports to complete daily life activities?
- Do you need support now to reduce your future need for support?

If you have answered YES to the above questions then it could be worth applying for the scheme which tonight we will talk more about the steps on how to apply.



## Definitions in the land of NDIS

### What is defined as a disability:

- The NDIA *must* be satisfied that a prospective participant has a disability that is attributable to one or more intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairments or psychiatric conditions.
- For the purposes of becoming a participant in the NDIS the focus of 'disability' is on the reduction or loss of an ability to perform an activity which results from an impairment. The term 'impairment' commonly refers to a loss of, or damage to, a physical, sensory or mental function.



## Definitions - permanent & significant disability

- **When is an impairment permanent or likely to be permanent?**
  - The NDIA *must* be satisfied that a prospective participant's impairment/s are, or are likely to be, permanent.
  - The diagnosis and the functional impairment of the disability need to be found to be - and clearly stated through the evidence - that it is permanent or likely to be permanent and there is NO further or future health treatments available that will improve the impact of the persons disability, all options have been explored and exhausted and all outcomes are stable (or will decline/ deteriorate).



## Definitions: primary diagnosis

- Primary disability refers to the impairment that impacts your daily functioning the most.
- A person can meet access for more than one disability.
- It is important to note that the disability that the person meets access for is the disability that the NDIA will provide funding for ONLY.
- It is important that the supporting evidence provide must be speaking to the diagnoses or disabilities that the person is applying for through access otherwise it can get confusing for the team assessing eligibility to the scheme.





## Definitions: Psychosocial Disability

- Psychosocial disability is a term used to describe a disability that may arise from a mental health issue.
- Not everyone who has a mental health condition will have a psychosocial disability, but for people who do, it can be severe, longstanding and impact on their recovery. People with a disability as a result of their mental health condition may qualify for the NDIS.
- So if your mental health condition even after all possible health treatments has been tried and your diagnosis still impacts your daily life, independence, ability to participate in social and community, employment or education opportunities then you may meet the criteria for having what the NDIA call a psychosocial disability.



## Definitions: functional impact, functional impairment

You will need evidence that your disability impacts your everyday life in the following areas, including a description of how each area is impacted:

1. mobility/motor skills
2. communication
3. social interaction
4. learning
5. self-care
6. self-management



## Definitions: functional impact, functional impairment

- **Mobility:** this means the ability of a person to move around the home to undertake ordinary activities of daily living, getting in and out of bed or a chair, leaving the home, moving about in the community and performing other tasks requiring the use of limbs. Mobility could also be hindered due to psychosocial reasons or side effects from medication (this is more relevant when a person is applying for access due to their psychosocial disability).
- **Communication:** includes being understood in spoken, written or sign language, understanding others and expressing needs and wants by gesture, speech or context appropriate to age;
- **Social interaction:** includes making and keeping friends (or playing with other children), interacting with the community, behaving within limits accepted by others, coping with feelings and emotions in a social context;



## Definitions: functional impact, functional impairment

- **Learning:** includes understanding and remembering information, learning new things, practicing and using new skills;
- **Self-care:** means activities related to personal care, hygiene, grooming and feeding oneself, including showering, bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, grooming, caring for own health care needs; or
- **Self-management:** means the cognitive capacity to organise one's life, to plan and make decisions, and to take responsibility for oneself, including completing daily tasks, making decisions, problem solving and managing finances.



## Applying to the NDIS

1. Submit forms and supporting evidence yourself via email ([nat@ndis.gov.au](mailto:nat@ndis.gov.au)) or post. ( I recommend email rather than post )
  - a. Access Request form
  - b. Access Request form and NDIS Evidence of Psychosocial Disability Form ( if applying for psychosocial disability )

**Get help:** If you need help filling in the form or making the call, you can:

- c. Call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 and complete a Verbal Access Request
- d. Contact your Local Area Coordinator
- e. Early Childhood Early Intervention partner, or
- f. Contact your local NDIA office.
- g. There are some community organisations that provide support with access such as HireUp and Fighting Chance. **Please be aware that if the provider is asking for payment or future payment from your NDIS plan that is NOT OK or allowed.**

## Access form – a key area to focus your attention on

- In the access form, Part E asks for you to add information around the functional impacts of your disability in each of the domains.
- I find that a lot of people and professionals will either skip past or use medical language in this section.
- It is imperative that whatever the diagnosis you focus on writing in FUNCTIONAL language rather than medical language.



## Some examples of functional language

I am going to share my screen and go through some examples of functional impact which will give you an idea of what the NDIA are specifically looking for in this section.



## What is considered good evidence?

- Recent
- Completed by a treating health professional who is relevant to your primary disability
- States that the functional impairment as well as the diagnosis is **PERMANENT and LIFELONG**
- Confirms your primary disability
- Confirms the impacts of your disability on the different areas of your life (6 domains)
- Describes previous treatments and outcomes
- Describes future treatment options and expected outcomes of those treatments. ( please be aware if you have future treatment options then the NDIA are likely to ask you to wait to apply till after you have seen the results from the treatment options)





## Who can provide evidence of your disability?

- The treating health professional who provides the evidence of your disability should:
- be the most appropriate person to provide evidence of your primary disability; and
- have treated you for a significant period of time (e.g. at least six months).
- Examples of common treating health professionals include: General Practitioner (GP), Pediatrician, Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist (Therapist), Neurologist, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Physiotherapist



## Types of evidence

Your treating health professional can provide evidence by:

- Completing Part F of the [Access Request Form](#); or
- Providing existing reports, assessments or letters that show the impact of your disability, or completing an [NDIS Supporting Evidence Form](#); or
- Completing Part B of the [NDIS Evidence of Psychosocial Disability Form](#) (preferred for primary psychosocial disability)



## Things to consider before applying

- It does take a lot of time
- There is often costs involved when it comes to gathering evidence
- It can at times feel very overwhelming
- The currency of reports and language used is extremely important
- Do it comprehensively the first time

**NOTE:** At times when the above is followed the NDIA may still come back with an access not met decision, however there will be options listed in the decision letter of how to review the decision or reapply.



## I've gained NDIS access, what next?

Once you have gained access, your LAC (local area coordinator) will be in touch with you to book in the planning meeting.

Going through booklet 2 will help you to prepare for the planning meeting and will prompt you to have the following ready:

1. Goals
2. Participant statement
3. A list of all your current supports ( including informal. Community and mainstream )
4. Supporting letters and evidence-based recommendations
5. Quotes
6. Plan length
7. Funds management choice



Questions?

