



Coronavirus (COVID-19): What NDIS participants can expect from their providers and support workers

It is an uncertain time, and you may be worried or confused about COVID-19 and what it could mean for your NDIS supports and services. We understand how important it is for you to have information on COVID-19 and stay up to date with current information.

This fact sheet explains some changes you might see in the way your supports and services are delivered during COVID-19.

Key points

- There is a dedicated [COVID-19 NDIS participant](#) webpage on our website
- You may experience some changes in your supports and services
- There is lots of information to help you keep safe and tell others what they have to do when they support you

Keeping you informed

To help inform and support you through the COVID-19 pandemic, we have created a [dedicated NDIS participant webpage](#) with links to resources and updates about COVID-19.

This webpage has specific information on the pandemic, and we encourage you to visit it. There is a [fact sheet](#) for NDIS participants that explains what you can expect from your provider and includes information on how to make a complaint about a provider, and links to further resources. It is also available in [Easy Read](#) and [Auslan](#) formats.

We are also communicating with providers as they adjust their processes where necessary to deliver the supports and services you rely on. The information we have sent to providers can be found on our [provider alerts webpage](#).

Why providers are changing how they deliver NDIS supports and services

Due to current social distancing and self-isolation rules associated with the pandemic, there may be some changes to the services and supports you receive.

Some of the changes may include:

- If you normally receive some therapy or counselling face-to-face, then your provider may set up phone-based or interactive online services as an alternative.



- If you usually undertake group recreational activities then your provider may set up activities that can be provided in your home, such as sing-alongs, cooking activities or craft.
- Instead of taking you to the supermarket to buy groceries, your support worker might do the shopping for you now and deliver your shopping to you at home.
- You could talk to your family and friends through telephone/video calls instead of face-to-face so you can keep in contact.

If there are any changes, then your provider should:

- seek your input regarding sudden changes to your activities
- provide you with the right information and seek your views about adjustments and changes.

Any changes due to COVID-19

It is important to recognise that providers are continuing to provide supports and services in a difficult situation. But despite this they are **obligated to notify us** if they think there could be a significant impact on the supports and services you receive.

If you feel that the changes being made to your supports are not being communicated with you properly, or causing you distress, then you should [contact us](#).

Keeping important supports in place

Our focus continues to be on the quality and safety of supports and services NDIS providers deliver to people with disability. Providers need to effectively respond to a crisis and continue to provide the supports and services you need to stay well and safe. Because of this, we have been working with them on their business continuity plans.

As part of those plans, they must:

- keep your records up to date, clear, accessible, and available should new or temporary staff be required to support you
- put clear communication channels in place to ensure staff, any third parties, as well as you and your support network receive the information you need at the right time and in the most appropriate way.

Please note also that at this time all NDIS providers, registered and unregistered, are still **obligated to protect and prevent you from experiencing harm** arising from poor quality or unsafe supports, abuse, neglect and exploitation, or poorly managed changes to supports.

Influenza

Australia is now heading into the influenza (flu) season, which is expected to overlap with the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Flu vaccinations are available now. The flu vaccination will help protect you from becoming seriously ill with flu, although it can't protect you from getting sick from COVID_19.

If you want or need a flu vaccination, then you should arrange it now, or ask one of your providers to help you.

If you have questions about the flu vaccination speak with your doctor.



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Disability Information Helpline

If you have a question about COVID-19, or need help because things have changed, you can contact the [Disability Information Helpline](#) on **1800 643 787**. (If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can also call the National Relay Service on 133 677.)

The helpline is available Monday to Friday 8.00am to 8.00pm (AEST) and Saturday and Sunday 9.00am to 7.00pm (AEST). It is not available on national public holidays.

You can call the helpline if:

- your support worker has not turned up
- your provider has stopped services
- it's hard for you to get food, groceries, medications or other essential items
- someone close to you has symptoms of coronavirus
- you are feeling really upset
- anything else is worrying you.

Training for support workers

The safety and wellbeing of all people with disability and the people that provide supports is paramount.

We are encouraging all NDIS workers to do the [free online training from the Department of Health](#) about how to prevent and control COVID-19 infection. You can ask your provider or the workers who support you if they have done the training. If they haven't done the training you can ask them to do it. You might also want to do the training yourself, so you know what you can expect from the people who support you.

If you have questions about the training, speak with your support worker or provider.

How to make a complaint about a provider

If you feel unsafe or are unhappy with the quality of your supports and services – whether or not these issues relate to COVID-19 – it is important to know that you can speak to us about your concerns. It is always okay to speak up.

If you are in New South Wales, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria or Tasmania, you can make a complaint to us by:

- Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- [National Relay Service](#) and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a [complaint contact form](#).

If you are in Western Australia, continue to contact [HADSCO](#) to make a complaint until 30 November 2020.

Contact Us

Call: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines). Our contact centre is open 9.00am to 4.30pm in the NT, 9.00am to 5.00pm in the ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, TAS and VIC Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

Email: contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au

Website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au