

SUPPORT COORDINATOR GUIDE

Unscheduled NDIS Plan Reviews

Why you should read this guide...

It's likely that you, as a support coordinator, will at some point apply for an unscheduled NDIS plan review on behalf of a participant. Here's what you should know to help you get started.

Some basic facts.

Participants who are unhappy with their individual funding package can ask the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to review it anytime – even if the next scheduled planning meeting is months away.

With the growth of the scheme the NDIA is now running more unscheduled plan reviews than ever before.

In the three months between April and June 2020, the NDIA reviewed more than 17,600 plans outside of the normal planning cycle. This is a large number. It means every sixth plan review during that period was unscheduled.

Unscheduled plan reviews are also known as **Participant Requested Reviews (PPR)**.

NDIS Plan Review

Between April and June 2020



103,755
TOTAL SCHEDULED + UNSCHEDULED

17,677
UNSCHEDULED REVIEWS



1 IN 6
REVIEWS

Take place on request, outside the normal schedule

Common reasons to request a review.

Obviously, not every plan will include the funding a participant had hoped for. While some disappointment may be expected, it's problematic when a plan fails to meet a participant's needs.

This can happen for various reasons.

Reason 1: Process flaws

A plan may be inadequate because of shortcomings in the way it was set up.

Maybe an important detail was overlooked during the planning process. Funding may show up in the wrong categories - or not show up at all.



Reason 2: Change in circumstances

There are also situations where a participant's life takes a sudden turn. When circumstances change unexpectedly, a plan's goals, duration and funding may require an urgent update to ensure a participant still gets the most adequate support.

If a plan isn't right, you can ask the NDIA to review it any time. You don't need to wait until the plan formally ends and you have your next scheduled planning meeting (which is typically after 12 months, although the NDIA is now allowing plans to run for up to 3 years).

Types of plan review – Know the difference.

There are **three different ways** to get the NDIA to review your existing funding package and issue a new plan for you:

1 - Scheduled plan review

Each funding package comes with an expiry date. Many participants choose to get funding for one year, but a plan's duration can vary from as little as 3 months to as much as 3 years.

Towards the end of your current plan schedule, the NDIA will invite you to a **review meeting** with one of its planners (or Local Area Coordinator). During this meeting you can tell the agency how things are going for you, whether your circumstances have changed and whether you may need more or less funding in your next plan.

In some cases — this is a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic — the NDIA may automatically extend the duration of a participant's existing plan by a few weeks before offering a review meeting to lock in a new plan.

Remember: the NDIS always needs to see evidence before it can grant any funding. Whatever you ask for, you need to show that it is a reasonable and necessary request to help you meet your life goals.

2 - Participant Requested Review ('unscheduled review')

When you want to request a plan review for a participant whose health has deteriorated or who is undergoing any other significant life changes, you need to complete a **change of circumstances form** ([download pdf](#)) and contact the NDIA.

These unscheduled plan reviews are also known as 'reviews under section 48'. You can read more about them [on the NDIS website here](#).

3 - Internal review ('review of a reviewable decision')

There are situations where the NDIA prefers to run a so-called **review of a reviewable decision** to check if a participant's plan was incorrectly approved.

The difference between unscheduled plan reviews and this type of review can be a bit of a grey zone. The NDIA may decide on a case-by-case basis which review it deems more appropriate.

A review of a reviewable decision will almost certainly apply where a plan seems fundamentally wrong to meet a participant's needs or where you think a planner has made a mistake in the way the funding is allocated. You would also request a review of a reviewable decision where a participant was rejected entry into the scheme and you think the rejection wasn't justified.

To request a review of a reviewable decision, [download and fill out this pdf form](#).

NDIS will shift to independent assessments

From mid-2021, the NDIA will change its plan review process.

Participants will then need to get an additional report written by an independent panel of health professionals to explain how their disability impacts their day-to-day life.

The NDIA says these new **independent functional capacity assessments** will help its Planners make fairer and more informed funding decisions. They're just one piece of evidence in the review process. Plans aren't fixed yet. The NDIA promised to consult disability community over the next six months before presenting its final roadmap.

What we know so far:

- Independent assessments will last between 1 and 4 hours.
- Assessors will include occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists and speech pathologists, but not the usual therapists a participant sees.

What else should your plan review request include?

It's worth noting that the NDIA will only agree to start a plan review outside the normal schedule if you have a valid reason. Requesting a plan review based solely on the notion that you think you deserve more funding, will rarely stand the agency's scrutiny. You need to prove your point. Explain what prompts you to request a review (for example, changed circumstances) and back up your request with evidence (for example, therapy reports).

Note that when the NDIA agrees to conduct a review, it will not amend an existing plan. Rather, it will issue an entirely new one.



For further information, read the official NDIS information on [internal reviews](#) and reviews for [changes of circumstances](#). You can also read the technical Operational Guideline that describes how the NDIS handles [reviews of decisions](#).

Who is Provider Choice?

We are NDIS experts. We provide plan management services and easy-to-use technology for all NDIS participants.

If you have any plan management questions or queries, please get in touch with:

Helen Sharman

Community Engagement Manager

 0491 263 915

 helen.sharman@providerchoice.com.au