

DisabilityCare Australia

Frequently asked questions
as at July 2013



National Disability Services

DisabilityCare Australia Processes

Q: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PLANNER?

The planner's first task is to confirm the eligibility of the person for DisabilityCare Australia (DCA). Some people will have completed an online self-reporting tool—My Access Checker <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/my-access-checker>—prior to meeting the planner. This will have indicated whether they are likely to be eligible for DisabilityCare Australia; the planner will confirm this.

Secondly, the planner will discuss with the participant their needs, goals and aspirations. This will inform the development of a STATEMENT OF GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS for the participant.

Following this, the planner and participant will work together to identify what current and future supports will be required to make progress on the participant's goals. This part of the plan, the STATEMENT OF PARTICIPANT'S SUPPORTS, sets out the supports that will be provided or funded by DCA.

These two statements make up the plan for each participant. The plan is owned by the participant and is based on what is regarded as reasonable and necessary to enable a good life. It could include one-off and/or ongoing funded supports. What is a reasonable and necessary support is checked against a set of 'reference packages' that DCA has developed.

For more detail on the DCA's Operational Guidelines about planning refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/323>

Q: WHAT TOOL(S) WILL THE AGENCY USE TO HELP THEM DEVELOP A PLAN?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) recognises that one tool will not always provide all the necessary information required. An assessment tool (a version for children and adults) has been developed for planners that will be evaluated during the Launch period.

The tool is based on the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF) and guides the conversation with participants. DCA does not intend to make public a copy of the assessment tool nor do they expect to give the participant a copy to complete. However, for more detail about the 10 domains or core areas that are covered in this tool that will assist and guide the planning conversation, refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/324>

ANSWER CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

DCA expect planners to draw upon other assessments that have been completed to help them make decisions about supports and services that are needed. They may request additional specialist assessments to be completed to help with the development of the plan.

DCA is keen that the participant only has to tell their story once and therefore is keen, with the consent of the participant, to have providers share information and assessments that they have about the participant.

Q. IS THE PLANNER'S ROLE DIFFERENT FROM THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AREA COORDINATOR (LAC)?

Yes, they are different. The LAC (which may have different titles in some of the Launch sites) will assist a participant to navigate the mainstream, community and disability systems. The LAC is not involved in determining eligibility to DisabilityCare Australia (DCA).

The LAC will act as a consistent point of contact for the participant, and will be available to provide as much or as little assistance as the participant requests.

Further information about the DCA Operational Guidelines refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/307>

Q. HOW WILL THE ROLES OF PLANNER AND LOCAL AREA COORDINATOR (LAC) OVERLAP, IF AT ALL?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) believes it will be important that the planners liaise and work cooperatively with the LACs to ensure the successful implementation of the participant's plan.

Q. IS THE PLANNER OR LOCAL AREA COORDINATOR INVOLVED IN CASE COORDINATION?

No, DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) recognises that some participants will require additional support to help coordinate the implementation of their plan. In exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the participant, DCA may appoint a case coordinator. This will be funded by DCA as an item of support in the plan and will be time limited.

NDS is currently seeking clarification from DCA about how it will support participants with complex needs who require highly skilled case management supports.

Q. WILL THERE BE AN APPEALS MECHANISM?

Some of the decisions and actions of DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) will be reviewable. These are listed in the NDIS Act 2012.

In addition, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal will establish an NDIS division and an independent expert panel to advise DCA's merits review process.

DCA Operational Guidelines about review of decisions have yet to be loaded onto the web site.

Funding, pricing and payments

Q. WILL DCA SET PRICES FOR SUPPORTS?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) has confirmed that at least for the commencement of the Launch, it will take the role of setting prices for most of the supports.

There are two types of price setting:

1. For clusters of supports that can be described as high frequency or high volume a **maximum price** will be set by DCA. The provider can claim payment up to this price but not beyond.
2. The other type of price will be a **benchmark price**. This is a price that is indicative of the cost but will be subject to confirmation of a quote from a supplier. This will mainly relate to items of support such as equipment and home and vehicle modifications. A benchmark price will be included in the participant's plan to allow the full funding package to be developed. However, the price finally paid by DCA will be confirmed once a quote has been obtained and approved.

Innovative supports, those that are unique to the participant, may also attract a benchmark price in the plan until confirmation is received from the provider/supplier and approved by the Agency.

The decision to set prices has been based on DCA's view that the market is still immature and that until the development of greater demand and supply factors, it is better to intervene with market price setting.

Click here to download the full list of the prices set for each of the Launch sites: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/providers/pricing-and-payment-supports>

Q. WILL A PROVIDER BE ABLE TO CHARGE A HIGHER PRICE THAN THE MAXIMUM PRICE?

If a provider is a Registered Provider of Supports and will be claiming a payment from DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) through its Provider portal the provider will not be able to charge a price higher than the maximum price.

DCA will not permit a Registered Provider of Supports to request a co-payment from participants.

ANSWER CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Registered Providers are advised to read carefully the Terms of Business document (<http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/288>) which clearly states that Registered Providers are not permitted to add charges to the prices of the support including credit card surcharges.

Q. WHAT DOES A PLAN MANAGEMENT PROVIDER DO?

Plan management describes the processes of organising the financial and administrative aspects of the plan, such as paying supplier invoices, developing service agreements with providers, assisting with the hiring and paying of staff, and preparing reports on how funds are being used. This is referred to as a financial intermediary function.

A Plan Management Provider may be able to provide limited case management support and also assist and train the participant to take greater control of managing their supports. This is referred to as a service intermediary function.

For more information about plan management providers refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/providers/what-registered-plan-management-provider>

Q. HOW CAN FUNDING BE MANAGED?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) describes the following options available to the participant:

1. Self-manage the financial and administrative processes: DCA anticipates up to 20% of participants will select this option. A participant may request to have a plan nominee to support them with these processes.
2. Use a Plan Management Provider: The participant may engage a business/organisation to undertake the financial and administrative processes on their behalf. A Plan Management Provider can also be a Registered Provider of Supports but would need to be able to demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest in operating both types of services.
3. Nominate DCA to play this role: DCA would make all the payments necessary to any Registered Providers of Supports identified by the participant.

For more detail about DCA Operational Guidelines that planners use to support a participant's plan management decision refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/327>

Q. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PLAN NOMINEE AND A CORRESPONDENCE NOMINEE?

A Plan Nominee can assist the participant with the:

- preparation and review of the participant's plan; and
- management of funding for supports under the participant's plan.

In contrast, a Correspondence Nominee cannot do the above activities. They act only as the person able to make requests to DisabilityCare Australia (DCA), for example, requests for information, and receive notices from DCA on behalf of the participant.

If a Plan Nominee is appointed, they can also manage the funding for supports, or appoint a Plan Management Provider or DCA to undertake this role.

Q. WHAT CHOICE AND FLEXIBILITY WILL THERE BE ABOUT WHAT CAN BE PURCHASED WITH THE FUNDS?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) anticipates that the participant's funding package may be divided into two parts. Some funds may be 'locked' or 'fixed' so that they will need to be spent on specified supports such as equipment, home modifications or certain types of early intervention services. These will tend to be those services which are deemed necessary to ensure a participant's goal or outcome can be met, or require certain skills or qualifications of the provider of supports. Other supports will be prescribed in general terms and will allow the participants greater flexibility to select the types of supports they may want to purchase.

Q. WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORTS AND SERVICES WILL BE FUNDED?

Only those supports and services that are deemed 'reasonable and necessary' will be funded by DisabilityCare Australia (DCA). This is determined using a set of criteria which take into account whether:

- the supports are effective and beneficial and are based on current good practice;
- the supports represent value for money; and
- what is reasonable to expect from family carers, other informal supports, and from community and mainstreams services.

For more detail on the DCA Operational Guidelines on which supports are included in the plan refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/327>

Q. WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORTS AND SERVICES WILL NOT BE FUNDED OR PROVIDED?

Supports that will not be funded include those that are:

- likely to cause harm to the participant or pose a risk to others;
- unrelated to the participant's disability;
- duplicate other supports provided under alternative funding;
- part of the day-to-day living expenses that are incurred by the general public (eg rent, groceries, household bills) and not related to disability support needs; and
- related to income replacement.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE SITUATION OF AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS FOR A PARTICIPANT; HOW DO ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS GET FUNDED?

When planners initially work with the participant to develop their Plan, there may be a discussion about this as a possibility. If required, there will be an allocation of funding to assist with this included in the plan. This is more likely to be included within a participant's plan if they have a high level of informal supports. The NDIS Act allows for plans to be reviewed at any point that circumstances change.

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) is also pursuing the idea of having each DisabilityCare Office develop local contractual agreements with providers to provide crisis support.

Q. HOW ARE SUPPORTS CATEGORISED?

Supports are clustered by category. For example, a cluster called "Assistance with daily personal activities" has been developed which has various subsets for how this personal care support is delivered, such as on weekdays, weekends, overnight on public holidays.

Cluster definitions have attempted to reflect many of the existing services and supports delivered by providers and new ones will be developed as demand from participants increases. However, NDS is requesting greater clarity of some of the cluster definitions as there appears to be some unintentional overlap in descriptions.

To assist providers compare and match their current funded service with the new support categories, table for each jurisdiction can be found on the DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) website: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/297>

ANSWER CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

There will be a cluster of supports called “innovative supports” which will describe a support that is unique to the participant or has not been requested before. For example, a participant may have a recreational goal in their plan to sky dive and a provider may be approved to develop a package of supports that will assist the participant to achieve this goal. This would be identified on the plan as an innovative support item.

Q. HOW DO PROVIDERS RECEIVE PAYMENTS?

There are three main ways providers can be paid. If DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) or a Plan Management Provider is managing the funds, the provider can either:

1. Make a claim online using the claim payment system (it is anticipated that payment will be made within 2 working days) or,
2. Send a paper invoice to DCA (payment made within 30 days)
Where a participant self-manages the funding for their supports:
3. The participant will pay providers directly. The provider will need to ensure that the participant understands and agrees to the provider’s terms of payment for any services delivered. For example, payment within 7, 14 or 30 days of receipt of invoice by cheque, EFT etc.

For more detail about payments and claims refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/389>

Q. IS THERE FUNDING FOR CAPITAL ITEMS SUCH AS EQUIPMENT OR BUILDINGS?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) will provide funding for capital items such as equipment and for home modifications for participants who require them.

The payment benchmark prices that DCA has set for equipment items and home/vehicle modifications can be found in the price, refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/providers/pricing-and-payment-supports>.

Final prices paid to providers will be based on the receipt of approved supplier quotes.

Currently there is a high need for capital investment in accommodation (to meet demand) and DCA will have to respond to this. Its preferred option would be to leverage housing investment from other sources.

Q. HOW DOES TRANSITION WORK FOR BLOCK FUNDED ORGANISATIONS?

At July 2013, some types of support will continue to be delivered under the existing block grant arrangements, with some remaining block funded during the Launch period. For some existing providers however, this may be a transitional arrangement and their funding will move across to individual support packages during the period of the Launch. Negotiations are currently underway between governments on how this will be managed at each Launch site.

For more detail refer to <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/providers/transition-arrangements-existing-providers>.

Becoming a registered provider

Q. HOW DOES AN ORGANISATION BECOME A REGISTERED PROVIDER OF SUPPORTS?

Registration for organisations and individuals to apply to become Registered Providers of Supports participants is now open on the DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) website. This process is completed via an online Smartform. You must submit your application using the approved online Smartform. This is the only way you will be able to register.

For more detail in how to register refer to: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/297>

If your registration has been approved you will receive a letter from DCA confirming this as well as a Certificate of Registration outlining the supports you are approved to deliver.

Q. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE SUPPORTS LISTED ON THE CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION DOES NOT MATCH MY REGISTRATION APPLICATION?

In the first weeks of registration a number of providers have noted that support lists have either been incomplete or incorrect. Some of this has been due to a mismatching of the supports described in existing contractual arrangements with the new DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) definitions of clusters of supports.

To assist providers compare and match their current funded service with the new support categories, table for each jurisdiction can be found on the DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) website: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/297>

If the supports listed are incorrect or incomplete providers should call DCA on 1800 800 110 to discuss further.

Q. CAN AN ORGANISATION HAVE MORE THAN ONE REGISTRATION?

Yes, larger organisations that have branches or outlets may choose to have more than one registration.

Q. CAN AN ORGANISATION NOMINATE THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DELIVER NEW CLUSTERS OF SUPPORTS OTHERS THAN THOSE THEY ARE CURRENTLY FUNDED FOR?

Yes, this is possible. However, organisations do not need to do this at the very first time they register online. They can apply to add new supports to their registration at any time. There will be a separate form for this which will not require the organisation to repeat previous information. Organisations will be notified of the outcome of their application to deliver a new support cluster.

Q. WHAT SORT OF EVIDENCE IS DCA SEEKING FROM PROVIDERS WHO WANT TO REGISTER FOR NEW SUPPORTS?

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) have provided information about this on their website, please refer to: http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Provider_Registration_suitability_requirements.pdf

Q. WILL I NEED SPECIAL SOFTWARE TO ACCESS THE PROVIDER PORTAL?

No, there is no special software needed to access the Provider portal; access will be via the internet, although providers will need to be using a modern browser. The portal will work only the following versions:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 9
- Apple Safari 6
- Mozilla Firefox

However, you will need to have an AUSKey organised to allow you to access the Provider portal. Each employee who needs to use the Provider Portal will need their own AUSKey and the digital certificate that comes with this AUSKey will need to be loaded locally onto the employee's PC. These must be kept secure and cancelled immediately if the employee is no longer working in a role that requires access to the Portal.

Q. WHAT IS AN AUSKEY?

An AUSKey is a single key used to access government on line services. It identifies employees of businesses on line without the need for multiple passwords.

Providers can apply to receive an AUSKey from the Australian Business Register (www.auskey.abr.gov.au). It is free.

Q. WHAT WILL PROVIDERS BE ABLE TO SEE AND DO ON THE PROVIDER PORTAL?

Where a participant allows access, the Provider portal will give providers information relevant to a participant's PLAN. Providers will be able to claim for payment online for supports provided to participants.

It will also allow providers to:

- Update their provider information;
- Submit a claim for payment to DCA;
- Determine the status of existing claims; and
- See information about past payments

For further details refer to the web link: <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/document/96>

Q. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FUNDING FOR CHILDREN CURRENT ACCESSING BETTER START (BS) AND HELPING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM (HCWA) PROGRAMS LIVING IN LAUNCH SITES?

Both BS and HCWA have been identified for transition to the NDIS. When children who are in receipt of BS and HCWA become participants of the scheme when they meet the access requirements, their funding will be transferred to DisabilityCare Australia.

Q. AS AN APPROVED BS AND HCWA PANEL PROVIDER, WILL I NOW BE MAKING PAYMENT CLAIMS THROUGH THE NEW NDIS PORTAL OR WILL I CONTINUE TO MAKE CLAIMS AS I CURRENTLY DO THROUGH FOFMS?

FaHCSIA is currently working with DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) on an implementation plan for the transition of BS and HCWA.

Claims for supports provided through DCA will need to be made through the DCA Provider portal.

A provider will need to be registered with DCA to deliver and claim for supports provided. Claims for BS and HCWA will continue to be made through the current FOFMS system.

Q. IF I AM AN APPROVED PANEL PROVIDER FOR BS AND HCWA PROGRAMS, DO I HAVE TO RE-REGISTER FOR APPROVAL TO BECOME A REGISTERED PROVIDER OF SUPPORTS UNDER THE NDIS?

The BS and HCWA panel will continue. If a provider wishes to deliver supports under

ANSWER CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA), the provider will need to register through DCA's registration process. A streamlined process for the registration of existing BS and HCWA service providers is currently being developed with DCA.

Q. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY UNDER THE AGE OF 6 YEARS WHO WILL BE NEW TO THE SYSTEM FOLLOWING 1 JULY 2013? WILL THE BS HCWA PROGRAMS BE AVAILABLE FOR THESE CHILDREN? DO FAMILIES REGISTER AS BEFORE WITH THE AUTISM ADVISOR FOR HCWA OR WITH THE DEDICATED REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION SERVICE (RIS) FOR BS?

Following July 2013, new children to the system in Victoria and New South Wales will need to make an access request to DisabilityCare Australia (DCA). In June, parents will be able to use the My Access Checker tool on the website to see whether their child may be able to access assistance from DCA after 1 July 2013.

In South Australia, cohorts of children will be gradually phased in to DCA based on age, with younger children aged 0 to 2 transferring first and children up to 5 years being accommodated by July 2014. Children from birth to 2 years will be assisted in the first quarter, moving through to children aged 5 in the last quarter. As the phasing occurs, children in the age range covered by DCA will need to make an access request to DCA. Parents will be able to use the My Access Checker tool on the website to see whether their child may be able to receive assistance through DisabilityCare Australia. Children in age groups outside of those eligible for DCA assistance can continue to access their existing program in the meantime.

Eligible children aged 6 can apply to access BS and HCWA until 1 July 2014, when the age range for young people accessing DCA is extended to 13.

Where a cohort of children is not covered in a launch site or is outside of the launch sites they will be able to access BS and HCWA if eligible for those programs.

Monitoring and evaluation

Q. WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING QUALITY SERVICE PROVIDERS?

At the start of the Launch, DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) will recognise the quality management systems currently in place within each jurisdiction (for service providers currently funded by state or territory governments to provide disability services and supports).

Therefore, when first registering as a Provider of Supports, there will not be a requirement from DCA for the existing government-funded providers to prove they have a quality system in place.

However, over the Launch period, DCA will develop a national quality system that will be used for the ongoing registration of Providers of Supports.

Q. WILL I NEED TO CAPTURE THE NEW DCA PARTICIPANT NUMBER SOMEWHERE IN MY ORGANISATION'S DATA COLLECTION PROCESS?

It would probably make sense that this unique identifier is captured as a new field somewhere in your current or future client information system for quick and easy reference.

Contact

Deborah Hoffman - NDIS Launch Coordinator

National Disability Services

Ph: 02 9256 3166

Email: deborah.hoffman@nds.org.au