



How to Get Help from the NDIS

(National Disability Insurance Scheme)
For Adult Autistics

Perth Adult Autism and Aspergers' Association (PA5)

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This information sheet has been developed for autistic people over the age of 18 who are thinking of getting help through the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The NDIS is a new national **disability support** scheme in Australia. The NDIS is run by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), a federal government agency.

If you are **autistic** and need help and support, you can apply to get help through funding from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

You might need help if you:

- find it hard to do things every day like shower, brush your teeth or get dressed
- find it hard to go out in public, go shopping, cook or live independently
- have problems with meltdowns, hoarding or caring for yourself or others.

There are other things many autistic people have problems with and that impact on their lives every day.

Some ways that the NDIS is helping autistic people is by:

- getting them a support worker to help with doing daily personal care tasks
- getting them a support worker to help with daily living, including taking care of the house, shopping, filling out forms or going to medical appointments
- getting therapy to help with emotional regulation, learning how to cope with meltdowns or learning other skills
- finding aids and equipment that might help you be more independent.

To get help from the NDIS, you will need to:

1. Get ready

You will need to make sure that you are **eligible** for the NDIS.

To be eligible, you need to be an Australian resident, be under the age of 65, live in Australia and have a permanent disability that affects you every day.

You will also need to:

- have (or be able to get) a **diagnosis** of autism (and/or psychosocial disability*)
- be able to prove that it affects your life and makes it very hard for you to do things every day without help (you can prove this by giving the NDIA a letter from your doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist).

* a permanent mental health condition

2. Get an Access Request form

You can get an **access request form** by ringing the NDIS on 1800 800 110. Ask them to email or post it out to you.

Or you can go to their office at 78-80 Railway Parade, Midland. The office is a two minute drive or four minute walk from the Midland Train Station.

3. Make sure you have what you need to apply

You will need to be able to **prove that you have a disability** by giving the NDIA a copy of your diagnosis.

If you have a diagnosis already, submit it to the NDIA. If they ask you to get a new diagnosis, the legislation says that they must support you to get it. (s 26)

The NDIA will also ask you to provide evidence of 'functional impairment'. There is a sample form here www.tinyurl.com/functionalimpairment - if your doctor is not sure how to fill out the form, you can provide them with this form as an example.

If you do not have a diagnosis, or if you cannot get your records, you will need to be rediagnosed. If you don't have a copy of your records, but you know where you had the tests or assessments done, you can ask your doctor to get them or authorise the NDIS to get them by ticking the box on the form.

There is a new set of criteria that is used to assess autistic people. It is called the DSM-V. Under the DSM-V, there are new categories - if you were once diagnosed with Aspergers' or PDD-NOS, your diagnosis will now more likely be 'Autism Spectrum Disorder.'

To be diagnosed with autism as an adult in WA, you will need to be **referred** to a psychiatrist/psychologist. If you need to get a referral, you will need to go to your doctor and tell them that you want a referral to a specialist to assess you for an autism spectrum disorder.

If you are autistic, the psychiatrist or psychologist will diagnose you with a '**level**' - if your 'level' is level 2 or level 3, you will usually not have to provide as much proof to the NDIS that you need help. If you are assessed as being level 1, you may be able to access the NDIS but you may need more information.

A peer support group like the **Perth Adult Autism and Aspergers' Association (PA5)** can help you find out the names of specialists (psychiatrists and psychologists) or other people who can help you.

4. Get ready to plan

The NDIA runs **information sessions** about how to 'pre-plan' and there are some funded organisations who will help you think about what you need and how to write your plan.

The NDIS works in a different way than the old disability funding systems.

They will ask you what you want to do and then ask you how you want to do it. NDIS plans work on '**goals**' and '**strategies**' - goals are what you want to do and strategies are ways that you can make that happen.

This can be hard to think about. You might want to ask friends, other autistic people or members of a **peer support group** how you can do this. Some thing you might like to try are studying at TAFE or uni, getting a new job, finding a partner or being more independent in your day to day life.

5. Getting help

If your access request is **rejected** or you find it hard to go through the NDIS process, you can contact an **advocacy agency** like People With disabilities WA, MIDLAS or IDAS. Their details are here. <http://www.dana.org.au/wa/>