

# Practice Guide – Hearing Supports

Guide for Planners and Local Area Coordinators

Refer to Practice Guide – Assisting Communications for information on including Auslan supports in plans for participants who are Deaf, have hearing loss or a hearing impairment.

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**The content of this document is OFFICIAL.**

## 1. Purpose

This Practice Guide will assist you to develop and implement plans for participants who have hearing supports in their plan.

**Note:** The age range for the NDIS Pathway Hearing Stream for children younger than 7 newly diagnosed with a hearing loss is not changing.

For participants younger than 7 refer to [Practice Guide – Early childhood – supports for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.](#)

## 2. To be used by

- Plan Developers – Planners and NDIS Partners (local area coordinators)
- NDIA Plan Delegates.

## 3. Scope

This Practice Guide will provide you with an understanding of support needs and the planning process for participants who identify with the disabilities of Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment. This guide explains how to include funded supports in a plan when a participant is eligible or already receiving supports through the Hearing Services Program (HSP), and how to determine Reasonable and Necessary supports when a participant is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program.

**Note:** The term 'Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment' is used when referring to the NDIS access process and recording of disability and functional impairment in the NDIS Business System (System). We understand this is not the preferred language for many participants in the Deaf or Hard of Hearing communities. This term is used to ensure consistency between this Practice Guide, the NDIS Our Guidelines and the details in the System to support the planning process. You should always check with the participant how they identify and what their preferred terminology is.

### 3.1 Hearing services interface

From 1 July 2020 hearing services in Australia will continue to be funded by both the Hearing Services Program (HSP) and the NDIS.

Under a previous in-kind arrangement participants who were not normally eligible for the Hearing Services Program were issued a voucher. This voucher will remain valid until it expires, or, when the participant has a plan review and chooses to cancel their voucher and have all their hearing needs funded in their NDIS plan.

Plan developers need to understand the participant’s current and future eligibility for the Hearing Services Program to determine how a participant will receive their hearing supports. Refer to [Participant Hearing Services Program eligibility](#).

If the participant is eligible for the Hearing Services Program they will fund some supports. The NDIS will fund other reasonable and necessary supports the Hearing Services Program does not fund.

If the participant is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program the NDIS will fund all reasonable and necessary supports.

Refer to [Funding Responsibilities](#) in this resource for more information about what the Hearing Services Program funds and what the NDIS can fund.

### 3.2 What is hearing loss?

Hearing loss can be described as:

- congenital (present at birth or soon after birth)
- acquired (occurs or develops during a person’s life and was not present at birth).

Types of hearing loss:

- **Sensorineural** hearing loss is considered permanent affecting the inner ear (cochlea).
- **Conductive** hearing loss may be considered a temporary condition if, for example, it is associated with a middle ear pathology (for example, ear infections/otitis media). However, a conductive hearing loss would be considered permanent if for example, the child has a malformed ear or there is sufficient medical evidence, for example from an Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) specialist, evidencing that the hearing loss is permanent, or is likely to be permanent and there are no known available and appropriate evidenced-based medical treatments that would remedy the hearing loss. For further information refer to s5.4 [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(Becoming a Participant\) Rules 2016](#).
- **Mixed** hearing loss is a combination of a sensorineural (permanent) hearing loss with a conductive overlay.
- **Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSO)** is sometimes called auditory neuropathy or auditory dys-synchrony. It is a “neural” hearing condition which impacts on the ability of the hearing (auditory) nerve to send sounds from the inner ear (cochlear) to the brain.

#### Classification of a Hearing Loss

Hearing Severity Level	Decibel Range
Normal Hearing	0-20dBHL

Hearing Severity Level	Decibel Range
Mild Hearing Loss	21 – 40dBHL
Moderate Hearing Loss	41 – 60dBHL
Severe Hearing Loss	61 – 80dBHL
Severe or Profound Hearing Loss	81 – 90dBHL
Profound Hearing Loss	>90dBHL

### 3.3 What are the impacts for participants who are Deaf, have a hearing loss or hearing impairment?

Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment may impact the participant's ability to hear conversational speech and environmental sounds, therefore affecting their ability to communicate, learn and socially interact. The impacts of Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment will vary considerably between individuals depending on a range of factors including:

- age of onset
- severity
- type of hearing loss
- early intervention support received, and
- other factors affecting the person such as whether they also have a secondary disability.

## 4. Access

Access to the NDIS for participants who identify as Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impaired is assessed under [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 \(NDIS Act 2013\)](#). Information about the Hearing Services Program eligibility is explained in the Applying to the NDIS Our Guideline [Do you meet the disability requirements? \(external\)](#).

Information about access for participants aged 0 – 25 is located in the Applying to the NDIS Our Guideline [Do you need early intervention? \(external\)](#).

When a participant turns 26 and met eligibility via the early intervention requirements, their eligibility is assessed under the Applying to the NDIS Our Guideline [Do you meet the disability requirements? \(external\)](#).

## 5. Pre-planning

During pre-planning you will have meaningful conversations with the participant and/or their nominee to create a high quality, personalised plan to support the participant to pursue their goals.

### 5.1 Effective communication

The NDIA must make sure assistance is provided to a participant to support their interaction and/or communication with the Agency, our staff and partners.

Participants who identify with the disabilities of Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment may use a variety of communication methods to communicate such as:

- lip reading
- hearing aids
- Auslan
- Remote Captioning
- other assistive technology.

The participant may find it difficult to hear at times, even when wearing a hearing device. In all your conversations it is important you:

- speak clearly
- don't shout
- where necessary, speak slightly slower than usual and make sure you face the participant
- position yourself so there is no background glare from windows. This will help the participant to watch your face for extra visual cues, for example lip reading, and help them understand what you are saying
- have the conversation in a well-lit, quiet room, with no unnecessary background noise
- rephrase what you are saying if the participant asks you to repeat yourself and don't repeat the same sentence again
- check-in with the participant to understand they have understood
- use gestural cues and visual resources where possible.

Participants who are deafblind may communicate using tactile, hand-over-hand or visual frame. Refer to the [Deafblind Disability](#) and [Deafness and Hearing Impairment](#) Snapshots for further information.

### 5.1.1 Meeting preparation

The participant's preferred method of communication needs to be established before the planning meeting and arrangements made to ensure the participant can participate in the meeting.

Before booking a planning meeting with the participant:

1. Check the System to confirm the participant's communication needs and their preferred contact method. This may vary from email, SMS or phone via TTY (Text Telephone/Teletype Terminal).

**Note:** If the participant's preferred method is phone via TTY, you need to use the [National Relay Service \(external\)](#) to call the participant to book the appointment and find out how you can best meet their communication needs during the planning meeting.

2. Understand and respect communication barriers for example, the participant may require an interpreter (Auslan or live captioning).
3. Make appropriate adjustments for the planning meeting. For example, a quiet room with no background noise, noisy air conditioners, busy roads or background music.

Refer to [Practice Guide – Assisting Communication](#).

## 5.2 Hearing Services Program

The NDIS interfaces with the [Hearing Services Program \(external\)](#) for participants when they are:

- under the age of 26, or
- aged 26 years and over and meet the Hearing Services Program eligibility criteria.

The Hearing Services Program has two components:

1. **Voucher (Voucher program)** delivers general hearing services and devices to [eligible people \(external\)](#).
2. **Community Service Obligations (CSO program)** deliver Specialist Hearing Services and devices to [eligible people \(external\)](#). The Community Services Obligations program is solely delivered by Hearing Australia.

## 5.3 Participant Hearing Services Program eligibility

To check if the participant is eligible or confirm the participant is still eligible for the Hearing Services Program (HSP), refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Include hearing supports in a plan](#).



### 5.4 Planning Process table

The following table lists the seven participant groups and the type of funding the participant may be eligible for.

You will need to identify which group the participant is in and follow the relevant planning process in the [Standard Operating Procedure – Include hearing supports in a plan](#).

Group	Funding
Participant aged 7 to 25*.	<p>Hearing services provided by the Community Services Obligation program.</p> <p>NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary supports which the Community Services Obligation program does not fund.</p>
Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander over 50 years.	<p>Hearing services provided by the Community Services Obligation program.</p> <p>NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary supports which the Community Services Obligation program does not fund.</p>
Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above who is eligible for the Hearing Services Program with a current HSP voucher.	<p>Hearing services provided by the Hearing Services Program**.</p> <p>NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary supports which the Hearing Services Program does not fund.</p>
Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above not eligible for the Hearing Services Program <b>but</b> with a current HSP voucher provided under the previous in-kind arrangement*** who would like to have NDIS fund all Hearing Supports.	<p>NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary hearing supports.</p>
Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above not eligible for the Hearing Services Program <b>but</b> with a current HSP voucher provided under the previous in-kind arrangement*** who would like to	<p>Hearing services provided by the Hearing Services Program until the participant's HSP voucher expires.</p>

Group	Funding
remain with Hearing Services Program while the voucher is valid.	NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary supports which the Hearing Services Program does not fund.
New NDIS participant aged 26 and above, HSP eligible.	Hearing services provided by Hearing Services Program. NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary supports which the Hearing Services Program does not fund.
New NDIS participant aged 26 and above, not HSP eligible.	NDIS funding for reasonable and necessary hearing supports.

\* If a person is turning 26 during the duration of a plan, consider their future hearing needs.

\*\*The participant's eligibility to the Hearing Services Program may change and should be checked at each scheduled or unscheduled plan review.

\*\*\*HSP vouchers are valid for 3 years from the date of issue.

### 5.5 Refer participants aged 7 to 25 and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander over 50 years to CSO

Participants aged 7 to 25 and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander over 50 years will receive their audiology assessments, fittings, devices and upgrades and replacements (including Cochlear Implant speech processor for people aged 7 to 25) through the Community Services Obligation program. Funding does not need to be included in the participant's NDIS plan for these hearing supports.

Participants aged 7 to 25 years of age with cochlear implants may also be supported by their local Cochlear Implant Clinic. The plan developer should consider capacity building funding in the participant's NDIS plan. Refer to [Capacity Building Supports](#).

Refer the participant to their local Hearing Australia provider. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Make a referral](#).

### 5.6 Participants aged 26 years or over who are eligible for HSP

HSP eligible NDIS participants will receive their audiology assessments, fittings, devices and upgrades (not Cochlear Implant speech processor) through the Hearing Services Program. Do not include funding for hearing supports that the Hearing Services Program funds.

Explain to the participant why they are receiving hearing supports from the Hearing Services Program.

### Example Script

*“Before we look at what reasonable and necessary supports the NDIS can fund we will look at what other supports you are currently receiving, or what supports can be provided by another organisation.*

*From what we have spoken about and by checking the Hearing Services Program eligibility criteria you are eligible for the Hearing Services Program.*

*The Hearing Services Program supports eligible people by giving them access to hearing services. This includes funding for hearing assessments, management, advice and support, and the fitting of a hearing device where needed.*

*This means you will receive some supports from the Hearing Services Program and we will look at funding reasonable and necessary supports that the Hearing Services Program does not provide.”*

For an example on planning for a participant aged 26 years or over who is eligible for Hearing Services Program refer to [case example – Alison](#).

### 5.7 Identify the participant’s Low Cost AT support needs

Low Cost AT is not covered by the Hearing Services Program. All participants need to have their Low Cost AT support needs considered. Examples include batteries and hearing aid consumables.

The below questions will help you to better understand the participant’s Low Cost AT needs:

- What assistive technology supports are you currently using to support your communication needs? How long have you had this AT?
- Do you have any safety concerns around your home? For example, are you able to hear the phone, doorbell, TV or smoke alarm?
- Do you require Assistive Listening Devices (Level 1 or 2 AT) to help alert you to everyday activities around the home?

You don’t need to ask the participant these questions at every plan review. Refer to [Plan Review](#) section for further information about Low Cost AT expected life.

Refer to:

- [Our Guidelines – Assistive technology](#)
- [Standard Operating Procedure – Add low cost assistive technology supports in a plan](#)

### 5.8 Identify the participant’s level of NDIS Hearing Services

The participant's individual circumstances will determine the level of hearing services from an audiologist or an audiometrist to support them to pursue their NDIS goals. Refer to [table of NDIS Hearing Services in the Capacity Building budget](#).

There are two categories for NDIS Hearing Services:

- **Hearing Services** is recommended for the delivery of audiometry and audiological services that are not covered by Hearing Services Program.
- **Specialised Hearing Services** is recommended for the delivery of specialist audiological services for participants deemed to have a profound hearing loss and/or an implantable device or additional communication needs, when not covered by the Hearing Services Program.

NDIS participants are likely to require Specialised Hearing Services when:

- the participant has a profound hearing loss - Three-frequency average of 80dB or worse in the better ear
- the participant uses an implantable device
- the participant has hearing loss and severe communication impairment which:
  - prevents the person from communicating effectively in his or her daily environment such as significant visual impairment, or
  - is caused or aggravated by significant physical, intellectual, mental, emotional or social disability or mobility issues such as after a stroke.

**Note:** When the plan developer assesses the NDIS participant as requiring Standard Hearing Services the participant can choose to purchase hearing services from audiologists or audiometrists from the registration group **Hearing Services**.

When the plan developer assesses the NDIS participant as requiring Specialised Hearing Services the participant will purchase hearing services from audiologists from the registration group **Specialised Hearing Services**.

## 5.9 Identify the participant's NDIS hearing supports

During your planning conversation you will gather information to confirm what NDIS hearing supports to include such as:

- assessments, fittings and devices where they are not available through the Hearing Services Program
- assistive technology, other than Low Cost AT, for example vibrating alerting systems or smoke alarms
- Auslan interpreting services and training
- repairs, maintenance and consumables for hearing devices

- capacity building supports.

For detailed information refer to [funding responsibilities](#).

Below are example questions which may assist you to better understand if a participant's current hearing device is meeting their needs.

- How old is your current hearing device?
- Do you have any concerns with your current hearing device?

The NDIS will fund a new hearing device if:

- the participant is not eligible for the Community Services Obligation or Voucher program and
  - the current device is more than 5 years old, **OR**
  - there is clinical evidence from a suitably qualified professional (Audiologist or Audiometrist) to demonstrate that the current hearing device is no longer meeting the participant's needs. For example: it can no longer be adjusted, the participant can no longer use the device due to significant deterioration in health, dexterity or cognitive ability or there is evidence the device has a repeat repair history and is now unreliable.

If the participant has not reported any difficulties with their current hearing device there is no need to include funding in their plan for a new hearing device.

To help you determine the hearing supports needs for the participant it may be reasonable and necessary to include funding for a provider (audiologist or audiometrist) to complete an assessment and the Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template when:

- the participant's hearing device is not meeting their hearing needs, or
- the device is coming to the end of its expected life.

Refer to the [Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology Assessment Template](#) and the section below.

#### **5.9.1 Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template**

Plan developers can use the Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template to help determine reasonable and necessary devices or technology. This assessment template is a guide for assessors and is not mandatory for them to complete.

Plan developers should guide the assessor (audiologist or audiometrist) to complete the Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template when the:

- NDIS is funding a hearing device for the first time
- current device is no longer meeting the participant's needs

- participant is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program and is requesting a hearing device above their assessed level in the [lifestyle consideration and outcome table](#)\*; or
- participant is eligible for the Hearing Services Program, or, an existing Hearing Services Program client requesting a hearing device that is above the level of device provided fully subsidised by the Hearing Services Program\*.

\*Mandatory TAB referral, refer to [Referrals to TAB](#) section

## 6. Planning

By this stage you have an understanding of the participant's individual circumstances and their goals. You can now determine what reasonable and necessary funded supports to include in the plan to enable the participant to pursue their goals.

For example, planning scenarios refer to [case examples](#).

### 6.1 Core Supports

Include funding for core supports that relate to the participant's disability where these are reasonable and necessary such as:

- [Low Cost AT](#)
- [HSP maintenance contribution](#)
- Auslan interpreting
- Auslan tutoring
- Auslan in the home.

**Note:** National Auslan Booking Services (NABS) is not a free service for NDIS participants. Include funding for interpreting services if it is considered reasonable and necessary. Participants have choice and control over who provides their preferred communication support. To help you determine what is reasonable and necessary refer to [Practice Guide – Assisting Communication](#) for information on including interpreting in plans.

### 6.2 HSP Repairs, Maintenance and Replacement Devices

You will use the following information in this section when you are planning for:

- Participants aged 7 to 25.
- Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above who is eligible for the Hearing Services Program with a current HSP voucher.
- Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above not HSP eligible but with a current HSP voucher who would like to remain with the Hearing Services Program while voucher is valid.



- New NDIS participant aged 26 and above, HSP eligible.
- Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander over 50 years.

The NDIS will fund the co-payment towards the annual maintenance fee and the administration fee for replacement of lost or damaged beyond repair device. The annual maintenance fee for repairs and replacing a lost or damaged device includes:

- batteries
- repairs
- spare parts
- replacing a lost or damaged device.

Include at least one unit (\$100.00) of **Low Cost AT for Hearing Related AT Core – Consumables** per year to cover the cost of these supports.

Additional fees will apply if the participant has chosen their hearing device from the partially subsidised category. The hearing services provider will advise if any additional fees apply to the participant. Refer to [Glossary](#) for definition of partially and fully subsidised.

### 6.3 Repairs and Maintenance for NDIS funded Hearing Devices

Refer to [Our Guidelines – Assistive technology](#) and [Standard Operating Procedure – Add funding for repairs, maintenance, rental and trial of assistive technology supports](#).

### 6.4 Capital Supports

These items are for hearing devices funded by NDIS and cannot be funded if the participant has a HSP voucher:

- bone conducting hearing devices, or
- cochlear implants speech processors, or
- hearing aids, or
- other devices that may not fall into the Standard, Intermediate or Advanced hearing device categories.

A quote is required for the non-standard hearing device item.

#### 6.4.1 The following table outlines the levels of hearing devices in the Capital Budget

Support Item Name	Support Item Number	Support Item Description
Standard level hearing device	05_502206417_0122_1_2	An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss (OSPL90 >= 128 dBSPL) IEC RTF 1600 Hz. Includes 10+ channels, feedback

Support Item Name	Support Item Number	Support Item Description
		management, adaptive noise control, option to add telecoil, directional microphone, and minimum bandwidth of 8kHz.
Intermediate level hearing device	05_502206418_0122_1_2	An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss and provides increased functions over and above what can be met with standard level devices. May include speech enhancement, sound management, ear to ear technology, and volume controls.
Advanced level hearing device	05_502206419_0122_1_2	An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss and provides increased functions over and above what can be met with intermediate level devices. May include one or more of the following features; 24+ channels, tinnitus reduction, smartphone connectivity, automatic programming, wireless, compatibility with accessories, remote programming.
Non-Standard Hearing device	05_502206419_0122_1_2	A device that offers specific technology to meet a particular functional requirement, which cannot be met by a Standard, Intermediate or Advanced hearing device.
External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing devices	05_220621211_0122_1_2	The external part of an implantable device which picks up speech and processes sound.
Speech Processor repair	05_502206151_0122_1_2	Repairs to the external part of an implantable device.



## 6.5 Capacity Building Supports

Participants aged 26 years and over with Cochlear implants will require capacity building funding to support them to access their local Cochlear Implant Clinic.

The NDIS does not fund audiology assessments for participants who are eligible for the Hearing Services Program.

### 6.5.1 Table of NDIS Hearing Services in the Capacity Building budget

Capacity Building	Support Item Number	Support Item Name	Support Item Description
Specialised Hearing Services	15_501_0119_1_3	Audiologist hearing services	Hearing services not covered under the Medical Benefit Scheme (MBS) performed by a suitably qualified audiologist.
Hearing Services	15_502_0134_1_3	Audiologist hearing services	Hearing services not covered under the Medical Benefit Scheme performed by a qualified audiologist. <b>Note</b> the participant can also access their hearing services from a suitably qualified audiometrist.
Hearing Services	15_503_0134_1_3	Audiometrist hearing services	Hearing services not covered under the Medical Benefit Scheme performed by a suitably qualified audiometrist.

For further information refer to [proposed capacity building for the life expectancy of a hearing aid \(generally 5 years\)](#).

### 6.5.2 Determine the reasonable and necessary hearing device

If an assessor is able to provide enough information for the plan developer to make a reasonable and necessary decision the Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template will not need to be completed.

Once you have assessed the information the following table will support to guide your reasonable and necessary decision making about an NDIS funded hearing device.

Also refer to Appendix:

- [10.2](#) Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone systems compatible with hearing aids/cochlear implant (CI) speech processors
- [10.3](#) Cochlear implant (CI) and bone conduction implantable devices – speech/sound processor upgrades
- [Funding Responsibilities](#) of this resource for further information about what the Hearing Services Program funds and what the NDIS can fund.

**Note:** it is best practice to encourage participants to trial a wireless communication device.

Lifestyle	Consideration	Outcome
<p><b>Active/demanding listening environments</b></p>	<p>Does the participant spend most of their time in demanding listening environments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the workplace</li> <li>• traveling frequently</li> <li>• attending large social or work functions</li> <li>• dining out often</li> <li>• going to concerts or live shows</li> <li>• giving presentations at meetings</li> <li>• frequently driving.</li> </ul>	<p>A participant who meets this criteria is likely to benefit from a Standard Hearing Device paired with a Wireless Communication Device (WCD).</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> An Intermediate or Advanced level hearing device should only be considered where there is sufficient evidence in the <a href="#">Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template</a>. This evidence should demonstrate that the Standard Hearing Device and Intermediate paired with a Wireless Communication Device has been trialled and the participant has little or no functional gain from the lower cost alternatives. If this is being requested you may need to seek more information before you make a decision.</p>

Lifestyle	Consideration	Outcome
<p><b>Casual/moderate listening environments</b></p>	<p>Does the participant spend most of their time in moderate listening environments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shopping</li> <li>• attending religious or social gatherings</li> <li>• golfing, walking or biking with a friend</li> <li>• attending meetings</li> <li>• having lunch with a small group of friends in a quiet locale</li> <li>• driving infrequently</li> <li>• watching TV occasionally.</li> </ul>	<p>A participant who meets this criteria is likely to benefit from a Standard Hearing Device paired with a Wireless Communication Device.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> An Intermediate level hearing device should only be considered where there is sufficient evidence in the <a href="#">Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template</a>. This evidence should demonstrate that the Standard Hearing Device paired with a Wireless Communication Device has been trialed and the participant has little or no functional gain from the lower cost alternative.</p>
<p><b>Quiet/listening environments</b></p>	<p>Does the participant spend most of their time in quiet listening environments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• doing activities at home</li> <li>• watching TV</li> <li>• playing cards with friends</li> <li>• reading a book or a newspaper</li> <li>• having casual conversations</li> </ul>	<p>A participant who meets this criteria is likely to benefit from a Standard Hearing Device or a Standard Hearing Device paired with a Wireless Communication Device.</p>

Lifestyle	Consideration	Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visiting friends in their homes.</li> </ul>	

## 6.6 Referrals to TAB

The following supports are mandatory TAB referrals and must be referred to TAB for advice:

- hearing aid requests above the participant’s level determined in the “assessment hearing device level
- bone conduction Hearing aid
- Bone Anchored Hearing Aid (BAHA) devices
- Cochlear Speech sound processors when request prior to end of service life.

All requests for hearing devices above the participant’s assessed level must be referred to TAB. If the participant is a client of the Hearing Services Program requesting NDIS to fund a hearing device above the level the Hearing Services Program will fund, you should ask for evidence as to why the Hearing Services Program has declined their request for a higher level hearing device to support your TAB referral.

If you need TAB advice regarding equipment you must wait for their advice before the item is included in a participant’s plan. Do not include the line item in the plan until you have received TAB advice and made the reasonable and necessary decision to approve the item.

Refer to the [TAB intranet page](#) requesting advice for further information.

## 6.7 Notify the Hearing Services Program

You should only notify the Hearing Services Program if the participant has a HSP voucher, is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program and wants to receive all their hearing support from the NDIS. Refer to the [Standard Operating Procedure – Include hearing supports in a plan](#) for how to do this.

## 7. Plan Implementation and Monitoring

You will work alongside the participant to make sure they understand their plan, and how they can access their supports either through the Hearing Services Program or the NDIS to pursue their goals.

Refer to [Our Guideline – Your plan](#) and [Standard Operating Procedure – Complete the Implement the Plan task](#) for plan implementation guidance.

## 8. Plan reviews

By now the participant has implemented one or more NDIS plans. They are likely to know what worked well and may have thought about areas they would like to change. During the plan review, you will work with the participant to identify progress and outcomes over the plan period.

For a participant with hearing supports, there are three additional tasks required at plan review:

- decide if a referral should be made for National Access to consider whether the participant's eligibility should be reassessed. [Participants who turn 26 years](#) of age during their previous plan and met access under Early Intervention must be referred for reassessment
- review [the participant's eligibility for the Hearing Services Program](#)
- review AT that has been funded in the last 5 years to see if any supports have reached their lifespan and require replacement.

For example, the average lifespan for Assistive Listening Devices (low cost AT) is between 3 to 5 years. It may not be reasonable and necessary to fund low cost AT at every plan review for a participant with hearing related AT.

Low Cost AT	Life Expectancy
Smoke alarm alerting system	3 to 5 years
Door chime alerting system	3 to 5 years
Baby cry alerting system	3 to 5 years
TV listening device	5 years
Music devices	3 years
Personal amplifier	5 years
Remote control for hearing device	4 to 5 years
Adapted landline telephone	3 to 5 years
Mini mic	5 years

## 8.1 Reviewing eligibility for participants who turn 26 years of age

If the participant identifies with the primary disabilities of Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment, met access to the Scheme under Early Intervention and is now 26 years or older, the plan developer will need to decide if a referral should be made for National Access to consider whether the participant's eligibility should be reassessed.

Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Refer or Eligibility Reassessment \(ER\) or Access Status Change](#).

## 8.2 Case examples

### 8.2.1 Meet Jose (26 years and over and not HSP eligible)

Jose is a 29 year old man who lives with a bilateral profound hearing loss. He lives with his wife and has an active lifestyle. Jose works full time and has difficulty hearing in the workplace when giving presentations. He is frequently driving and traveling for work and struggles to hear when dining out with friends and family. Jose is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program. Jose is a new NDIS participant and is meeting with his plan developer today. Jose uses a hearing device that is 5 years old as an Assistive Technology Support.

#### Plan discussion

During the discussion with his plan developer, Jose spoke about his communication and NDIS goals. Jose feels that his speech has been impacted by his hearing loss. Jose was not diagnosed with a profound hearing loss until later in life. Jose has NDIS goals and aspirations around his communication, and he would like to be able to hear better in group meetings at work and would like to work on improving his speech. Jose's current hearing device is 5 years old. He has a written report from an audiologist that outlines that his current hearing device no longer meets his hearing goals, and it is at the end of its life expectancy (5years). The completed Hearing Devices and Hearing Technology assessment template outlines that Jose has severe communication difficulties and demonstrates that he has trialled both the standard level hearing device and the intermediate level hearing device. The report clearly outlines the functional gains for Jose when trialling the intermediate hearing device. Jose has also requested the NDIS to fund a smoke alarm and a Wireless Communication Device to boost the performance of the intermediate hearing device in his workplace. Jose has also requested the NDIS to fund a support worker to help him around the home and in the community.

#### Reasonable and necessary supports

##### Core supports:

- funding repairs and maintenance of Jose's hearing device
- smoke alarm.

##### Capacity Building supports:



- funding for Specialist Hearing Services
- funding for Speech Therapy.

**Capital supports:**

- funding for the intermediate hearing device.

The NDIS can fund these supports, as they allow Jose to continue living independently without the need for additional funded supports. These supports are considered reasonable and necessary under s34 of the NDIS Act 2013 as they assist Jose to pursue his goals of improving his speech and being able to hear clearly in the workplace and feel safe at home and are value for money, in comparison to other supports.

The NDIS is not able to fund the Wireless Communication Device and the support worker.

The Wireless Communication Device is available to Jose through Job Access and did not meet section 34 of the NDIS Act 2013 as it is most appropriately funded by another service system.

Funding for a support worker did not meet section 34 of the NDIS Act 2013 as it will not assist Jose to facilitate social and economic participation as he is able to complete tasks independently. This decision was guided by the Practice Guide –Hearing Supports.

**Supporting material**

Practice Guide – Hearing Supports.

**8.2.2 Meet Young (under the age of 26, CSO eligible)**

Young is a 17 year old boy who lives with a bilateral profound hearing loss. Young is a client of Hearing Australia under the Community Services Obligation program. Young is an Auslan user, lives at home with his parents and is at school. Young uses a hearing aid and speech processor as Assistive Technology Supports. Young has been an NDIS participant for two years and he and his family are meeting with the plan developer today for his scheduled review.

**Plan discussion**

During his discussion with the plan developer, Young explains he is in year 11. Young's parents have reported that he spends a lot of time at home studying. Young has explained that he would like the NDIS to fund a new communication device to help him participate in educational activities. He has also requested the NDIS fund a smoke alarm for when he is at home by himself. Young has reported that his hearing aid is 3 years old and his speech processor is 2 years old. Young discussed with the plan developer that he likes to communicate in Auslan and wants to teach this language to others when he is older. Young explains it is sometimes hard to communicate in Auslan because he does not always have someone to interpret for him.

**Reasonable and necessary supports**

**Core supports:**

- funding for the HSP annual maintenance client contribution
- funding for Auslan interpreting
- smoke alarm.

**Capacity Building supports**

- funding for Therapy supports not available through Health or the Hearing Services Program.

These supports are considered reasonable and necessary under section 34 of the NDIS Act 2013 as they assist Young to pursue his communication and NDIS goals and are value for money, in comparison with other supports.

The NDIS is not able to fund the new communication device as it did not meet section 34 of the NDIS Act 2013. A communication device for educational purposes is available to Young through the Department of Education and does not meet section 34 of the NDIS Act 2013, as it is most appropriately funded by another service system.

This decision was guided by the Practice Guide –Hearing Supports.

**Supporting material**

Practice Guide – Hearing Supports.

**8.2.3 Meet Alison (26 years and over, eligible for the HSP)**

Alison is a 37 year old woman who lives with a bilateral moderate hearing loss and a mild intellectually disability. Alison has been an NDIS participant for 3 years and is a current client of the Hearing Services Program. Alison meets the eligibility criteria for the Hearing Services Program. She lives at home with her husband and two young children. Alison uses a hearing device that is 2 years old as an Assistive Technology Support. Alison is meeting with her plan developer today for a scheduled plan review.

**Plan discussion**

During her discussion with the plan developer, Alison explains she has difficulty hearing the TV and hearing her friends in their home. Alison has requested the NDIS fund a Wireless Communication Device to boost the performance of her current hearing device.

**Reasonable and necessary supports**

**Core supports**

- funding for the HSP annual maintenance client contribution.

**Capital supports**

- funding for the Wireless Communication Device.



The plan developer referred the request for a Wireless Communication Device to TAB. The advice was that Wireless Communication Device paired with Alison's current hearing device would assist Alison to hear better in a range of settings, including watching the TV and meeting with friends, meeting her communication goals of wanting to hear the TV clearly and communicate with her friends when they are at her home. The Wireless Communication Device is not available to Alison through the Hearing Services Program.

These supports are considered reasonable and necessary under s34 of the NDIS Act 2013 as they assist Alison to pursue her communication and NDIS goals, and are value for money, in comparison with other supports.

This decision was guided by the Practice Guide –Hearing Supports.

#### **8.2.4 Meet Paul (26 years and over, is a valid HSP voucher holder and not eligible for the Hearing Services Program)**

Paul is a 57 year old man who lives with a moderate to profound hearing loss. Paul has been an NDIS participant for two years. Paul does not meet the eligibility criteria for the Hearing Services Program but holds a valid HSP voucher that will expire in June 2021. He lives at home with his mother and does voluntary work for Meals on Wheels two days per week and at his local community centre three days per week. Paul will be meeting with his plan developer for his scheduled review today. Paul uses a hearing device as an Assistive Technology support.

#### **Plan discussion**

During his discussion with his plan developer, Paul explains that while he is generally able to live independently, he requires the use of his hearing device to enable him to actively participate in everyday life. Paul has also reported that voluntary work is very important to him, and he would one day like to return to the workforce. Paul's NDIS and communication goals are to be able to hear clearly in crowded places and continue to actively participate in community activities.

Paul understands that he no longer meets the eligibility criteria for the Hearing Services Program and now has the option to cancel his HSP voucher and have his hearing supports funded by the NDIS. Paul has reported that he would like to have his hearing supports funded by the NDIS. He has a written report from his service provider that outlines that Paul has trialled a wireless communication device and the completed AT assessment template demonstrates the functional gains for Paul when using the wireless communication device with his current hearing device. Paul was able to hear clearly in the car, speak to passengers and sit at the back of the room in the community centre and still hear the guest speaker clearly. Paul does not meet the criteria for Specialist Hearing services.

#### **Reasonable and necessary supports**

The plan developer reviews Paul's current and future needs along with available evidence. The plan developer funds the following reasonable and necessary supports:

**Core supports:**

- funding for repairs and maintenance on his AT.

**Capacity Building**

- standard Hearing Services.

**Capital supports**

- funding for the Wireless Communication Device.

The NDIS can fund these supports, as they allow Paul to continue living independently without the need for additional funded supports. These supports are considered reasonable and necessary under s34 of the NDIS Act 2013 as they assist Paul to pursue his goal of continuing to actively participate in community activities. The funded supports also help him to pursue his communication goals, are value for money, in comparison to other supports, effective and beneficial and the support is not funded by another service system.

The plan developer has notified the Hearing Services Program that Paul's hearing supports are now being met by the NDIS. The Hearing Services Program will cancel his voucher and Paul now needs to purchase his hearing supports from his NDIS plan.

**Supporting material**

- Practice Guide – Hearing Supports.

## 9. Funding Responsibilities

This table of responsibilities is a guide for decision makers in determining reasonable and necessary funded supports and identifying the responsibility of other government and broader systems of support services.

Type of support	Supports generally funded by the NDIS	Supports general funded by OTHER PARTIES
Assessment fittings and devices	Provided by the NDIS when the participant is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program.	Provided under the <a href="#">Hearing Services Program (external)</a> for participants under the age of 26 or HSP eligible participants aged 26 years or over
Speech Processor upgrades	Participants 26 years and over speech processor upgrades (excluding the initial speech processor) may be funded under the NDIS upon meeting the reasonable and necessary criteria based on <a href="#">TAB advice</a> .	Speech processor upgrades are generally provided under the Community Services Obligation component of the Hearing Services Program for participants under 26 years of age.
Remote Microphone systems	Provided by the NDIS when the participant is not eligible for the Community Services Obligation component of the Hearing Services Program.	Provided under the Community Services Obligation component of the Hearing Services Program.
Waterproof covers for cochlear implants	It would be deemed reasonable and necessary to fund waterproof accessories where there is evidence the participant participates in water activities. The Cochlear	Not applicable.

Type of support	Supports generally funded by the NDIS	Supports general funded by OTHER PARTIES
	Aqua Accessory is a lower cost alternative to the Cochlear Aqua Plus Accessory.	
Work related modifications or assistive technology	Hearing Devices and supports related to daily living that a person would require irrespective of the activity they are undertaking.	Work specific, equipment for example specialised phones, amplified stethoscopes, and multimedia hub for example interactive whiteboards. <a href="#">Employment Assistance Fund (external)</a> via <a href="#">Job Access (external)</a> funds workplace modification, access to communication support e.g. Auslan interpreter or live captioning, Deaf Awareness Training etc.
Education related assistive technology and Auslan interpreting	Hearing Devices and supports related to daily living that a person would require irrespective of the activity they are undertaking.	Educational specific, equipment for example amplified stethoscopes, and multimedia hub for example interactive whiteboards, modification, access to communication support e.g. Auslan interpreter or live captioning, Deaf Awareness Training etc.

## 10. Appendices

### 10.1 Proposed capacity building for the life expectancy of a hearing aid (generally 5 years)

The following table may be helpful in identifying supports for participants with hearing needs funded by the NDIS.

A participant who has a profound hearing loss and/or implantable devices does not generally require more clinical time than participants eligible for standard hearing services. However, participants with additional communication needs require substantially more clinical time to provide appropriate assessment and training in device management and communication strategies.

Type of support	Standard Hearing Services	Specialised Hearing Services Group A: Profound loss and/or implantable device	Specialised Hearing Services Group B: Additional communication needs
<b>Hearing aid replacement:</b> Assessment undertaken by suitably qualified professional, considering hearing aid options for example style of hearing aid, minimum features required.	Up to 90 minutes	Up to 90 minutes	Up to 150 minutes
<b>Audiological case management:</b> Subsequent to a first assessment, services performed only by a Qualified Practitioner (Audiologist). Consists of advice to a Qualified Practitioner (Audiometrist) to enable the completion of the Audiometrist's assessment of a non-routine client, required to achieve the Hearing Rehabilitation Outcome.	Up to 30 minutes		

Type of support	Standard Hearing Services	Specialised Hearing Services Group A: Profound loss and/or implantable device	Specialised Hearing Services Group B: Additional communication needs
<b>Hearing aid fitting:</b> Fitting of hearing aids that are clinically suitable to the participant's needs, including device trials and training in device maintenance.	Up to 150 minutes	Up to 150 minutes	Up to 240 minutes
<b>Aural Rehabilitation/Habilitation:</b> It is recommended that aural rehabilitation/habilitation be included in every 5 year plan. Changes in hearing levels, health, and personal circumstances can impact on successful communication outcomes. A change in device style and accessories, as well as technological advances may necessitate a change in communication strategies. This service is provided to assist participants to acquire and apply skills to maximise their communication abilities and better manage their hearing loss. The service can include, but is not limited to: Auditory training, speech reading training, counselling, training in communication strategies, and training of formal and informal supports.	Up to 7 hours	Up to 7 hours	Up to 10 hours
<b>Clinical Maintenance:</b> ADHOC clinical services including ear mould and any other attachments necessary for the operation of the device.	Up to 4 x 45 minutes	Up to 4 x 45 minutes	Up to 4 x 60 minutes

Type of support	Standard Hearing Services	Specialised Hearing Services Group A: Profound loss and/or implantable device	Specialised Hearing Services Group B: Additional communication needs
<p><b>Review:</b> Review of participant's needs where the participant is experiencing less than optimal benefit or satisfaction with their device, and it is more than 12 months from the date of fitting or last participant review.</p> <p>The aim of this service is to give the practitioner greater flexibility in providing appropriate services in a timely and efficient manner and to extend the life of the current fitting. This item is not intended to be used to rectify a poor fitting by the practitioner.</p>	Up to 4 x 1 hour	Up to 4 x 1 hour	Up to 4 x 1.5 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5 hours</b>	<b>18 hours</b>	<b>26.5 hours</b>



## 10.2 Considerations for Wireless Communication Device/Remote microphone systems compatible with hearing aids/cochlear implant (CI) speech processors

Circumstance	Consideration
<b>Hearing aids – all participants</b>	Hearing aids improve hearing in the near field, however in noisy situations (further than 1.5 m away) the benefits of hearing aids are limited, especially in the presence of background noise. Research indicates remote microphones significantly help people wearing hearing aids understand more speech in noise and over distance.
<b>Participant aged 7 to 25 (or under 26)</b>	Participants eligible to receive hearing supports and services funded under the Community Services Obligation component of the Hearing Services Program will be eligible to receive a Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone system consisting of one transmitter and one receiver. This is considered 'the <b>minimum necessary</b> or <b>standard level</b> of support required'. Approving NDIS funding for additional Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone systems (including a second receiver) may not meet the reasonable and necessary criteria.
<b>Participant aged 26 years or over – Voucher eligible</b>	Participants eligible to receive hearing supports and services under the Voucher component of the Hearing Services Program are not eligible to receive a Wireless Communication Device/Remote microphone system under the Hearing Services Program. Recommendations for Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone systems may be deemed reasonable and necessary if there is sufficient clinical evidence that it meets the reasonable and necessary criteria.
<b>Participant aged 26 years or over – CSO eligible</b>	Participants eligible to receive hearing supports and services funded under the Community Services Obligation component of the Hearing Services Program will be eligible to receive a Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone system consisting of one transmitter and one receiver. This is considered 'the <b>minimum necessary</b> or <b>standard level</b> of support required'. Approving NDIS funding



Circumstance	Consideration
	for additional Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone systems (including a second receiver) may not meet the reasonable and necessary criteria.
<b>Participants aged 26 years or over NDIS funded Hearing Supports</b>	There are a variety of Wireless Communication Device/Remote microphone systems compatible with Standard, Intermediate and Advanced level hearing devices available under the NDIS. The option of fitting a participant with a Standard Hearing device and a compatible Wireless Communication Device/remote microphone system is likely to represent increased 'value for money', improving communication outcomes for the participant, at a substantially lower cost than the cost of Intermediate or Advanced level hearing devices.
<b>Requests for assistive technology solely for use at work</b>	Requests for assistive technology solely for use at work (for example specialised phones, amplified stethoscopes, multimedia hub for interactive whiteboard) would generally not meet the reasonable and necessary criteria as these items are more appropriately funded by <a href="#">Job Access (external)</a> through the <a href="#">Employment Assistance Fund (external)</a> . However, the Employment Assistance Fund (external) does not cover the cost of hearing aids or cochlear implants.

**10.3 Considerations for Cochlear Implant (CI) and Bone Conduction Implantable devices –Speech/Sound Processor upgrades**

Circumstance	Consideration
<b>Participant aged 7 to 25</b>	Participants aged 7 to 25 years of age are eligible to receive Cochlear Implant speech processor upgrades funded through the Community Services Obligation if they meet Hearing Australia's eligibility criteria <a href="#">speech processor upgrade criteria (external)</a> .

Circumstance	Consideration
	<p>Children and young adults requesting NDIS funding for speech processor upgrades should be referred to Hearing Australia. Approving NDIS funding for speech processor upgrades for participants aged 7 to 25 years of age will generally not meet the reasonable and necessary criteria.</p> <p>Under the Hearing Services Program maintenance agreement all spare parts and repairs and/or replacements of speech processors are covered.</p>
<b>Participant aged 26 years or over</b>	<p>If the participant is 26 years and over, speech processor upgrades may be funded under the NDIS if there is sufficient evidence the speech processor requires replacement. The plan developer will need to consider factors including the age and model of the current speech processor if it is damaged beyond repair or has been lost.</p> <p>If it is determined funding for a Cochlear Implant speech processor upgrade is reasonable and necessary the appropriate support item can be included in the NDIS plan (External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing devices).</p>

## 11. Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Audiometrist</b>	Audiometrists have met the relevant membership and clinical competency requirements for audiometrists set by the Australian Practitioner Professional Bodies. Audiometrists are: Full/Ordinary members of ACAud with a Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) competency, and/or Full members of HAASA, undertaken at least the equivalent of an Australian Diploma-level Technical and Further Education (TAFE) vocational qualification in audiometry or a Bachelor of Audiometry from an Australian university. Visit <a href="#">audiology australia (external)</a> for further information.
<b>Auslan</b>	Auslan is the recognised language of the Australian Deaf Community.
<b>Audiologist</b>	Audiologists have met the relevant membership and clinical competency requirements set by the Australian Practitioner Professional Bodies. This means that audiologists are: Full members of Audiology Australia with a Certificate of Clinical Practice (CCP), and/or Full/Ordinary members of the Australian College of Audiology (ACAud) with Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) and Diagnostic Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) competencies. Audiologists must have completed at least the equivalent of an Australian university Masters level degree in clinical audiology. Visit <a href="#">audiology australia (external)</a> for further information.
<b>Cochlear Implant</b>	A surgically implanted device which enables the person to experience sounds by sending signals to the nerve endings in the inner ear (cochlea).
<b>Community Service Obligation (CSO)</b>	The Community Services Obligation enable Hearing Australia to provide specialist hearing services to eligible participants.

Term	Definition
<b>Deaf (Hard of Hearing, Hearing Impaired and Hearing Loss)</b>	<p>A person who has problems with their ability to hear or cannot hear. When referring to individuals in general, it is considered appropriate to use the term 'deaf'. However, an individual is referred to as 'Deaf' if they are involved in the signing community. Sometimes signing individuals are referred to as 'culturally Deaf'.</p> <p>For additional information on this topic, see <a href="#">National Association of the Deaf (external)</a> website and <a href="#">International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (external)</a> website.</p>
<b>Fully Subsidised Hearing Device</b>	Fully subsidised devices are free to NDIS participants receiving hearing supports through the Hearing Services Program.
<b>Hearing Australia</b>	Hearing Australia is the contracted provider who receives government funding (Community Services Obligation) to deliver specialist hearing services to children and young adults under the age of 26.
<b>Hearing supports</b>	Supports that assist with a participant's functional hearing loss.
<b>Hearing Services Program (HSP)</b>	The program is administered by the Department of Health. The program provides access to hearing services to people eligible for Hearing Services Program.
<b>Mild hearing loss</b>	A person with a mild hearing loss may have difficulties hearing soft speech sounds.
<b>Moderate hearing loss</b>	A person with a moderate hearing loss will have difficulties understanding conversational speech, particularly in the presence of background noise.
<b>NABS</b>	National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service.
<b>NDIS funded Hearing Supports</b>	The reasonable and necessary supports funding under the NDIS that are not available to a participant through the Hearing Services Program.

Term	Definition
NDIS Specialist Hearing Services	The delivery of specialist audiological services for participants deemed to have a profound hearing loss and/or an implantable device or additional communication needs to participants with NDIS funded Hearing Supports.
NDIS Standard Hearing Services	The delivery of audiometry and audiological services to participants with NDIS funded Hearing Supports.
Non-standard device	An NDIS funded device that offers specific technology to meet a particular functional requirement, which cannot be met by a Standard, Intermediate or Advanced hearing device.
Partially Subsidised Hearing Device	The NDIS participant has opted to purchase a partially subsidised hearing device through the Hearing Services Program, which may have more technological features to suit individual lifestyle choices. In this case, the Hearing Services Program contributes the amount that would have been paid for a fully subsidised hearing device to the service provider, and the participant has paid the additional amount quoted for the hearing device for example the 'gap'.
Severe/Profound hearing loss	A person with a Severe/Profound hearing loss cannot hear normal conversational speech. Many people with a profound hearing loss are now fitted with a Cochlear Implant.
Speech Processor	The part of a cochlear implant that converts speech sound into electrical impulses to stimulate the auditory nerve, allowing a person to understand sound and speech.
Unilateral hearing loss	A person with a unilateral hearing loss has their hearing in one ear only affected.
Voucher	An authority (issued in paper or electronic form) issued to eligible clients of the Hearing Services Program enabling them to have their hearing tested and devices reviewed.

Term	Definition
	A voucher is valid for 3 years from date of issue.
Voucher Holder	A person who has been issued a valid voucher from the Hearing Services Program.

## 12. Supporting material

- [NDIS Act 2013](#)
- [NDIS Rules](#)
- [NDIS Operational Guidelines \(external\)](#)
- [Practice Guide – Assisting Communication](#)

## 13. Process owner and approver

General Manager, Participant Experience and Design.

## 14. Feedback

If you have any feedback about this Practice Guide, please complete our [Feedback form](#).

## 15. Version change control

Version No	Amended by	Brief description of change	Status	Date
14.0	CW0032	Class 2 Updated guidance around: Hearing Services Program (HSP) eligibility. You should refer to HSP for eligibility information. Cochlear Implant Speech Processor and Coil - Non CSO line item replaced with External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing device.	APPROVED	2020-07-30
15.0	CW0032	Class 1 approved. Updated links to assistive technology guidance.	APPROVED	2020-12-10
16.0	JC0075	Class 2 approval. Section 6.3 – Participant HSP eligibility:	APPROVED	2021-01-14

Version No	Amended by	Brief description of change	Status	Date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updated to link out to the SOP for the procedure to check eligibility.</li> <li>- Removed the example support description for mainstream supports. This has been added to the SOP – Hearing Supports.</li> </ul> <p>Section 6.7 – Notify the HSP:</p> <p>-Updated to refer to the SOP – Hearing Supports for the procedure.</p> <p>Also minor updates to wording for plain English.</p>		
17.0	CS0074	<p>Class 2 approval</p> <p>Dept of Health and Aged Care advised new website for Hearing Services Program (HSP). Links to HSP website updated</p>	APPROVED	2023-05-29
18.0	EMN960 LJ0007	<p>Class 1 approved.</p> <p>Updated to align with the early childhood age range change from 1 July 2023.</p>	APPROVED	2023-06-20



# Include hearing supports in a plan

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**Previous Step:** The participant is identified as having hearing support needs.

**Next Step:** Review and submit the plan for approval.

## 1. Purpose

The content of this document is **OFFICIAL**. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will support you to include reasonable and necessary hearing supports in a participant's plan in conjunction with hearing supports that are part of the Australian Government [Hearing Support Program](#) (HSP).

**Note:** Refer to [Early Childhood Services](#) (ECS) resources when developing plans for children aged 0 to 6 years who identify with the primary disabilities of Deaf, hearing loss or hearing impairment.

## 2. Index

- [6.1 Determine if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Service Program](#)
- [6.2 Follow the planning process for the group the participant is in](#)
- [6.3 Include Core supports](#)
- [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#)
- [6.5 Include Capital supports](#)
- [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#)
- [6.7 Notify the Hearing Services Program](#)
- [7 Supporting material](#)

## 3. To be used by

- Plan Developers – Planners and Partners in the Community (Local Area Coordinators [LACs])
- NDIA Plan Delegates

## 4. Scope

Participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) who are eligible for the Hearing Services Program (HSP) will access fully subsidised hearing services and supports (including hearing devices). They will do this under the Hearing Services Program.

Participants who are **not** eligible to receive hearing services and supports from the Hearing Services Program will receive their supports from the NDIS.

Under a previous in-kind arrangement participants who were not normally eligible for the Hearing Services Program were issued a voucher to access the Hearing Services Program. This voucher will remain valid until:

- it expires; or
- when the participant has a plan review and chooses to cancel their voucher and have all their hearing needs funded in their NDIS plan.

Detailed information about the Hearing Services Program and supports is located in the [Practice Guide – Hearing Supports](#).

## 5. Prerequisites

- You have read the [Practice Guide – Hearing Supports](#).
- Primary disability and streaming have been correctly recorded in the System.

## 6. Procedure

### 6.1 Determine if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Services Program

You need to use this procedure if you do not know if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Services Program.

The participant may be:

- eligible for the Hearing Services Program under the Community Service Obligation (CSO) program
- eligible for the Hearing Services Program under the Voucher program
- not eligible for the Hearing Services Program but have a HSP voucher (in-kind arrangement)

- not eligible for the Hearing Services Program.

If you already know their eligibility, go to [section 6.2 – Follow the planning process for the group the participant is in](#).

### **6.1.1 Check if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Services Program under the Community Services Obligation program**

If the participant is:

- aged 7 to 25, go to [section 6.2.1](#) to complete the planning steps
- Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander over 50 years, go to [section 6.2.7](#) to complete the planning steps.

If the participant doesn't meet the above criteria you can check if they're eligible for the Hearing Services Program under the Voucher program – go to [section 6.1.2](#).

### **6.1.2 Check if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Service Program under the Voucher program**

If the participant doesn't know if they're eligible for the Hearing Services Program, you need to check. There are a number of eligibility criteria. Some examples include, Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card, DVA gold or white card (for hearing loss) holder. For a full list go to the [HSP eligibility checker \(external\)](#).

1. Get consent from the participant and record it in the System. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Check third party consent or authority](#), and the [Standard Operating Procedure – Record third party consent](#) for ways you can get and record consent.
2. Go to the [HSP eligibility checker \(external\)](#) and follow the instructions to check for eligibility. The participant may be:
  - eligible and already a customer
  - eligible but not already a customer. The participant will need to apply if they want their hearing services funded by the Hearing Services Program. They can do this through [Hearing Services Program \(HSP\) website](#).
3. If the HSP eligibility checker tells you the participant is eligible, go to section:
  - [6.2.2](#) for current NDIS participants aged 26 and above
  - [6.2.5](#) for new NDIS participants aged 26 and above.

4. If an existing participant is not eligible for Hearing Services Program they may still have been issued a HSP voucher they can use. This would be under the previous in-kind arrangement. Go to [section 6.1.3](#) to follow the steps to find out.

### **6.1.3 Check if the participant is not eligible for Hearing Services Program, but has a HSP voucher (in-kind arrangement)**

1. Check alerts on the participant's record. If they are not eligible for Hearing Services Program but they have a HSP voucher you will find an alert on their record. This will be a **One main contact** alert. This will tell you when the HSP voucher expires.
2. If the alert tells you the HSP voucher has not expired, go to section:
  - [6.2.3](#) for current NDIS participants aged 26 and above, who would like to have the NDIS fund all Hearing Supports
  - [6.2.4](#) for current NDIS participants aged 26 and above, who would like to remain with the Hearing Services Program while the voucher is valid.
3. If the alert tells you the HSP voucher has expired, change the end date of the alert to today's date. Then go to [section 6.2.6](#).
4. If there are no alerts on the participant's record to tell you they have a HSP voucher, go to [section 6.2.6](#)

## **6.2 Follow the planning process for the group the participant is in**

You will have identified which group the participant is in and if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Services Program and the group in procedure [6.1 – Determine if the participant is eligible for the Hearing Services program](#).

You will now develop the plan based on the hearing group the participant is in. You can find information about each hearing group in section 5.3 of the [Practice Guide - Hearing Supports](#).

### **6.2.1 Participant aged 7 to 25**

Hearing Australia delivers the Community Services Obligation program. They provide hearing services and devices for participants aged 7 to 25. NDIS will fund any reasonable and necessary supports which are not available under the Community Services Obligation program.

Complete the following planning steps:

1. Support the participant to link to the Community Service Obligation program, if they are not already. You can find information on how to do this on the [Hearing Services Program \(HSP\) website](#).

2. Record the mainstream support in the System. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure - Informal, community and mainstream supports](#).

**Example Support Description**

“Your hearing services will be provided through the Commonwealth Government Hearing Services Program which is delivered by Hearing Australia”.

**Summary:** The NDIS will not fund HSP equivalent audiology services where they are available to participants through the Hearing Services Program.

3. Include funding for the HSP Repairs, Maintenance and Replacement Devices annual fee. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core Supports](#).
4. Include core supports that relate to the participant’s disability. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core Supports](#).
5. Include capacity building funding to supports. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building Supports](#).
6. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital Supports](#).
7. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
8. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).

**6.2.2 Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above, eligible for the Hearing Services Program with a current voucher**

The Hearing Services Program provides Hearing services. NDIS will fund reasonable and necessary supports which are not available through the Hearing Services Program.

Complete the following planning steps:

1. If the participant turned 26 since their last review you must decide if you should make a referral for National Access. They will consider whether the participant’s eligibility should be reassessed. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Refer participant for eligibility reassessment to make the referral](#).
2. Record the mainstream support in the System. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure - Informal, community and mainstream supports](#).

**Example Support Description**

“Your hearing services will be provided through the Commonwealth Government Hearing Services Program”.

**Summary:** The NDIS will not fund HSP equivalent audiology services where they are available to participants through the Hearing Sservices Program.

3. Include funding for the HSP Repairs, Maintenance and Replacement Devices annual fee. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
  4. Include core supports that relate to the participant's disability. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
  5. Include capacity building funding to supports. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#).
  6. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital supports](#).
  7. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
  8. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).
- 6.2.3 Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above, not eligible for the Hearing Services Program but with a current HSP voucher, provided under the previous in-kind arrangement, who would like NDIS to fund all Hearing Supports.**

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary Hearing supports.

Complete the following planning steps:

1. If the participant turned 26 since their last review you must decide if you should make a referral for National Access. They will consider whether the participant's eligibility should be reassessed. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Refer participant for eligibility reassessment to make the referral](#).
  2. Identify the participant's NDIS hearing supports. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
  3. Identify the participant's level of hearing services and include capacity building funding. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#).
  4. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital supports](#).
  5. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
  6. Notify the Hearing Services Program to cancel the participant's HSP voucher. Refer to section [6.7 Notify the Hearing Services Program](#).
  7. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).
- 6.2.4 Current NDIS participant aged 26 and above, not eligible for the Hearing Services Program but with a current HSP voucher, provided under the previous in-kind arrangement, who would like to remain with HSP while the voucher is valid.**

Hearing services are provided by Hearing Services Program until the participant's HSP voucher expires. Vouchers are valid for 3 years from the date of issue. NDIS will fund

reasonable and necessary supports not available through the Hearing Services Program. Complete the following planning steps:

1. Record the mainstream support in the System. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure - Informal, community and mainstream supports](#).
2. Include funding for the HSP Repairs, Maintenance and Replacement Devices annual fee. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
3. Include core supports that relate to the participant's disability. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
4. Include capacity building funding to supports. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#).
5. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital supports](#).
6. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
7. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).

#### **6.2.5 New NDIS participant aged 26 and above, eligible for the Hearing Services Program**

The Hearing Services Program provides Hearing services. The NDIS will fund reasonable and necessary supports not available through the Hearing Services Program

Complete the following planning steps:

1. Record the mainstream support in the System. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure - Informal, community and mainstream supports](#).

#### **Example Support Description**

“Your hearing services will be provided through the Commonwealth Government Hearing Services Program”.

**Summary:** The NDIS will not fund HSP equivalent audiology services where they are available to participants through the Hearing Services Program.

2. Include funding for the HSP Repairs, Maintenance and Replacement Devices annual fee. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
3. Include core supports that relate to the participant's disability. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
4. Include capacity building funding to supports. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#).
5. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital supports](#).



6. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
7. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).

### **6.2.6 New NDIS participant aged 26 and above, not eligible for the Hearing Services Program**

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary Hearing supports.

Complete the following planning steps:

1. Identify the participant's NDIS hearing supports. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
2. Identify the participant's level of hearing services and include capacity building funding. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#).
3. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital supports](#).
4. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
5. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).

### **6.2.7 Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander over 50 years**

Hearing Australia delivers the Community Services Obligation (CSO) program. They provide funding for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander participants aged over 50 years. NDIS will fund any reasonable and necessary supports which the Community Services Obligation does not provide funding for.

Complete the following planning steps:

1. Support the participant to link to the Community Service Obligation program, if they are not already. You can find information on how to do this on the [Hearing Services Program \(HSP\) website](#).
2. Record the mainstream support in the System. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure - Informal, community and mainstream supports](#).

#### **Example Support Description**

“Your hearing services will be provided through the Commonwealth Government Hearing Services Program which is delivered by Hearing Australia”.

**Summary:** The NDIS will not fund HSP equivalent audiology services where they are available to participants through the Hearing Services Program.

3. Include funding for the HSP Repairs, Maintenance and Replacement Devices annual fee. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).

4. Include core supports that relate to the participant’s disability. Refer to section [6.3 Include Core supports](#).
5. Include capacity building funding to supports. Refer to section [6.4 Include Capacity Building supports](#).
6. Include funding for any capital supports. Refer to section [6.5 Include Capital supports](#).
7. Determine plan management. Refer to section [6.6 Determine Plan Management](#).
8. Implement and monitor the plan. Refer to [Our Guideline – Your Plan](#).

### 6.3 Include Core supports

Include funding for Core supports that relate to the participant’s disability. The following table outlines the appropriate action to take for hearing related Core supports.

#### 6.3.1 Table One – Hearing related Core supports

Core Support	Action
Low Cost AT	Refer to <a href="#">Our Guidelines - Assistive technology</a> on the NDIS website and Assistive Technology guidance on the <a href="#">Planning resources Intranet page</a> .
Include disability translation and interpreting supports in the participant’s plan (Auslan)	Refer to the <a href="#">Standard Operating Procedure – Include disability related interpreting supports in the participant’s plan</a> .
HSP maintenance contribution	Follow <a href="#">HSP contribution</a> steps below
Non HSP repairs and maintenance	Refer to <a href="#">Our Guidelines - Assistive technology</a> on the NDIS website and Assistive Technology guidance on the <a href="#">Planning resources Intranet page</a> .

#### 6.3.2 HSP contribution

For HSP eligible participants add \$100 funding to cover the HSP repairs, maintenance and replacement annual fee.

1. The **Planning** page displays, select **Determine the Funded Supports**.

Applications >> Access >> Pre-Planning >> **Planning** >> Implement >> Monitor >>

Planning - Staff Tasks

- Determine the Funded Supports**  
Last updated by [Name] on 31.05.2019 >>
- Determine Plan Management >>

- From the **Determine the Funded Supports** screen, select **Core**.





☰ < Determine the Support Needs ? ⚙️ □

Support Type	Price \$	
<b>Core</b>	30,113.50	>
Capacity Building	5,924.80	>
Capital	28,411.95	>
Total Plan Budget ( \$ )		64450.25

- Select the expand icon at **Consumables**.

Determine the Support Needs

Support Type > Support Category



Support Category	Price \$	Comment	Periodic
Consumables	8,678.50 		>
Daily Activities	15,048.00 		>
Social, Community and Civic Participation	3,762.00 		>
Transport	2,625.00 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> >

Participant Goals

Goal Category	Goal Type	Goal
No goals selected		

4. Select the **Product** field expand icon.

Support Calculator

	Product	Price	Quantity	Unit	How Often	Frequency	Total
		0.00	1		Once	1.00	0.00
Item Type <input type="text"/>							
Quote Required <input type="checkbox"/> Quote Received <input type="checkbox"/>							
							\$0.00

Done Cancel

- In the product field, search using the search term **Low Cost AT** and select the line item **Low Cost AT for Hearing Related AT**.

Select a Product

low cost

Low Cost AT For Prosthetics And Orthotics 03_060000911_0135_1_1
Low Cost AT For Personal Care And Safety 03_090000911_0103_1_1
Low Cost AT For Personal Mobility 03_120000911_0105_1_1
Low Cost AT For Vision Related AT 03_220300911_0113_1_1
Low Cost AT For Hearing Related AT 03_220600911_0122_1_1
Low Cost AT For Communication Or Cognitive Support 03_222100911_0124_1_1

Cancel

- You will be taken back to the **Support Calculator**.

Support Calculator

+	Product	Price	Quantity	Unit	How Often	Frequency	Total
🗑️	Low Cost AT For Heari	100	1	each	Per Year	1.00	100.00

Item Type

Quote Required  Quote Received

Done Cancel

- Select **Yes** to add the funding for the supports to the existing support category budget.

Confirmation

Do you want to increase the Support Category Price \$ 8678.50 with the added sum of items \$ 100.00 ?

Yes No

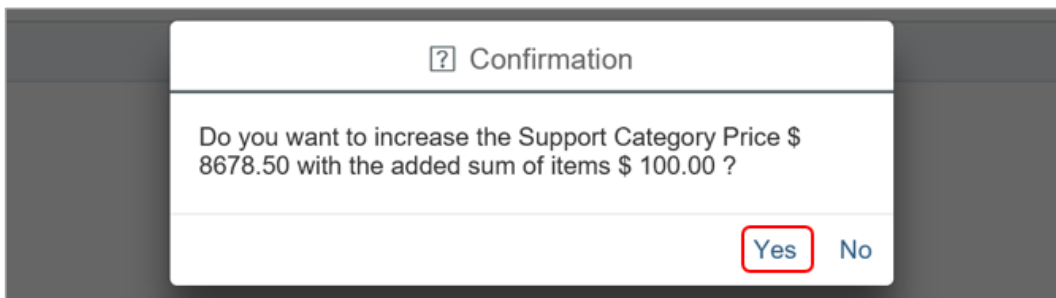


8. At Quantity enter number of Low Cost AT units required based on the planning conversation, [Our Guidelines - Assistive Technology](#) on the NDIS website, Assistive Technology guidance on the [Planning resources Intranet page](#) and depending on your reasonable and necessary decision. You must include at least 1 unit (\$100) to ensure the participant can access funding for the HSP annual maintenance client contribution (generally under \$50.00) as per [Practice Guide - Hearing Supports](#).

- **How Often**, select **Per Year** from the drop down box.
- Select **Done**.

**Note:** For further information about a participant’s eligibility to receive fully subsidised remote microphone system / Wireless Communication Device (WCD) under the HSP refer to [Practice Guide – Hearing Supports](#).

9. Select **Yes** to add the funding for the supports to the existing support category budget.



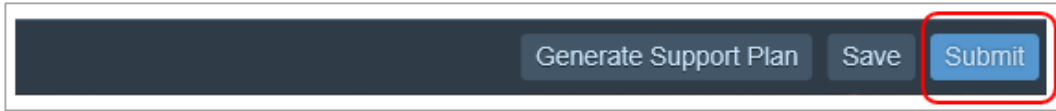
10. For HSP eligible participants, remove the automatically generated support item comment in the Consumables field and replace with the comment below.

<Funding for assistive technology: <\$insert budget amount> is allocated for the purchase of Basic (Level 1) and Standard (Level 2) assistive technology to support me to pursue my goals and outcomes. This funding may be used flexibly to cover the annual maintenance and batteries contribution related to the services I receive from the Hearing Services Program>

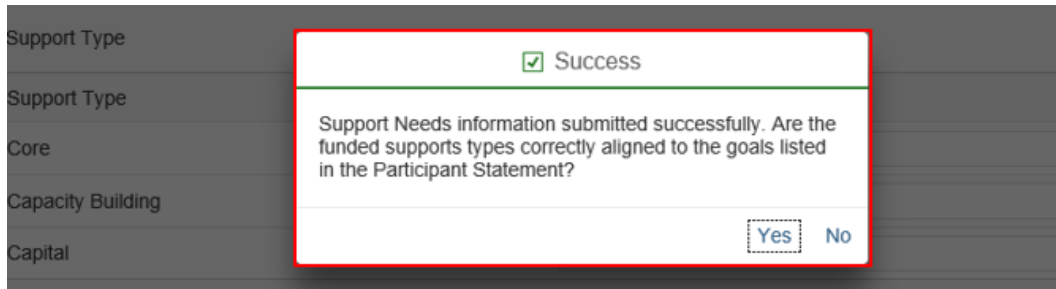
Support Category	Price \$	Comment
Consumables	8,778.50 <input type="button" value="copy"/>	Funding for assistive technology: \$100 is allocated for the purchase of basic (Level 1) <input type="button" value="up"/> <input type="button" value="down"/>

11. Select **Submit** to complete the Determine Funded Supports task or save to return to complete at a later time.





12. The success message will ask **Are the funded supports correctly aligned to the goals listed in the Participant Statement?**











- If you select **No**, you will be redirected to the **Participant Statement**. You need to review the goals section and make sure the correct support type boxes have been ticked.
- If you select **Yes** you will continue as usual.

#### 6.4 Include Capacity Building supports

Where a participant is accessing hearing supports through the NDIS you will include capacity building funding. You will do this by selecting the appropriate support item based on the participant's level of hearing services. The [Practice Guide – Hearing Supports](#) details the appropriate support items to select.

The NDIS can fund reasonable and necessary Capacity Building supports for participants. However, the NDIS will not fund audiology assessments for participants who are eligible for the Hearing Services Program.

1. The **Planning** page displays, select **Determine the Funded Supports**.

 >>	 >>	 >>	 >>	 >>	 >>
Applications	Access	Pre-Planning	Planning	Implement	Monitor
<b>Planning - Staff Tasks</b>					
<b>Determine the Funded Supports</b>					
Last updated by		on 31.05.2019			
<b>Determine Plan Management</b>					
					

- In the **Determine Funded Supports** task, select **Capacity Building**.

Determine the Support Needs	
Support Type	Price \$
Core	0.00
<b>Capacity Building</b>	213.39
Capital	0.00

- Select **Capacity Building** a second time. Copy any existing comments from the **CB Daily Activity** comment field into a word document to re-add to the comments field later.

Determine the Support Needs			
Support Type > Support Category > Capacity Building			
Support Category	Price \$	Comment	Associated Goal
CB Choice & Control	0.00		
CB Daily Activity	0.00		
CB Employment	0.00		

- Review the level of **Capacity Building** supports generated in the TSP. You will need to increase or decrease as required, to meet the reasonable and necessary criteria. Consider the need for Capacity Building supports (for example improved daily living) for participants based on:

- participant goals
- functional assessment
- provider recommendations.

Examples include, speech, communication and language development, social development and strategies to manage in a mainstream environment.

- Refer to [Our Guidelines - Assistive technology](#) on the NDIS website and Assistive Technology guidance on the [Planning resources Intranet page](#) for information on including **Capacity Building** funding related to assistive technology.

6. Select the **expand icon** for **Daily Activities**.

Determine the Support Needs

Support Type > Support Category > Capacity Building

Support Category	Price \$	Comment	Associated Goal
CB Choice & Control	0.00		
CB Daily Activity	0.00		
CB Employment	0.00		

7. Select the **expand icon** for **Product**.

Support Calculator

+	Product	Price	Quantity	Unit	How Often	Frequency	Total
		0.00	1		Once	1.00	0.00

Item Type

Quote Required  Quote Received

\$0.00

Done Cancel

8. Search using 'audio' and select the relevant support based on the participant's level of supports. Refer to the [Practice Guide - Hearing Supports](#).

Select a Product

audio

- Audiologist hearing services  
15\_501\_0119\_1\_3
- Audiologist hearing services  
15\_502\_0134\_1\_3
- Audiometrist hearing services  
15\_503\_0134\_1\_3

Cancel

9. You will be taken back to the **Support Calculator**.

Product	Price	Quantity	Unit	How Often	Frequency	Total
Audiologist hearing s	213.39	1	Hour	Once	1.00	213.39

Item Type: **Stated**

Quote Required  Quote Received

\$213.39

Done Cancel

- At **quantity** select 1
- At **how often** select per year
- At **Item Type** select stated
- Select **Done**.

10. In the **comments** field paste any comments you previously saved.

11. Select **Support Type** to return to the main **Determine Support Needs** screen.

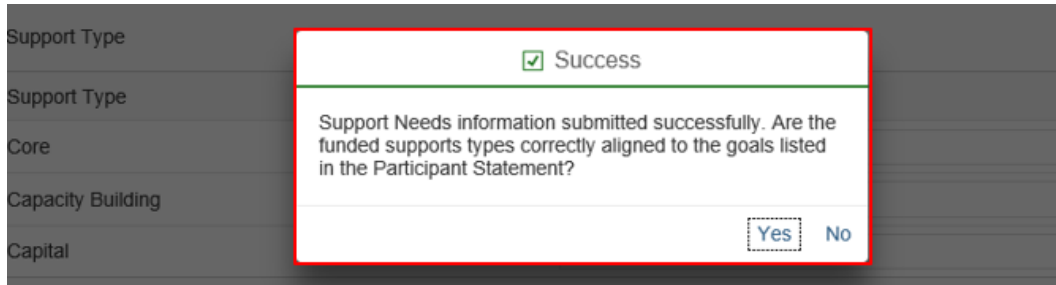
**Support Type** > Support Category

Support Category	Price \$	Comment
Consumables	8,778.50	Funding for assistive technology: \$100 is allocated for the purchase of basic (Level 1)

12. Select **Submit** to complete the **Determine Funded Supports** task or save to return to complete at a later time.

Generate Support Plan Save **Submit**

13. The success message will ask **Are the funded supports correctly aligned to the goals listed in the Participant Statement?**



- If you select **No**, you will be redirected to the **Participant Statement**. You need to review the goals section and make sure the correct support type boxes have been ticked.
- If you select **Yes** you will continue as usual.

## 6.5 Include Capital supports

Add Capital funded supports that are outside the Hearing Service Program.

The NDIS will only fund Capital supports for hearing devices where they are:

- out of scope for the Hearing Services Program
- the participant is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program.

Refer to [Practice Guide - Hearing Supports](#).

This does not include speech processors or other implantable devices. Seek [TAB advice](#) before including this item in a participant's NDIS plan. Refer to [Our Guidelines - Assistive technology](#) on the NDIS website and Assistive Technology guidance on the [Planning resources Intranet page](#).

1. The **Planning** page displays, select **Determine the Funded Supports**.

Applications >> Access >> Pre-Planning >> **Planning** >> Implement >> Monitor >>

Planning - Staff Tasks

- Determine the Funded Supports**  
Last updated by [ ] on 31.05.2019 >>
- Determine Plan Management >>

2. From the **Determine the Funded Supports** screen, select **Capital**.

< Determine the Support Needs ? ⚙️ □

Support Type	Price \$	
Core	0.00	>
Capacity Building	213.39	>
<b>Capital</b>	0.00	>
Total Plan Budget ( \$ )		213.39

3. Select **Assistive Technology**.

< Determine the Support Needs ? ⚙️ □

Support Type > Support Category

Support Category	Price \$		Comment	
Assistive Technology	0.00	<b>□</b>	[ ]	>
Home Modifications	0.00	□	[ ]	>

4. Select **Product**.



Product	Price	Quantity	Unit	How Often	Frequency	Total
	0.00	1		Once	1.00	0.00
						\$0.00

Item Type:

Quote Required  Quote Received

Done Cancel

5. Search using the full name of the **Capital Support** that is to be added. Refer to [Practice Guide - Hearing Supports](#). Note: searching for hearing will bring up all supports related to hearing.

Select a Product

hearing

- Standard level hearing device  
05\_502206417\_0122\_1\_2
- Intermediate level hearing device  
05\_502206418\_0122\_1\_2
- Advanced level hearing device  
05\_502206419\_0122\_1\_2
- Non-Standard Hearing device  
05\_502206420\_0122\_1\_2

Cancel

## 6.6 Determine Plan Management

For Basic (level 1) and Standard (level 2) AT ensure the funding is either self-managed or plan managed, where possible. This supports the participant to exercise choice and control when purchasing their AT supports. If the participant chooses to have their Low Cost AT funding Agency managed, ensure the participant is aware they may not be able to pay their Hearing Services Program hearing provider the annual maintenance fee or purchase their AT items online as they may not be registered NDIS providers.

To update **Determine Plan Management** refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Complete the Determine Plan Management task](#).

## 6.7 Notify the Hearing Services Program

You will only complete this step for current NDIS participants aged 26 and above who:

- are not eligible for the Hearing Services Program, and
  - have a current HSP voucher, and
  - would like to have NDIS fund all Hearing Supports.
1. Record the participant's consent to cancel their voucher on their behalf. Complete the NDIS [Form - Consent to Share Information](#) and record this in the System.
  2. Once consent is received send an email to the Hearing Services Program:

**Email:** [hearing@health.gov.au](mailto:hearing@health.gov.au)

**CC:** [Hearing@ndis.gov.au](mailto:Hearing@ndis.gov.au)

**Subject Line Heading:** Notification of NDIS funded hearing needs

**Email Classification:** Official – Sensitive – Personal

**Copy and paste into the body of the email:**

This email is confirmation that the below Hearing Services Program client has made an informed choice and provided written consent to cancel their HSP voucher. They have chosen to have their hearing needs funded by the NDIS.

The participant has been informed that the HSP voucher will cease on <insert NDIS plan approval date>.

The participant has been advised that they do not meet the Hearing Services Program eligibility criteria and will not be able to obtain another voucher once this existing voucher has been cancelled.

NDIS participant number:

First Name:

Surname:

DOB:

Plan start date:

3. Record an interaction noting you have advised the participant of why the Hearing Services Program has been notified, that you have provided them with information to

make an informed choice and document what date we informed the Hearing Services Program. Refer to [Standard Operating Procedure – Interactions template general](#).

4. Remove the **One main contact** Alert from the participant's record by changing the end date to today's date. This is the alert that shows when the HSP voucher expires. You need to do this so other staff know the HSP voucher can't be used.

## 7. Supporting material

- [Practice Guide – Hearing Supports](#)
- [Operational Guideline – Assistive Technology](#)
- [Hearing Service Program website](#)
- [Standard Operating Procedure – Alerts in the NDIS Business System](#)

## 8. Process owner and approver

General Manager, Participant Experience Design

## 9. Feedback

If you have any feedback about this Standard Operating Procedure, please complete our [Feedback form](#).

## 10. Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
5.0	CW0032	Class 2 Interim support items for hearing services for participant's under the age of 26 should no longer to be included in plans	APPROVED	2020-04-28
6.0	JC0075	Class 3 Approval From 1 July 2020 NDIS will fund wrap around reasonable and necessary supports that are not funded via HSP.	APPROVED	2020-06-14

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
7.0	JC0075	Class 2 approval. Changed the order of the first 2 procedures so the first procedure is to check for HSP eligibility. The second procedure is to follow the planning procedure for the Hearing group the participant is in. The procedures have been clarified. Minor updates to wording for plain English.	APPROVED	2021-01-14
8.0	CS0074	Class 1 Approval Updated links relating to Assisting the participant with their preferred method of communication.	APPROVED	2021-02-19
9.0	CS0074	Class 1 approval Dept of Health and Aged Care advised new website for Hearing Services Program (HSP). Links to HSP website updated.	APPROVED	2023-05-29

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL.

## Guide – Hearing supports

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This article provides guidance for a **planner delegate**, **internal review delegate**, **complex support needs (CSN) planner**, **national reassessment delegate** and **local area coordinator** to understand:

- an overview of hearing supports
- funding responsibilities
- when the NDIS will typically fund a new hearing device
- delegate considerations when planning with participants who need hearing supports in their plan.

For participants younger than 7 years, refer to article [EC Hearing](#).

**Note:** In this article we have used the terms 'Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing loss or hearing impairment'. We understand this is not the preferred language for many participants in the Deaf community. We have used these terms to make sure this article is consistent with our Operational Guidelines and PACE. You should always check with the participant how they identify and what their preferred terminology is.

### Recent updates

#### October 2023

This guidance comes from the Practice Guide – Hearing supports We've made minor updates to change any NDIS Business System language to PACE language. We'll make improvements to this guidance in the future.

### Before you start

You have read and understood:

- [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary support \(external\)](#)
- [Our Guideline – Assistive technology \(external\)](#)
- article [Guide – Assisting communication](#).

### Hearing loss

Hearing loss can be described as:

- congenital, which is present at birth or soon after birth
- acquired, when hearing loss occurs or develops during a person's life but was not present at birth.

Types of hearing loss:

- Sensorineural hearing loss is considered permanent affecting the inner ear, this is called the cochlea.
- Conductive hearing loss may be considered a temporary condition if it's associated with a middle ear pathology. For example, ear infections which are also known as otitis media. A conductive hearing loss would be considered permanent if there is sufficient medical evidence that the hearing loss is permanent, or is likely to be permanent. This means evidence there are no known available and appropriate evidenced-based medical treatments that would remedy the hearing loss. This may include evidence from an Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) specialist. For more information refer to [S5.4 National Disability Insurance Scheme \(Becoming a Participant\) Rules 2016](#).
- Mixed hearing loss is a combination of a sensorineural (permanent) hearing loss with a conductive overlay.
- Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD) is sometimes called auditory neuropathy or auditory dys-synchrony. It is a "neural" hearing condition which impacts on the ability of the hearing (auditory) nerve to send sounds from the inner ear (cochlear) to the brain.

## Levels of hearing loss

Hearing severity level and decibel ranges:

- Normal Hearing: 0-20dBHL
- Mild Hearing Loss: 21 – 40dBHL
- Moderate Hearing Loss: 41 – 60dBHL
- Severe Hearing Loss: 61 – 80dBHL
- Severe or Profound Hearing Loss: 81 – 90dBHL
- Profound Hearing Loss: >90dBHL

## Hearing Supports

If the participant is Deaf or hard of hearing, their ability to hear conversational speech and environmental sounds may be impacted. They may need hearing support to communicate, learn and socially interact.

This will be different for each person based on different factors, including:

- age of onset
- severity
- type of hearing loss
- early intervention support received, and
- other factors affecting the person such as whether they also have a secondary disability.

## NDIS and the Hearing Services Program (HSP)

From 1 July 2020 hearing services in Australia will continue to be funded by both the Hearing Services Program (HSP) and the NDIS.

The HSP is available for participants who are:

- under the age of 26 or
- aged 26 years and over and meet the Hearing Services Program eligibility criteria.

The HSP has two components:

- voucher (voucher program) delivers general hearing services and devices to eligible people
- community service obligations (CSO program) deliver Specialist Hearing Services and devices to eligible people. The Community Services Obligations program is solely delivered by Hearing Australia.

Under a previous in-kind arrangement participants who weren't normally eligible for the HSP were issued a voucher. This voucher will remain valid until it expires, or, when the participant has a plan change and chooses to cancel their voucher. This means all their hearing needs will be funded in their NDIS plan.

Plan developers need to understand the participant's current and future eligibility for the HSP to determine how a participant will receive their hearing supports.

If the participant is eligible for the HSP they will fund some supports. This includes:

- audiology assessments
- fittings
- devices and upgrades. This doesn't include cochlear implant speech processors.

We'll fund other supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria which the HSP does not fund.

If the participant isn't eligible for the HSP, we'll fund all supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria.

### **Confirm who should fund hearing supports**

The hearing supports the participant can access will depend on the type of funding the participant may be eligible for. The below list includes the different groups.

#### **Participant older than 7 and younger than 25**

- Hearing services provided by the CSO program.
- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria which the CSO program does not fund.

If the participant is turning 26 during plan duration, think about their future hearing support needs.

#### **Current NDIS participant older than 26 and eligible for the HSP with a current HSP voucher**

The participant's eligibility to the Hearing Services Program may change and should be checked at each check-in.

- Hearing services provided by the HSP.
- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria which the HSP does not fund.

#### **Current NDIS participant older than 26 not eligible for the HSP, with a current HSP voucher who would like to have NDIS fund their hearing supports**

This may include participants who received their HSP under the previous in-kind arrangement. HSP vouchers are valid for 3 years from the date of issue.

- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria.

#### **Current NDIS participant older than 26 not eligible for the HSP, but would like to remain with the HSP while their HSP voucher is valid**

This may include participants who received their HSP under the previous in-kind arrangement. HSP vouchers are valid for 3 years from the date of issue.



- Hearing services provided by the HSP until the participant's HSP voucher expires.
- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria which the HSP does not fund.

#### **New NDIS participant older than 26, eligible for the HSP**

- Hearing services provided by HSP.
- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria which the HSP does not fund.

#### **New NDIS participant older than 26, not eligible for the HSP**

- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria.

#### **Participant who is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander older than 50**

- Hearing services provided by the CSO program.
- We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria which the CSO program does not fund.

To learn more about who is responsible for funding supports, refer to article [Guide – Hearing supports appendix A – Funding responsibilities](#).

To create a referral or check if the participant is still eligible for the HSP, refer to article [Add or update low-cost assistive technology \(AT\) in a plan approval case](#).

### **HSP repairs, maintenance and replacement devices**

We'll fund the co-payment towards the annual maintenance fee and the administration fee for replacement of lost or damaged beyond repair device. The annual maintenance fee for repairs and replacing a lost or damaged device includes:

- batteries
- repairs
- spare parts
- replacing a lost or damaged device.

If the participant has a hearing device from the partially subsidised category, there may be additional fee. The hearing services provider will advise if any additional fees apply to the participant.

To include funding for HSP repairs, maintenance and replacement devices, refer to article [Add or update hearing supports in a plan approval case](#).

## NDIS funded hearing supports

We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria. This may include:

- assessments, fittings and devices where they are not available through the Hearing Services Program
- assistive technology, other than Low Cost AT, for example vibrating alerting systems or smoke alarms
- Auslan interpreting services and training
- repairs, maintenance and consumables for hearing devices
- capacity building supports.

To learn more about these supports refer to articles:

- [Guide – Hearing supports appendix A – Funding responsibilities](#)
- [Guide – Hearing supports appendix B – Capacity building supports](#)
- [Guide – Hearing supports appendix C – Capital supports](#)
- [Guide – Hearing supports appendix D – Core supports.](#)

## Glossary

### **Audiometrist**

Audiometrists have met the relevant membership and clinical competency requirements for audiometrists set by the Australian Practitioner Professional Bodies. Audiometrists are:

- Full or ordinary members of ACAud with a Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) competency
- Full members of HAASA. They have completed an Australian Diploma-level Technical and Further Education (TAFE) vocational qualification in audiometry or a Bachelor of Audiometry from an Australian university.

For more information, refer to [Audiology Australia \(external\)](#).

### **Auslan**

Auslan is the recognised language of the Australian Deaf Community. Auslan has its own syntax, grammar and uses a combination of handshapes, movements and facial expression.

### **Audiologist**

Audiologists have met the relevant membership and clinical competency requirements set by the Australian Practitioner Professional Bodies. This means that audiologists are:

- Full members of Audiology Australia with a Certificate of Clinical Practice (CCP)
- Full or ordinary members of the Australian College of Audiology (ACAud) with Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) and Diagnostic Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) competencies.

Audiologists must have completed at least the equivalent of an Australian university Masters level degree in clinical audiology. For more information, refer to [Audiology Australia \(external\)](#).

### **Cochlear Implant**

A surgically implanted device which enables the person to experience sounds by sending signals to the nerve endings in the inner ear (cochlea).

### **Deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired and hearing loss**

A person who has problems with their ability to hear or cannot hear. When referring to individuals in general, it is considered appropriate to use the term 'deaf'. However, an individual is referred to as 'Deaf' if they are involved in the signing community. Sometimes signing individuals are referred to as 'culturally Deaf'.

For more information, refer to [National Association for the Deaf \(external\)](#) or [International Federation of Hard of Hearing People \(external\)](#).

### **Fully Subsidised Hearing Device**

Fully subsidised devices are free to NDIS participants receiving hearing supports through the Hearing Services Program.

### **Hearing Australia**

Hearing Australia is the contracted provider who receives government funding (Community Services Obligation) to deliver specialist hearing services to children and young adults younger than 26.

### **Mild hearing loss**

A person with a mild hearing loss may have difficulties hearing soft speech sounds.

### **Moderate hearing loss**

A person with a moderate hearing loss will have difficulties understanding conversational speech, particularly in the presence of background noise.

### **Non-standard device**

An NDIS funded device that offers specific technology to meet a particular functional requirement, which cannot be met by a standard, intermediate or advanced hearing device.

### **Partially subsidised hearing device**

The NDIS participant has opted to purchase a partially subsidised hearing device through the HSP, which may have more technological features to suit individual lifestyle choices. In this case, the HSP contributes the amount that would have been paid for a fully subsidised hearing device to the service provider, and the participant has paid the additional amount quoted for the hearing device for example the “gap”.

### **Severe or profound hearing loss**

A person with a severe or profound hearing loss cannot hear normal conversational speech. many people with a profound hearing loss are now fitted with a cochlear implant.

### **Speech Processor**

The part of a cochlear implant that converts speech sound into electrical impulses to stimulate the auditory nerve, allowing a person to understand sound and speech.

### **Unilateral hearing loss**

A person with a unilateral hearing loss has their hearing in one ear only affected.

## **Next steps**

1. Add NDIS funded hearing supports to the participant plan, refer to article [Add or update hearing supports in a plan approval case](#).

## **Article topics and case names – internal use only**

### **Topics**

This article relates to the following topics:

- **Add:** t\_assistivetechology
- **Add:** t\_communication
- **Add:** t\_hearing
- **Add:** t\_implementation
- **Add:** t\_planchanges
- **Add:** t\_providers
- **Add:** t\_reasonableandnecessary
- **Add:** t\_therapysupports

## Case names

You can use this guidance for the:

- **Add:** dc\_case\_checkin
- **Add:** dc\_case\_earllysupports
- **Add:** dc\_case\_internalreview
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- **Add:** dc\_case\_technicaladvice

## Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	CS0074	Class 1 approval	APPROVED	2022-11-18
1.1	MGC723	Updated to make sure content is transferred from PG – Hearing supports	DRAFT	2023-09-14
1.2	BTM847	Peer review	DRAFT	2023-09-28
1.3	MGC723	Action peer review and add links	DRAFT	2023-09-28
2.0	JS0082	Class 1 Approval	APPROVED	2023-09-28

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## Guide – Hearing supports appendix A – Funding responsibilities

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This article provides guidance for a **planner delegate**, **internal review delegate**, **complex support needs (CSN) planner**, **national reassessment delegate** and **local area coordinator** to:

- understand funding responsibilities for hearing supports.

### Recent updates

#### October 2023

This guidance comes from the Practice Guide – Hearing supports. We've made minor updates to change any NDIS Business System language to PACE language. We'll make improvements to this guidance in the future.

### Before you start

You have read and understood:

- [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary support \(external\)](#)
- [Our Guideline – Assistive technology \(external\)](#)
- article [Guide – Assisting communication](#)
- article [Guide – Hearing supports](#).

### Funding responsibilities

Use this list as a guide to help you understand the responsibility of other government and broader systems of support services. We call these mainstream and community services.

#### Assessment fittings and devices

##### Supports generally funded by the NDIS

We'll fund hearing supports that meet the NDIS funding criteria when the participant is not eligible for the Hearing Services Program (HSP).

##### Supports generally funded by mainstream and community services

If the participant is eligible for the HSP, it's more appropriate for assessment fittings and devices to be funded under the HSP.

## Speech Processor upgrades

### Supports generally funded by the NDIS

If the participant is older than 26, we may fund speech processor upgrades if the support meets the NDIS funding criteria. This doesn't include the initial speech processor.

**Note:** You need to get advice from the Technical Advisory Branch (TAB) for speech processor upgrades.

### Supports generally funded by mainstream and community services

Speech processor upgrades are generally provided under the Community Services Obligation component of the Hearing Services Program for participants under 26 years of age.

## Remote Microphone systems

### Supports generally funded by the NDIS

We'll generally fund this support if it meets the NDIS funding criteria and the participant is not eligible for the Community Services Obligation (CSO).

### Supports generally funded by mainstream and community services

If the participant is eligible for the HSP, it's more appropriate for remote microphone systems to be funded under the HSP.

## Waterproof covers for cochlear implants

### Supports generally funded by the NDIS

We'll generally fund this support if it meets the NDIS funding criteria and there is evidence the participant takes part in water activities. The cochlear aqua accessory is a lower cost alternative to the cochlear aqua plus accessory.

### Supports generally funded by mainstream and community services

This support isn't generally funded by mainstream and community services.

## Work related modifications or assistive technology

### Supports generally funded by the NDIS

We'll generally fund hearing devices and supports related to daily living that a person would need in their day-to-day life regardless of the activity.

### Supports generally funded by mainstream and community services

It's more appropriate for work related modifications or equipment to be funded by the [Employment Assistance Fund \(external\)](#) via [Job Access \(external\)](#). This may include workplace specific:

- modification such as visual alerts
- assistive technology such as specialised phones, amplified stethoscopes and interactive whiteboards
- communication support such as Deaf awareness training, Auslan interpreters or live captioning.

## Education related assistive technology and Auslan interpreting

### Supports generally funded by the NDIS

We'll generally fund hearing devices and supports related to daily living that a person would need in their day-to-day life regardless of the activity.

### Supports generally funded by mainstream and community services

It's more appropriate for education specific supports to be funded by mainstream and community services. This may include education specific:

- modification such as visual alerts
- assistive technology such as specialised phones, amplified stethoscopes and interactive whiteboards
- communication support such as Deaf awareness training, Auslan interpreters or live captioning.

## Next steps

1. Add NDIS funded hearing supports to the participant plan, refer to article [Add or update hearing supports in a plan approval case](#).

## Article topics and case names – internal use only

### Topics

This article relates to the following topics:

- **Add:** t\_assistivetechonology
- **Add:** t\_communication
- **Add:** t\_hearing



- **Add:** t\_implementation
- **Add:** t\_planchanges
- **Add:** t\_providers
- **Add:** t\_reasonableandnecessary
- **Add:** t\_therapysupports

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1.0	CS0074	Class 1 approval	APPROVED	2022-11-18
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1.3	MGC723	Action peer review and add links	DRAFT	2023-09-28
2.0	JS0082	Class 1 Approval	APPROVED	2023-09-28

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## Guide – Hearing supports appendix B – Capacity building supports

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This article provides guidance for a **planner delegate**, **internal review delegate**, **complex support needs (CSN) planner**, **national reassessment delegate** and **local area coordinator** to:

- understand capacity building hearing supports
- determine capacity building for support with hearing devices.

### Recent updates

#### October 2023

- This guidance comes from the Practice Guide – Hearing supports. We've made minor updates to change any NDIS Business System language to PACE language. We'll make improvements to this guidance in the future.
- Article name changed from Guide – Hearing supports appendix B – Proposed capacity building for the life expectancy of a hearing aid to Guide – Hearing supports appendix B – Capacity building supports.

### Before you start

You have read and understood:

- [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary support \(external\)](#)
- [Our Guideline – Assistive technology \(external\)](#)
- article [Guide – Assisting communication](#)
- article [Guide – Hearing supports](#)
- article [Guide – Hearing supports appendix A – Funding responsibilities](#)

### Capacity building hearing supports

If the participant is older than 26 with cochlear implants, think about funding for capacity building to support access to their local cochlear implant clinic.

We don't fund audiology assessments for participants who are eligible for the HSP.

Think about the participant's individual situation before you confirm the level of hearing services they need. This includes if they need hearing services from an audiologist or an audiometrist.

- Hearing Services is recommended for the delivery of audiometry and audiological services that aren't covered by the HSP.
- Specialised Hearing Services is recommended for the delivery of specialist audiological services. This is for participants who have profound hearing loss, an implantable device or additional communication needs which aren't covered by the HSP.

The participant may need specialised hearing services if they:

- have a profound hearing loss. Three-frequency average of 80dB or worse in the better ear
- use an implantable device
- have hearing loss and they can't communicate because of their disability. This includes if they can't communicate effectively in their day-to-day life or they have a visual impairment. This may also include if they have a physical, intellectual or psychosocial disability.

**Note:** If you determine the participant needs:

- standard hearing services, they can purchase hearing services from audiologists or audiometrists. This is from the registration group Hearing Services.
- specialised hearing services, they can purchase hearing services from audiologists. This is from the registration group specialised hearing services.

## Determine capacity building for support with hearing devices

The life expectancy of a hearing aid is generally 5 years. You can use the list below to help work out what type of capacity building support meets the NDIS funding criteria.

If the participant has a profound hearing loss or implantable device, they may need more clinical time than participants eligible for standard hearing services. However, participants who

need additional communication support may need more clinical time. This is to provide appropriate assessment and training in device management and communication strategies.

### Hearing aid replacement

Assessment undertaken by suitably qualified professional, considering hearing aid options for example style of hearing aid, minimum features required.

**Standard Hearing Services:** Up to 90 minutes

**Specialised Hearing Services, Group A** – Profound loss or implantable device: Up to 90 minutes

**Specialised Hearing Services Group B** – Additional communication needs: Up to 150 minutes.

### Audiological case management

Subsequent to a first assessment, services performed only by a Qualified Practitioner (Audiologist). Consists of advice to a Qualified Practitioner (Audiometrist) to enable the completion of the Audiometrist's assessment of a non-routine client, required to achieve the Hearing Rehabilitation Outcome.

**Standard Hearing Services:** Up to 30 minutes

### Hearing aid fitting

Fitting of hearing aids that are clinically suitable to the participant's needs, including device trials and training in device maintenance.

**Standard Hearing Services:** Up to 150 minutes

**Specialised Hearing Services, Group A** – Profound loss and/or implantable device: Up to 150 minutes

**Specialised Hearing Services Group B** – Additional communication needs: Up to 240 minutes.

### Aural Rehabilitation or Habilitation

It is recommended that aural rehabilitation/habilitation be included in every 5 year plan. Changes in hearing levels, health, and personal circumstances can impact on successful communication outcomes. A change in device style and accessories, as well as technological advances may necessitate a change in communication strategies. This service is provided to assist participants to acquire and apply skills to maximise their communication abilities and better manage their hearing loss. The service can include, but is not limited to: Auditory

training, speech reading training, counselling, training in communication strategies, and training of formal and informal supports.

**Standard Hearing Services:** Up to 7 hours

**Specialised Hearing Services, Group A** – Profound loss and/or implantable device: Up to 7 hours

**Specialised Hearing Services Group B** – Additional communication needs: Up to 10 hours.

### Clinical Maintenance

ADHOC clinical services including ear mould and any other attachments necessary for the operation of the device.

**Standard Hearing Services:** Up to 4 x 45 minutes

**Specialised Hearing Services, Group A** – Profound loss and/or implantable device: Up to 4 x 45 minutes

**Specialised Hearing Services Group B** – Additional communication needs: Up to 4 x 60 minutes.

### Review

Review of participant's needs where the participant is experiencing less than optimal benefit or satisfaction with their device and it is more than 12 months from the date of fitting or last participant review.

The aim of this service is to give the practitioner greater flexibility in providing appropriate services in a timely and efficient manner and to extend the life of the current fitting. This item is not intended to be used to rectify a poor fitting by the practitioner.

**Standard Hearing Services:** Up to 4 x 1 hour

**Specialised Hearing Services, Group A** – Profound loss and/or implantable device: Up to 4 x 1 hour

**Specialised Hearing Services Group B** – Additional communication needs: Up to 4 x 1.5 hours.

### Total recommended hours

**Standard Hearing Services:** 18.5 hours

**Specialised Hearing Services, Group A** – Profound loss and/or implantable device: 18 hours

**Specialised Hearing Services Group B** – Additional communication needs: 26.5 hours.

## Next steps

1. Add NDIS funded hearing supports to the participant plan, refer to article [Add or update hearing supports in a plan approval case](#).

## Article topics and case names – internal use only

### Topics

This article relates to the following topics:

- **Add:** t\_assistivetechology
- **Add:** t\_communication
- **Add:** t\_hearing
- **Add:** t\_implementation
- **Add:** t\_planchanges
- **Add:** t\_providers
- **Add:** t\_reasonableandnecessary
- **Add:** t\_therapysupports

### Case names

You can use this guidance for the:

- **Add:** dc\_case\_checkin
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- **Add:** dc\_case\_internalreview
- **Add:** dc\_case\_participantbudgetupdate
- **Add:** dc\_case\_planapproval
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- **Add:** dc\_case\_requestforservice
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## Version control

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1.0	CS0074	Class 1 approval	APPROVED	2022-11-18
1.1	MGC723	Updated to make sure content is transferred from PG – Hearing supports. Article name changed from Guide – Hearing supports appendix B – Proposed capacity building for the life expectancy of a hearing aid to Guide – Hearing supports appendix B – Capacity building	DRAFT	2023-09-14
1.2	BTM847	Peer review	DRAFT	2023-09-28
1.3	MGC723	Action peer review Add links	DRAFT	2023-09-28
2.0	JS0082	Class 1 Approval	APPROVED	2023-09-28

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## Guide – Hearing supports appendix C – Capital supports

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This article provides guidance for a **planner delegate**, **internal review delegate**, **complex support needs (CSN) planner**, **national reassessment delegate** and **local area coordinator** to:

- understand capital hearing supports
- understand when we will fund a new hearing device
- determine who should fund communication devices
- determine who should fund implantable device upgrades.

### Recent updates

#### October 2023

- This guidance comes from the Practice Guide – Hearing supports. We've made minor updates to change any NDIS Business System language to PACE language. We'll make improvements to this guidance in the future.
  - Article name changed from Guide – Hearing supports Appendix C – Considerations for Wireless Communication Device/Remote microphone systems to Guide – Hearing supports appendix C – Capital supports.

### Before you start

You have read and understood:

- [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary support \(external\)](#)
- [Our Guideline – Assistive technology \(external\)](#)
- article [Guide – Assisting communication](#)
- article [Guide – Hearing supports](#)
- article [Guide – Hearing supports appendix A – Funding responsibilities](#).

### Capital hearing supports



We'll fund capital supports that aren't funded by the Hearing Services Program (HSP) and meet the NDIS funding criteria. This may include:

- bone conducting hearing devices
- cochlear implants speech processors
- hearing aids
- other devices that are outside the levels of hearing devices we may fund below.

We need a quote if the participant asks for a hearing device outside the levels of hearing devices we may fund.

## **Levels of hearing devices we may fund**

### **Standard level hearing device**

An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss (OSPL90  $\geq$  128 dB SPL) IEC RTF 1600 Hz. Includes 10+ channels, feedback management, adaptive noise control, option to add telecoil, directional microphone, and minimum bandwidth of 8kHz.

### **Intermediate level hearing device**

An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss and provides increased functions over and above what can be met with standard level devices. May include speech enhancement, sound management, ear to ear technology, and volume controls.

### **Advanced level hearing device**

An electronic instrument that provides amplification to individuals with a hearing loss and provides increased functions over and above what can be met with intermediate level devices. May include one or more of the following features; 24+ channels, tinnitus reduction, smartphone connectivity, automatic programming, wireless, compatibility with accessories, remote programming.

### **Non-standard hearing device**

A device that offers specific technology to meet a particular functional requirement, which cannot be met by a Standard, Intermediate or Advanced hearing device.

### **External speech processor and accessories for implanted hearing devices**

The external part of an implantable device which picks up speech and processes sound.

### **Speech processor repair**

Repairs to the external part of an implantable device.

## When we will fund a new hearing device

We will fund a new hearing device if the participant isn't eligible for the Community Services Obligation (CSO) program or HSP voucher program and either:

- the current device is more than 5 years old
- there is clinical evidence from a suitably qualified professional (Audiologist or Audiometrist) to demonstrate that the current hearing device is no longer meeting the participant's needs. For example: it can no longer be adjusted, the participant can no longer use the device due to significant deterioration in health, dexterity or cognitive ability or there is evidence the device has a repeat repair history and is now unreliable.

If you need help to determine if a hearing device meets the NDIS funding criteria, include funding for a provider to complete an assessment. This may include an audiologist or audiometrist to complete the [hearing devices and hearing technology assessment template \(external\)](#) when the:

- NDIS is funding the hearing device for the first time
- current hearing device is no longer meeting their hearing needs
- hearing device is coming to the end of its expected life
- participant isn't eligible for the HSP and is asking for a hearing device above their assessed level in the hearing device recommendation
- participant is eligible for the HSP or is an existing HSP client asking for a hearing device that is above the level of device fully subsidised by the HSP. You must create a technical advice case as this is a mandatory TAB referral.

If the participant isn't having any difficulties with their current hearing device, you don't need to include funding in their plan for a new hearing device.

For information about repairs and maintenance for NDIS funded hearing devices, refer to [Our Guideline – Assistive technology \(external\)](#) and article [Add funding for assistive technology \(AT\) repairs, maintenance, rental and trial](#).

## Determine the hearing device recommendation

If you have enough information to decide if the hearing device meets the NDIS funding criteria, you won't need the [hearing devices and hearing technology assessment template \(external\)](#) to be completed. You can use the below hearing device recommendation to help work out if the hearing device meets the NDIS funding criteria.

**Note:** It's best practice to encourage participants to trial a wireless communication device.

### **Active or demanding listening environments**

Does the participant spend most of their time in demanding listening environments? For example:

- the workplace
- traveling frequently
- attending large social or work functions
- dining out often
- going to concerts or live shows
- giving presentations at meetings
- frequently driving.

A participant who meets this criteria is likely to benefit from a standard hearing device paired with a wireless communication device (WCD).

**Note:** Only think about an intermediate or advanced level hearing device if there's sufficient evidence in the [hearing devices and hearing technology assessment template \(external\)](#). This evidence should demonstrate that the standard hearing device and intermediate paired with a wireless communication device has been trialled and the participant has little or no functional gain from the lower cost alternatives. If this is being requested you may need to seek more information before you make a decision.

### **Casual or moderate listening environments**

Does the participant spend most of their time in moderate listening environments? For example:

- shopping
- attending religious or social gatherings
- golfing, walking or biking with a friend
- attending meetings
- having lunch with a small group of friends in a quiet locale
- driving infrequently
- watching TV occasionally.

A participant who meets this criteria is likely to benefit from a standard hearing device paired with a WCD.

**Note:** Only think about an intermediate or advanced level hearing device if there's sufficient evidence in the [hearing devices and hearing technology assessment template \(external\)](#). This evidence should demonstrate that the standard hearing device and intermediate paired with a WCD has been trialled and the participant has little or no functional gain from the lower cost alternatives. If this is being requested you may need to seek more information before you make a decision.

### **Quiet or listening environments**

Does the participant spend most of their time in quiet listening environments? For example:

- doing activities at home
- watching TV
- playing cards with friends
- reading a book or a newspaper
- having casual conversations
- visiting friends in their homes.

A participant who meets this criteria is likely to benefit from a standard hearing device or a standard hearing device paired with a WCD.

## **Determine who should fund communication devices**

Use the below recommendations to help work out who should fund wireless communication devices (WCD) or remote microphone systems compatible with hearing aids or cochlear implant (CI) speech processors.

### **Hearing aids – all participants**

Hearing aids improve hearing in the near field, however in noisy situations (further than 1.5 m away) the benefits of hearing aids are limited, especially in the presence of background noise. Research indicates remote microphones significantly help people wearing hearing aids understand more speech in noise and over distance.

### **Participant older than 7 and younger than 26**

Participants eligible to receive hearing supports and services funded under the CSO component of the HSP will be eligible to receive a WCD or remote microphone system. This includes one transmitter and one receiver. This is considered 'the minimum necessary or standard level of support required'. Approving NDIS funding for additional WCD or remote microphone systems, including a second receiver may not meet the NDIS funding criteria.

### **Participant older than 26 and eligible for the HSP voucher**

Participants eligible to receive hearing supports and services under the Voucher component of the HSP are not eligible to receive a WCD or remote microphone system under the HSP. Recommendations for WCD or remote microphone systems may be reasonable and necessary if there is sufficient clinical evidence that it meets the NDIS funding criteria.

### **Participant older than 26 and eligible for the CSO program**

Participants eligible to receive hearing supports and services funded under the CSO component of the HSP will be eligible to receive a WCD or remote microphone system. This includes one transmitter and one receiver. This is considered 'the minimum necessary or standard level of support required'. Approving NDIS funding for additional WCD or remote microphone systems, including a second receiver may not meet the NDIS funding criteria.

### **NDIS funded hearing supports for participants older than 26**

There are a variety of WCD or remote microphone systems compatible with Standard, Intermediate and Advanced level hearing devices available under the NDIS. If a participant is fitted with a Standard Hearing device and compatible WCD or remote microphone system, this is likely to represent value for money. This is because it will improve communication outcomes for the participant at a substantially lower cost than the cost of Intermediate or Advanced level hearing devices.

### **Assistive technology for use only in the workplace**

Requests for assistive technology for use only at work would generally not meet the NDIS funding criteria. For example, requests for specialised phones, amplified stethoscopes, or multimedia hub for interactive whiteboard at work. This is because these items are more appropriately funded by [Job Access \(external\)](#) through the [Employment Assistance Fund \(external\)](#). However, the [Employment Assistance Fund \(external\)](#) does not cover the cost of hearing aids or CIs.

### **Determine who should fund implantable device upgrades**

Use the below recommendations to help work out who should fund cochlear implant (CI) and bone conduction implantable devices speech or sound processor upgrades.

### **Participant older than 7 and younger than 26**

Participants older than 7 and younger than 26 are eligible to receive CI speech processor upgrades funded through the CSO. This is if they meet Hearing Australia's eligibility criteria [speech processor upgrade criteria \(external\)](#).

Children and young adults asking for NDIS funding for speech processor upgrades should be referred to Hearing Australia. Approving NDIS funding for speech processor upgrades for participants older than 7 and younger than 26 generally won't meet the NDIS funding criteria.

Under the HSP maintenance agreement all spare parts and repairs or replacements of speech processors are covered.

## Participant older than 26

We may fund speech processor upgrades for participants older than 26 if there is sufficient evidence the speech processor needs replacement. The plan developer will need to consider factors including the age and model of the current speech processor, if it is damaged beyond repair or has been lost.

If funding for a CI speech processor upgrade meets the NDIS funding criteria, include support in their plan. Refer to [Add or update low-cost assistive technology \(AT\) in a plan approval case](#).

## Next steps

1. Add NDIS funded hearing supports to the participant plan, refer to article [Add or update hearing supports in a plan approval case](#).

## Article topics and case names – internal use only

### Topics

This article relates to the following topics:

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1.0	CS0074	Class 1 approval	APPROVED	2022-11-18
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2.0	JS0082	Class 1 Approval	APPROVED	2023-09-28

# Add transport supports to the participant's plan

The content of this document is OFFICIAL.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will help you consider and add transport supports to the participant's plan.

This SOP is about participant transport arrangements. For information about provider travel, refer to the [NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits](#).

## 1. Recent updates

Date	What's changed
February 2021	<p>New SOP format to align with Our Guidelines refresh. SOPs include process information only. Use Our Guidelines to help you make decisions and refer to <a href="#">Related procedures or resources</a>.</p> <p>This is existing guidance from the Practice Guide – Determine Reasonable and Necessary Supports, which will be retired at the end of the internal preview period.</p>

## 2. Checklist

Topic	Checklist
Pre-requisites	<p>You have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Made a reasonable and necessary decision to include transport support using <a href="#">Operational Guideline - Including Specific Types of Supports in Plans – Transport</a>.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Told the participant that transport funding does not cover day-to-day living costs. For example, it does not cover transport to appointments, shopping or recreational activities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Told the participant that if they currently receive mobility allowance from Centrelink, this allowance will stop when their plan is approved.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sought advice from the Technical Advisory Branch if the transport funding is significantly above <b>Transport Assistance Level 3</b>, or not related to activity-based transport.</li> </ul>



Topic	Checklist
	<p>If you are including transport as periodic payments, you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Told the participant that periodic transport payments are self-managed and paid each fortnight to their bank account.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Checked in the risk assessment that the participant is not currently an insolvent under administration.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Checked that self-managing funding will not present an unreasonable risk to the participant.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Checked the bank account details have been collected and recorded in the System.</li> </ul>
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">3.1 Decide how much funding to include in the plan</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">3.2 Add transport supports to the participant's plan</a></li> </ul>

## 3. Procedure

### 3.1 Decide how much funding to include in the plan

1. Use the **Levels of Transport Assistance** below to help you decide how much funding to include the plan.
  - **Level 1 \$1606-\$1,784:** For participants who are not working, studying or attending day programs but want to improve their community access.
  - **Level 2 \$2472-\$2,676:** For participants who are currently working or studying part-time (up to 15 hours a week) or participating in day programs. This also includes goal based social, recreational or leisure activities.
  - **Level 3 \$3456-\$3,567:** For participants who are currently working, looking for work, or studying (15 hours or more a week), and can't use public transport because of their disability.
  
2. Do not make transport funding flexible unless it meets the following criteria:
  - The transport funding is not an automated periodic payment. This means the periodic payment box is unchecked in the Determine the Funded Supports task.
  - The transport funding is not a fixed (stated) support.
  - There are funds available in the Core budget.
  - The transport funding plan management type is the same as other Core Supports.
  - The transport Service Booking includes a higher amount than the transport category in the Core budget.

#### 3.1.1 Transport support as part of community participation

3. If the participant requests transport support as part of community participation you must consider non-labour costs when deciding how much Core funding to include.
4. Consider the following information:

Participants can use their Core budget funding for a support worker to help them:

- participate in community outings
- transport from their home to the community.

Providers claim these costs at the relevant community participation hourly rate (individual or group).

Providers can claim non-labour transport costs to help the participant:

- access community participation supports
- access or maintain employment
- access or maintain higher education.

Non-labour costs associated with participant transport can include:

- public transport fares
- road tolls
- parking fees
- reasonable vehicle running costs
- taxi or ride-share fares.

The National Disability Insurance Agency considers that it's reasonable for a provider to claim:

- up to \$0.85 a kilometre for a standard vehicle not modified for accessibility
- up to \$2.40 a kilometre for a vehicle that is modified for accessibility or a bus
- up to the full amount for other forms of transport or associated costs, such as road tolls, parking and public transport fares.

### **3.2 Add transport supports in the participant's plan**

1. Follow [Standard Operating Procedure – Complete the Determine the funded supports task](#) to generate the Typical Support Package.

- Navigate to the **Determine the Support Needs** screen. Select **Core**.

Support Type	Price \$
Core	5,960.00
Capacity Building	15,979.25
Capital	390.15

Total Plan Budget ( \$ ) 22329.40

Plan Duration: 12 months

Generate Support Plan Save Submit

- The **Core Support Categories** screen displays. Review the amount generated for Transport funding, and adjust the Typical Support Package generated amount if necessary.

Support Category	Price \$	Comment	Periodic
Consumables	0.00		
Daily Activities	4,006.44		
Social, Community and Civic Participation	1,507.68		
Transport	455.88	Support to access work, study and community activities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- Unlike other support categories, transport can be paid to participants as an automated periodic payment, paid each fortnight. The **periodic transport check box** next to the transport support category is ticked by default. Uncheck this box if the participant's transport funding will be Agency-managed or plan-managed, or if they do not want transport as a periodic payment.
- Add a comment that describes how the support will be used. For example: Support to access work, study and community activities.

### 3.3 Next steps

1. Check you have included all other reasonable and necessary supports when completing the **Determine the Funded Supports** task. Refer to the relevant planning resources to complete this task.

## 4. Related procedures or resources

- [Operational Guideline - Including Specific Types of Supports in Plans – Transport](#)
- [Planning Intranet page](#)
- [Standard Operating Procedure – Complete the Determine the funded supports task](#)
- [NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits](#)

## 5. Feedback

If you have any feedback about this Standard Operating Procedure, please complete our [Feedback Form](#).

## 6. Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.0	CW0032	Class 2 approved. New SOP format to align with Our Guidelines refresh, Existing guidance from Practice Guide - Determine Reasonable and Necessary Supports.	APPROVED	2021-02-07

The contents of this document are **OFFICIAL**.

## Understand transport supports

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This article provides guidance for a **planner delegate** to:

- calculate transport supports
- find the right support category
- understand what to consider if transport supports are part of community participation.

### Recent updates

#### July 2023

- Article renamed to Understand transport supports.
- Added before you start and next steps sections.

### Before you start

You have read and understood:

- [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary supports \(external\)](#)
- [Operational Guideline - Including specific types of supports in plans – transport](#)
- article **Understand the product catalogue**
- article **Support Categories**.

### Calculate transport supports

To help you decide how much funding to include in the participant's plan, use the [Operational Guideline - Including specific types of supports in plans – transport](#).

If the transport funding is above Transport Assistance Level 3, or isn't related to activity-based transport, you'll need to seek advice from the Technical Advisory Branch (TAB). For more information, refer to article **Creating a technical advice case**.

### Find the right support category

Transport can be funded in **Core** or **Recurring** support categories.

You will need to read article **Understand the product catalogue** to determine the correct support category.

## What to consider if transport support is part of community participation

A participant might request transport support as part of community participation. Participants can use their transport budget funding for a support worker to help them:

- participate in community activities
- transport from their home to the community.

Providers claim these labour costs at the relevant community participation hourly rate. For example: individual or group rates.

You must also consider non-labour costs when deciding how much funding to include. Providers can claim non-labour transport costs to help the participant:

- access community participation supports
- access or maintain employment
- access or maintain higher education.

Non-labour costs associated with participant transport can include:

- public transport fares
- road tolls
- parking fees
- reasonable vehicle running costs
- taxi or ride-share fares.

Refer to the [NDIS Pricing Arrangement and Price Limits](#) for more information about provider travel – labour and non-labour costs.

## Next steps

Add or update transport supports in a plan.

1. For a plan approval case, refer to article **Add or update transport supports in a plan approval case** or
2. For a participant budget update case, refer to article **Add or update transport supports in a participant budget update case**.

## Article topics and case names – internal use only

### Topics

This article relates to the following topics:

- Transport

### Case names

You can use this guidance for the:

- Plan Approval
- Plan Change
- Participant Budget Update

### Version control

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.1	AMK633 DCM308	Added text into Knowledge Article template format New draft for system enhancements to transport funding in PACE release 1.13	DRAFT	2023-04-24
1.2	AMK633	Peer review	DRAFT	2023-05-04
1.3	DCM308	Action peer review feedback Flesch Readability level 47.2 Grade 9.8 Passive voice 12.9%	DRAFT	2023-05-05
1.4	DCM308	New draft with updated information received from build showcase	DRAFT	2023-06-08



Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.5	DCM308	Article renamed to Understand transport supports. System steps moved to independent articles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add or update transport supports for a Plan Approval case.</li> <li>Add or update transport supports for a Participant Budget Update case.</li> </ul>	DRAFT	2023-06-08
1.6	MSM312	Peer review	DRAFT	2023-06-20
1.7	RWN540	Amendments following peer review	DRAFT	2023-06-20
1.8	DD0014	EL1 review	DRAFT	2023-06-22
1.9	DCM308	Action EL1 review Flesch Readability level 34.0 Grade 10.0 Passive voice 0.0%	DRAFT	2023-06-26
1.10	DCM308	Collate SME Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Delivery</li> <li>Visible thread</li> </ul>	DRAFT	2023-06-30
1.11	DCM308	Action SME Feedback Cleaned for DO review Flesch Readability level 33.0 Grade 10.1 Passive voice 0.0%	DRAFT	2023-06-30
1.12	CTM829	EL2 review	DRAFT	2023-07-17

Version	Amended by	Brief Description of Change	Status	Date
1.13	DCM308	Added new sections as per knowledge article template v6.0 Updated user role names Cleaned for BiL endorsement	DRAFT	2023-07-20
2.0	CTM829	EL2 Class 1 approval	APPROVED	2023-07-21