

# National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

- The NDIS provides support and services to people with a disability
- This scheme may be suitable for polio survivors who are under 65 years of age
- This fact sheet gives examples on what you might include on your NDIS application
- The NDIS website has lots of information – there are many links in this fact sheet

## What Is The NDIS?

The [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) (NDIS) is a program to get help with your disability. It provides access to disability services and support for Australians under the age of 65.

NDIS funding is not the same for everyone. Each person gets funding based on their own needs and goals. It also aims to give you choice and control. People use the NDIS to fund support and services to help them achieve their goals. These might include:

- increasing independence in daily activities
- getting and keeping a job
- social activities
- participating in the community



## Is Polio And/Or The Late Effects Of Polio Considered A Disability?

[Poliomyelitis \(polio\)](#) is a virus that invades the nervous system. One in 200 infections leads to permanent paralysis. Most people make some recovery, but some may have ongoing disability.

The [Late Effects of Polio](#) include a range of symptoms that occur many years after the initial polio infection. Symptoms include [fatigue](#), [muscle and/or joint pain](#) and muscle weakness.

The disability resulting from polio and/or the Late Effects of Polio can include:

- becoming a permanent wheelchair user
- shortened limbs requiring bracing or special shoes
- a walking difficulty due to weakened muscles
- experiencing chronic fatigue
- and many more – every polio survivor is different

Read Polio Australia's [Disability Services fact sheet](#) to find out more.

## Should I Apply And When?

You may be unsure about using the NDIS because you don't like to think you have a disability. However, there may be equipment and services that could improve your quality of life. For example, the NDIS allowed one polio survivor to visit a physiotherapist. Before the NDIS, he was paying for this himself.

It is advisable to apply as soon as possible. You must be under 65 years of age when you enter the NDIS. Once you are in the NDIS, you remain in it beyond 65 years of age. You cannot access the NDIS after you turn 65.

## Eligibility For The NDIS

Some polio survivors are not eligible for the NDIS. This might be because they are over 65. In this case, they may be eligible for [aged care services](#). Other people might not be eligible because the Late Effects of Polio does not make it difficult for them to do the things they need to do.

Some people may be eligible for the NDIS but not realise it. They may not think themselves as having a disability. However, there may be some things that they have difficulty with, or need help with. They might want to think about whether the NDIS could help them.

To be eligible, you must have a “permanent and significant disability”. You must be a [citizen, permanent resident or special category visa holder](#). As the [NDIS reasonable and necessary supports video](#) explains, a permanent disability is likely to stay with you for life. A significant disability affects your ability to take part in everyday activities.

For the NDIS, having had polio, or having the Late Effects of Polio, is not enough on its own. You need to show what limitations you have as a result. These limitations are called impairments. You also need to show how these impairments impact on your everyday activities.

For further information on eligibility visit the [NDIS webpage: “Access to the NDIS”](#).

The [Understanding the NDIS booklet](#) gives some good information on understanding the NDIS. It is also available in an [Easy English](#) version. There are many other resources available on the [NDIS website](#).

## How To Apply For The NDIS

To find out if you are eligible for the NDIS, call the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on [1800 800 110](#). They might ask you some questions over the phone.



They will likely send you some forms to complete, including the Access Request Form. The Access Request Form can't be downloaded from the internet – you need to contact the NDIA.

To complete the Access Request Form, you need to fill out details about yourself and your disability. Your general practitioner can fill this form out for you. You also need to either:

- provide reports and letters to show how your disability affects your daily life, *or*
- ask a health professional to complete the table in the form.

The health professional section looks at how your disability affects these areas:

- 1 mobility/motor skills (the ability to walk and move around)
- 2 communication
- 3 social interaction
- 4 learning
- 5 self-care (eating, drinking, showering and dressing)
- 6 self-management (household tasks, finances and so on)

It is important to be honest about your impairments, as others may not be aware of how they affect you in your day-to-day function.

## Late Effects of Polio Examples

Polio itself does not qualify someone for the NDIS. It needs to be clear that polio or the Late Effects of Polio has caused significant impairment. You also need to show how this impairment affects you in everyday activities.

Some examples for polio survivors might be:

### Impairment: weakness in one leg

#### 1. Mobility/motor skills – you might need:

- a leg brace or orthosis
- crutches
- a mobility scooter for longer distances e.g. to attend social events
- a ramp to allow you to bring the scooter inside
- someone to help you if you need to use steps
- someone to help you on uneven surfaces
- help to use public transport to get to work

#### 5. Self-care – you might need:

- equipment such as a shower chair
- changes to the bathroom (for example, removing the bath tub and installing a step-less shower base)
- someone to help you in the shower and getting dressed

#### 6. Self-management – you might need:

- someone to help with heavy house cleaning

### Impairment: severe weakness in both legs

#### 1. Mobility/motor skills – you might need:

- leg braces or orthotics
- electric wheelchair

- vehicle modifications to maintain independence
- help with transport
- major changes to your house to allow you to use the wheelchair
- someone to help you get in and out of bed with a hoist
- help to use public transport to visit family

#### 5. Self-care – you might need:

- major changes to the bathroom (wheelchair-accessible shower and toilet)
- someone to help you in the shower and getting dressed

#### 6. Self-management – you might need:

- someone to help with house cleaning
- somebody to help you with grocery shopping
- somebody to take you to your sporting activities

It is important to also consider the cost of maintenance and repair of equipment.



### Impairment: significant fatigue

#### 1. Mobility/motor skills – you might need:

- help with transport
- mobility scooter for long distances
- a ramp to allow you to bring the scooter inside

#### 6. Self-management – you might need:

- someone to help with house cleaning
- somebody to help you with grocery shopping
- somebody to take you to appointments

### Impairment: swallowing difficulty

#### 5. Self-care – you might need:

- modified food (as advised by a speech pathologist)

### Appealing A Decision

You may think a decision the NDIA has made is wrong or unfair. You can appeal this decision. You will have to apply for a review. Visit the [NDIS website](#) or [call the NDIA](#) to find out more.

You can find someone to help you with your appeal. Search on the [Disability Advocacy Finder](#) to find an advocacy organisation.

### Finding A Health Professional

Many health professionals may not be familiar with post-polio. These tips might be useful:

- Find a health professional on Polio Australia's [Health Professionals Register](#)
- Give your health professional the "The Late Effects of Polio: do you know the signs?" [fact sheet](#)
- Ask the professional to contact Polio Australia via [office@polioaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@polioaustralia.org.au)

### More Information

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)  
1800 800 110

The NDIS have a range of resources available to help you:

- Booklets and fact sheets:  
[www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets](http://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets)
- Videos:  
[www.youtube.com/user/DisabilityCare](https://www.youtube.com/user/DisabilityCare)

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