



Registered NDIS provider.



Service Information Handbook for Participants

June 2024

This document can be provided in alternate formats on request.

What is this handbook for?

This handbook has information about Plan & Connect and the services we provide.

It is a small part of Plan & Connect and Regional Disability Advocacy Service Ltd's Policy Manual. A full copy of the policy is available by contacting the office on 1300 886 388.



This information is also available in audio, and can be made in other formats and languages on request.

Who is Plan & Connect?

Plan & Connect is a business arm of Regional Disability Advocacy Service Ltd (RDAS). Plan & Connect was set up to provide services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Plan & Connect is a registered provider of the NDIS delivering the following activities:

- Support Coordination
- Plan Management



Plan & Connect employs staff to provide local, independent and professional services.

Who can access Plan & Connect?

You must have an NDIS plan that includes one or both of the following budget categories:

- Coordination of Supports
- Improved Life Choices

Not all people who have an NDIS Plan will have funded support coordination or plan management.

Some people will have their plan managed by their Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).



Things we can NOT assist with

- Advocating for you or helping you to appeal your plan (you will need to contact the RDAS Advocacy team for this)
- Helping you to roster individual supports or support workers
- Providing legal or financial advice



Audits of Files

Plan & Connect may be required to show your files to an appointed auditor. These auditors are required to keep your information confidential in accordance with the Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality Policy.



If you do not want your file to be seen by an independent auditor it is OK to say **NO**. We will make a note on your file.

However, Plan & Connect would like you to say **YES**, because it will help us provide a better service.

What should I do if I feel that my privacy has been breached?

If you think Plan & Connect has not followed the privacy policy, you can make an appointment with the Executive Officer of RDAS.

If the issue cannot be resolved through RDAS, you can take your complaint to the NDIS. You can find more information about how to do this on page 12.



Our Services

Plan & Connect will work with you to find the right supports to help you become more independent at home and in the community. We will also help you to have choice and control over your NDIS plan.

Support Coordination

We provide ongoing assistance to strengthen your ability to design and build your own support system. This may include resolving service delivery issues or checking how useful your provider's service is. Support coordination focuses on supporting you to direct your whole life, not just your services.



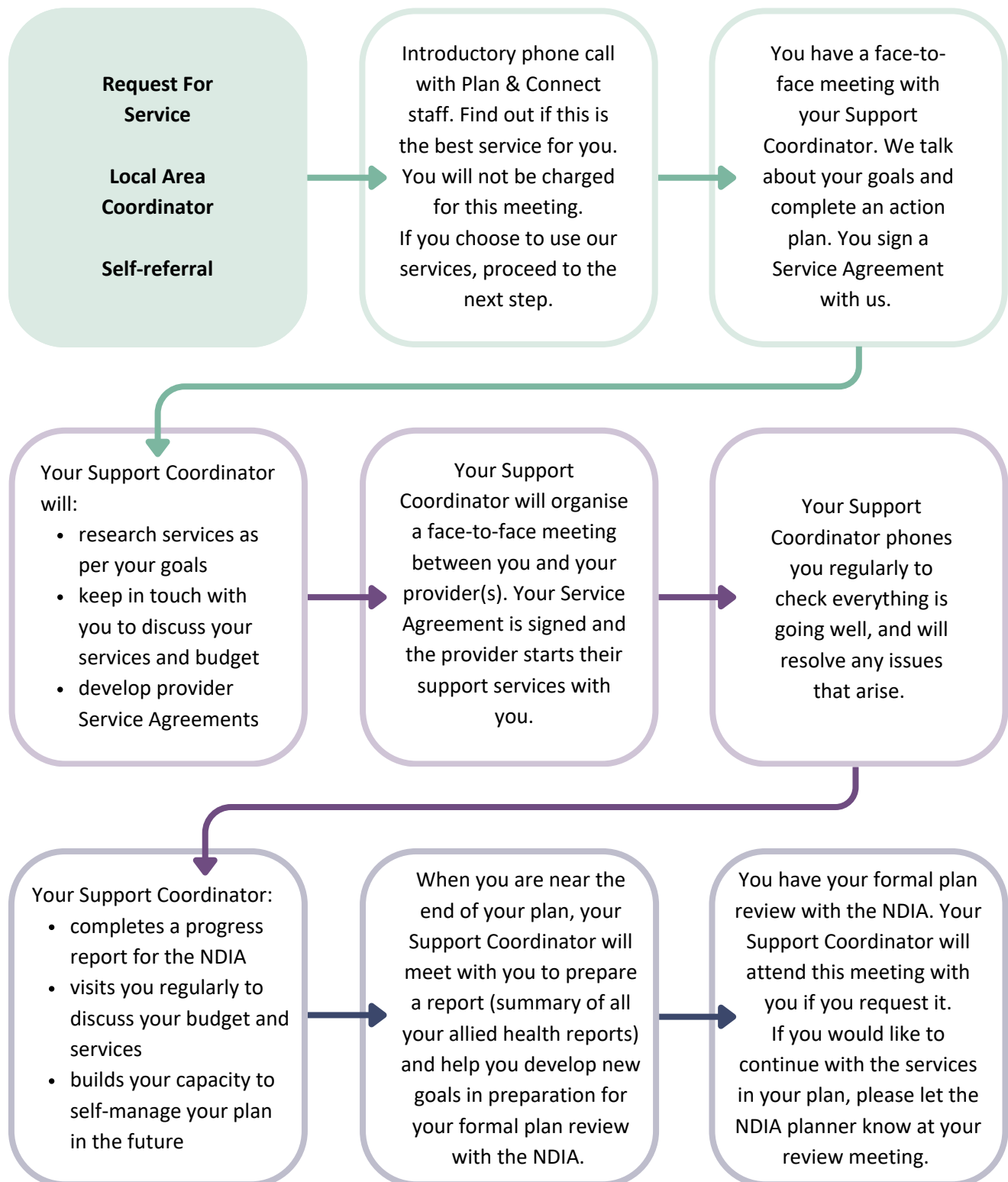
Plan Management

This service provides financial administration of your NDIS plan. For example:

- Increasing your control over how your plan is put into practice and used
- Managing and monitoring your budgets over the course of the plan
- Managing NDIS claims and paying providers for delivered services
- Maintaining records and producing regular statements which show how much money is left in your plan
- Providing advice on the Terms and Conditions of any of your provider Service Agreements
- Providing access to a wider range of service providers, including non-registered providers, while remaining in line with the NDIS price guide for your services.



What is the Support Coordination Process?



If you decide you don't want Plan & Connect to provide Support Coordination any more, you can send a letter giving us one month's notice of Termination of Service Agreement at any stage during this process.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Plan & Connect strives to make sure that every person's human rights are protected. We use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to guide our practice.



You have the right to:

- Be treated with respect
- Have your privacy and dignity upheld by us
- Access our services without discrimination based on your gender, sexuality, race, culture, or religion
- Be informed about available supports
- Choose from available alternatives
- Make a complaint without fear of payback
- Receive copies of Plan & Connect's Policies and Procedures on request
- Have any service information made available to you in appropriate language or an alternative format
- Receive a service free of conflict of interest



You have the responsibility to:

- Provide the correct information needed in order for Plan & Connect to provide services to you
- Let Plan & Connect know if your plan has changed
- Let staff know if you are unable to keep an appointment
- Behave in a manner that promotes respect and dignity



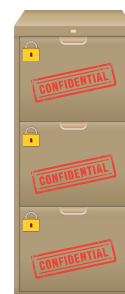
Any person who acts in a threatening manner will have it brought to their attention and be requested to modify their behaviour. In the event that threatening behaviour continues, the person will be asked to leave and Plan & Connect's services may be withdrawn.

Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality

Plan & Connect respects your right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality.

How do we keep your information private?

We will ask you things like your age, disability, Aboriginality, cultural diversity, sexuality and where you were born. This information is used to provide you with culturally appropriate support. It is also a requirement for our Government funding. We will report this information in a way that will not identify you personally.



If Plan & Connect needs to contact another person or agency to discuss your information, we must have your permission to do so first.

Plan & Connect will keep your information in a locked filing cabinet or on a computer system with passwords. The only people who will be able to see your information are people who already have permission to access it.

Can I access my own records?

Yes, you have the right to see the information on your file. You can make a request to access your records, which may take up to 21 days to be answered.

Can Plan & Connect tell other people about me without me knowing?

Yes. Plan & Connect will need to tell other people about you without your permission if:

- The law says we have to disclose information
- Your life or someone else's life is in danger
- The information is needed for court or legal proceedings.



NDIS Practice Standards

Plan & Connect is a registered NDIS service provider. It has been accredited to meet the *NDIS Practice Standards*.

There are 4 core areas of the Practice Standards:

- Rights (of participants) and Responsibilities (of providers)
- Provider Governance and Operational Management (how well providers run their business)
- Provision of Supports (how well providers actually support you)
- Provision of Supports Environment (keeping the environment you are supported in safe, secure and healthy)

Each of these 4 areas has its own quality markers and outcomes that providers have to meet in order to be registered with the NDIS.

Plan & Connect also complies with an extra standard in *NDIS Practice Module 4: Specialist Support Coordination*. This relates to:

- Provision of Specialist Support Coordination (how well we provide this service)
- Managing NDIS Supports
- Conflict of Interest

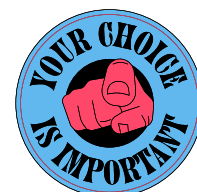
Conflict of Interest

Plan & Connect is committed to ensuring that you have choice and control over the support you receive. Regional Disability Advocacy Service (RDAS) provides individual and systemic advocacy, which is funded by the government outside of the NDIS. If you have an issue requiring an Advocate, or you need to appeal an NDIA decision, you can request an Advocate from RDAS or we can help you find one from another organisation.



Plan & Connect has rules to avoid conflicts of interest. Some of the rules are:

- Apart from Support Coordination, Plan Management and Specialist Support Coordination, we will not provide any other supports funded by the NDIS
- Neither RDAS, Plan & Connect, nor any of their individual staff members can receive money or any other gift from another service provider to recommend their service to you
- Only people who need to see your file can open it
- Support Coordinators will not work in the same office space as Advocates



If you think Plan & Connect staff have broken one of these rules you can call RDAS and speak to a manager. You can find more information about how to do this on Page 11.

How to contact Plan & Connect

If you have a concern, a question, want information or support, please contact us.

Phone: 1300 886 388 (toll free)

Email: admin@planconnect.org.au

Web: www.planconnect.org

Write: PO Box 982, Wodonga VIC 3689

Wodonga

132 Melbourne Rd

Wangaratta

Unit 6, 8-10 Tone Rd

Wagga Wagga

Suite 2B, 77 Gurwood St

Griffith

Suite 5, 1 Olympic St

Making a complaint or suggestion, or giving a compliment

Plan & Connect is committed to hearing your feedback, positive or negative. We want to ensure that our service meets your needs.



Do you have any suggestions to improve our service? Or are you unhappy with Plan & Connect?

You can provide your feedback by calling any staff member on 1300 886 388.

We will ensure that your feedback is:

- Dealt with quickly and fairly
- Kept confidential
- Acted on in an appropriate way



If you feel we did not listen to your feedback, or you are unhappy with the outcome, you can contact the Board of RDAS by calling **1800 250 292** or emailing **eo@rdas.org.au**.

Making an external complaint

If you are not happy with the way Plan & Connect or RDAS has dealt with your complaint, or you do not feel comfortable contacting RDAS directly, you can also make a complaint to the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission.

Phone: 1800 035 544

www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/making-complaint



NDIS Quality
and Safeguards
Commission

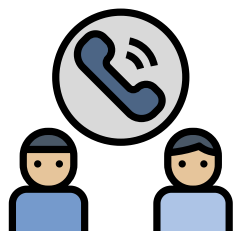
Further Information

IT'S OK TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The **National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline** is a free, independent and confidential service for reporting mistreatment of people with disability. Anyone can contact the hotline: family members, friends, service providers or a person with disability.

Abuse is not to be tolerated. It comes in many forms:

- Physical abuse, where someone hits or beats a person with disability
- Mental or psychological abuse, where someone is called names, yelled at or ignored
- Financial abuse, where money is taken from a person with disability or they are prevented from accessing their funds
- Sexual abuse, where an individual is forced to have sex or is subjected to unwanted touching
- Neglect, where a person with disability is denied their needs such as food or medication, or is left alone in their room for too long



Free Call
1800 880 052



Call 1800 555 677
then ask for 1800 880 052

Would you like to become a member of Regional Disability Advocacy Service?

By becoming a member of RDAS you can demonstrate your support for an organisation that advocates for the rights of people with disability.

What does membership give me?

As a member of RDAS you will:

- Receive an invitation to the RDAS Annual General Meeting
- Have a say in how RDAS is run
- Receive *The Advocate*, RDAS' quarterly community newsletter, as well as invitations to community forums and consultations
- Be counted as one of the many individuals who support the rights of people with disability in our community

Who can be a member?

- Persons with disability
- Carers/family members of persons with disability
- Individuals who support RDAS' vision, mission, values and purpose
- People who live, work or study in RDAS' service regions of North East Victoria or Southern Riverina New South Wales, or who have an association with these regions.

Membership and subscription to the newsletter is FREE.

Contact RDAS on 1800 250 292.