



**Title: National Disability Insurance Scheme Policy**

**Section: Procedures**

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**Policy Statement**

Beneficiaries of UBC may receive funding from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This policy sets out UBC's priorities and procedures in relation to beneficiaries who are receiving funds from the NDIS or are in the process of registering for the NDIS.

**Purpose and Scope**

This policy will provide an explanation of some of the language used, give a summary of what the NDIS was expected to do and what has eventuated, including a couple of case studies. Based in this, this policy will set out the priorities of UBC.

**Definitions**

Local area coordinator: Local organisation who works in partnership with the NDIA. These organisations cannot provide services to participants as this would pose a conflict of interest. Instead, they help participants write and manage their plans, connecting participants to services and local supports. However, their inability to provide services has left some with a gap in services and at best, increased travel.

NDIA: National Disability Insurance Agency – the Commonwealth Government organisation who administers the NDIS

NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme

Participant: The patient/client who is the recipient of the NDIS funding

Plan: A written agreement worked out between the participant and the NDIA, stating their goals, needs and the reasonable and necessary supports that the NDIS will fund.

Providers: Organisations/individuals who work with NDIS participants

Reasonable and necessary: Reasonable = fair. Necessary = something you must have.

Self/agency/NDIA managed: Participants can oversee how their NDIS funds are spent themselves or the NDIA can control their funds for them. Alternatively, participants can employ (using some of the NDIS funds) a plan manager (case manager) to oversee the process for them.

Service agreement: A written agreement that is required between a participant and anyone providing a service to the participant, using NDIS funds.

UBC: The Uncle Bobs Club

## **Policy**

### NDIS

To be eligible for the NDIS, a person must:

- be under 65 years of age
- live in Australia and be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- be diagnosed by a doctor as having a permanent disability that requires early intervention to reduce the need for future supports. Disability is defined as the total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions

It was understood that the NDIS would give individuals increased choice and control. All information included in supporting documents (letters or reports provided by healthcare professionals) and their NDIS plan is required to be in lay terms, outlining not the medical details of their diagnosis, but in terms of their individual goals. Instead of reports outlining the impact of the person's disability, they must address goals such as the person's ability to access the community.

### NDIS in action

The NDIS in theory sounds fantastic. However, many who have tried to navigate this new system have found it lacking.

Many individuals who have been diagnosed with a disability are very good at understanding medical lingo and consequently struggle with this new emphasis on lay man's speak. Many believed that services received previously would continue and therefore didn't accurately report their current needs. Regular treatment that was previously provided to maintain mobility or manage pain have been deemed not reasonable or necessary. Plans have been developed either face to face or over the phone and particularly early on there were reports of participants having their assessments done over the phone without realising that was what was happening. Consequently, there were huge gaps in their plans. There have also been inconsistencies between what one assessor would approve and the next. While it is possible to challenge an NDIS plan, it is a lengthy process, and many are reluctant to do this as they are warned that while a review of their plan may result in increased funding, it may also result in reduced funding. Some, who would appear to have a clear case for receiving NDIS funding have been knocked back all together on technicalities. All of these issues have resulted in many individuals across the country getting less funds than they expected, and for some, less than what they need.

Those who have been approved funds face long waits to access their funds, due to lengthy processes and extensive paperwork for healthcare professionals, which then relies on final approval from the NDIA, which can take months to receive. While small items can be purchased without approval by those who are self-funded, most items are costly, and participants are warned that they will not be reimbursed if they fund the items privately.

There have been numerous examples of the NDIS falling short:

A young boy who has been waiting two years for a new AFO (ankle foot orthosis that holds his foot in the right position). Initially he was caught in the changeover to the NDIS and told his previous funding was no longer available. He now waits for NDIA approval after being told that they would not be reimbursed if they fund it privately.

A lady with MS has been knocked back by the NDIA, as her diagnosis of remitting MS (where symptoms appear as attacks or flare up's with improvement, but not necessarily recovery, in between each episode) was considered not permanent.

Another lady, while waiting months for the final approval by NDIA for a new mattress has developed pressure injuries and still has no indication of when approval will be given.

While only one of these examples relates to a child, it gives you an idea of the issues faced by these people.

#### UBC priorities and procedures

The needs of these people are great and there are many who will be looking for assistance. People who have been accepted by the NDIA should have funding for all needs related to their disability. Organisations like UBC stepping in and funding those needs, while it will help the individuals who we can afford to give money to, it will not help address the bigger issues of the NDIS.

There are a number of people who I would argue we should be assisting. In order of priority I would argue we should assist:

- those who have been knocked back by the NDIA
- those who have NDIS plans that do not cover their needs
- those who have been advised that they can self-fund items and be reimbursed, but do not have the money (with the idea that funds would be given as a loan and returned to UBC when NDIS funding has been cleared)

However, this does not mean that we do nothing for those who are waiting for NDIS funds, in a system that is clearly not meeting the needs of those who are vulnerable in our society. UBC will:

- maintain a policy regarding the NDIS and the fact that we have become aware of a need for change within the system
- facilitate, where possible, connections with advocacy groups who can assist individuals by expediting the approval of funds being released by the NDIA

#### Disciplinary Procedures

If any volunteer, staff, member or director, is found to be in breach of this policy, they will face disciplinary action. This action will be determined by State Committee, or if it is deemed necessary, a specially formed committee. Actions taken by UBC may vary from a written warning, up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation. There will also be full cooperation with the relevant legal authorities.

#### Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact on any human rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006.

#### Review

This policy and related procedures will be reviewed every three years, unless changed circumstances require earlier review.

**Associated Policies, Procedures and Other Documents**

- N/A

**References**

- N/A

Policy Name: National Disability Insurance Scheme Policy

Responsible Director: Sarah Meney

Functional Area: Procedures

Date adopted: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Review Date: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Review History**

Date	Review Details	Action

## NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME POLICY

I confirm I have read and understood the National Disability Insurance Scheme Policy

Staff Signature ..... Date .....

Print Name .....