

# Go To Guide

# For Adults





## This booklet was developed by South West Autism Network (SWAN)

We are grateful for the input from autistic individuals and their families who shared their expertise to make this a useful and practical resource for families of young children.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to its development.

The information contained in this guide is constantly being updated, and is current as of June 2025. For more up-to-date information, you can access the digital version at <https://swanautism.org.au/regional-toolkit>.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

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- Department of Communities (Disability Services):  
[swanautism.org.au/dss-ilc-resources](https://swanautism.org.au/dss-ilc-resources)
- Department of Social Services:  
[swanautism.org.au/dss-ilc-program](https://swanautism.org.au/dss-ilc-program)

Our thanks to the CBA Staff Grant, whose generous contribution helped bring this resource to you.

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## About SWAN

The South West Autism Network (SWAN) supports autistic people and their families in the south west region of Western Australia.

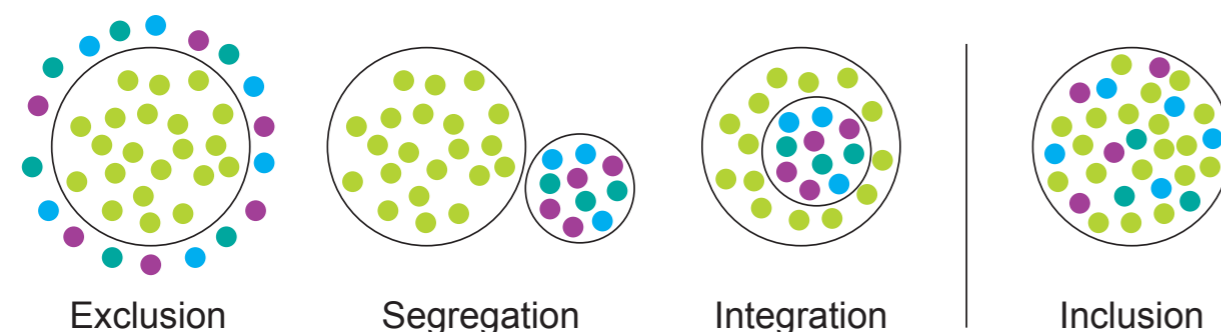
We provide:

- information, resources, and peer support (online, phone or face-to-face)
- social media groups
- accessible information via website and e-newsletter
- a free resource library for members
- training and workshop opportunities
- fun skill-building group programs for children and young adults
- social events such as our Family Christmas Party

SWAN's staff and Board of management includes autistic adults and family members. This gives us an understanding of the experiences of people with autism and guides us in providing the information, services and support people need.

Our vision is to empower autistic people and people with disability in south west WA and beyond. We are a Disabled Persons and Families Organisation (DPFO) and use person-centred language. Most autistic adults prefer to be described as an 'autistic person' rather than 'person with autism', and SWAN uses the language preferred by autistic people.

At SWAN, we believe in inclusion as the truly fair way to honour and respect the rights of all people.



SWAN is a not-for-profit organisation with tax-deductible status. Our services are funded through government grants and the generosity of people who make donations and provide ongoing sponsorship.

Go to our website to learn more about SWAN, join as a member or find out how you can get involved. [swanautism.org.au](http://swanautism.org.au)

**“High quality inclusion is not just about ‘being there’ or attending a mainstream or universal setting, but about creating environments that provide opportunities for ALL children to actively engage in ALL activities”**

**Denise Luscombe, Chair ECIA WA/NT 2015**

People with disability need the same chances as everyone else to think about what they want to do and make decisions about their life. Receiving good information and support leads to increased decision-making skills and greater independence and responsibility.

## About this booklet

This booklet was created to help autistic adults to have the opportunities and the support they need in everyday life, and to be included in all aspects of their community. It covers topics such as the transition from high school to post-secondary education and training, as well as employment, housing, health, and other aspects of everyday life. This booklet will also be helpful to the families, friends, and supporters of autistic adults.

This booklet has lots of useful information that will help autistic adults find the services, community activities, and supports they need. We've included information about rights and advocacy services, government entitlements, and where to find more information and help when you need it. There is also information about the NDIS including the different types of supports the NDIS can fund, and advice to help you with planning so you can get appropriate supports that suit your individual needs.

## How to use this booklet

Some people using this resource will want to read the whole booklet first, while others will be looking for specific information. You may want to look only at certain topics that are of more interest to you at the moment. It's up to you.

As well as providing information, we have also included activity pages throughout the booklet, and a blank page at the back of the booklet for notes. You can use these to map out and record important information about services and supports, so it becomes a handy personal resource.

In this book, you will see that all web addresses start with 'swanautism.org.au/'. This is because we made our own short URLs from longer web addresses. Short URLs are useful if the long web address changes, as the short URL will still work and take you to the right place, even if the long address is different.

If you have any comments about the booklet, or need further information, please get in touch with us at SWAN by emailing [info@swanautism.org.au](mailto:info@swanautism.org.au).

This booklet is the fourth in a series that SWAN has produced for different ages and stages of life. You can find all the booklets on the SWAN website, and please contact us if you would like a hard copy. [www.swanautism.org.au](http://www.swanautism.org.au)

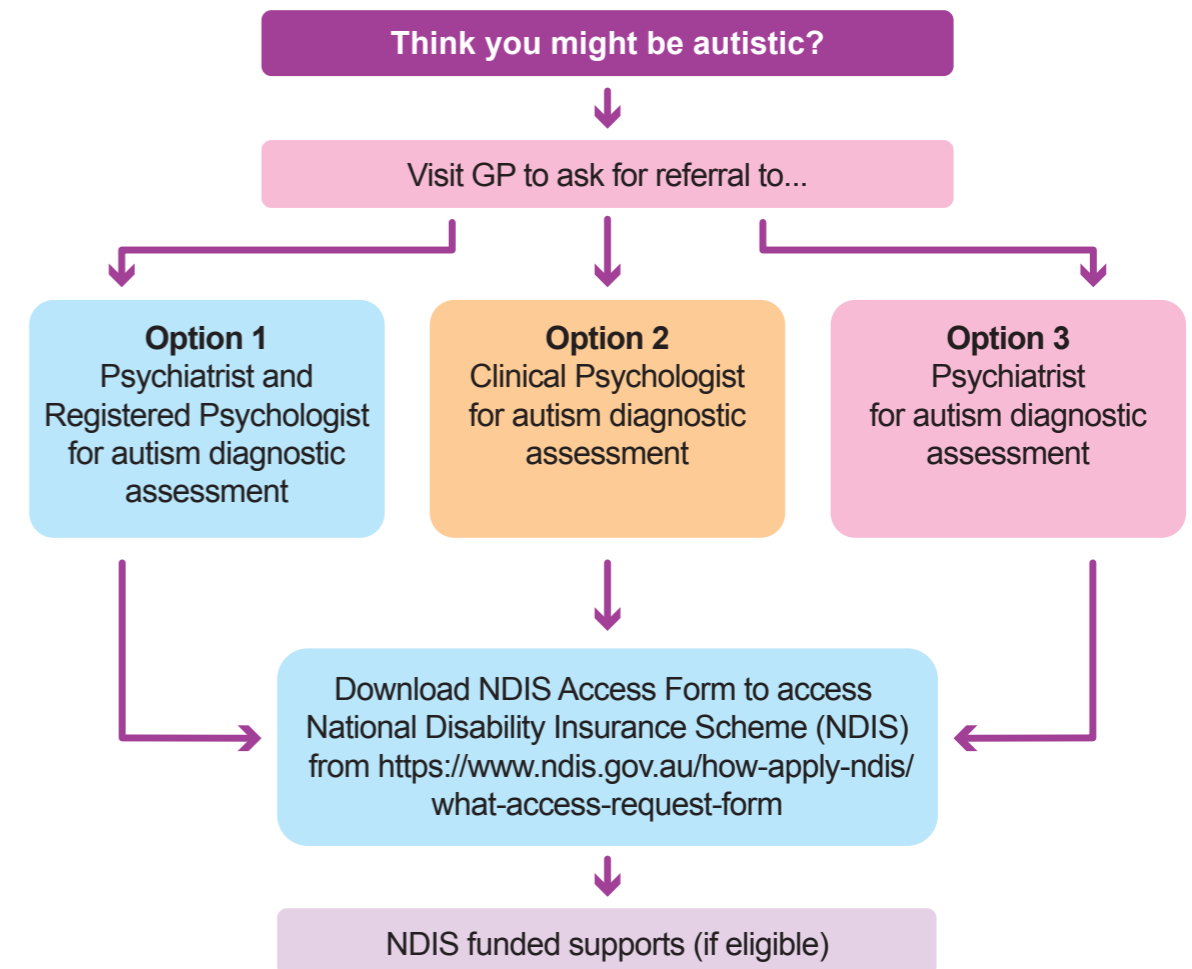


# Getting a diagnosis in Western Australia

## Here's how it works

The autism diagnostic process for individuals in WA starts with an appointment with your GP to discuss your concerns and ask for a referral to an appropriate professional. Your GP may recommend a particular specialist, but you can ask to be referred to the specialists of your choice. If you don't hear from the specialists within two weeks of them being sent the referral, it's a good idea to contact them directly.

Adults up to the age of 25 years may be eligible for a Medicare rebate when referred by a Psychiatrist to a Psychologist for diagnosis.





In order to meet the access requirements for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and possibly Disability Support Pension, diagnostic assessment by either a Psychiatrist or Clinical Psychologist alone may be enough, as long as the report meets eligibility requirements, and there is sufficient evidence of autism in early childhood. There may need to be a second assessment carried out if needed. Alternatively, you can have a diagnostic assessment by both Registered Psychologist and Psychiatrist.

Autism is diagnosed using the DSM-V-TR, and people are diagnosed based on having difficulties in two areas:

- a) Social communication
- b) Restricted, repetitive behaviour or interests

The diagnostic report should also include a level of severity for both areas.

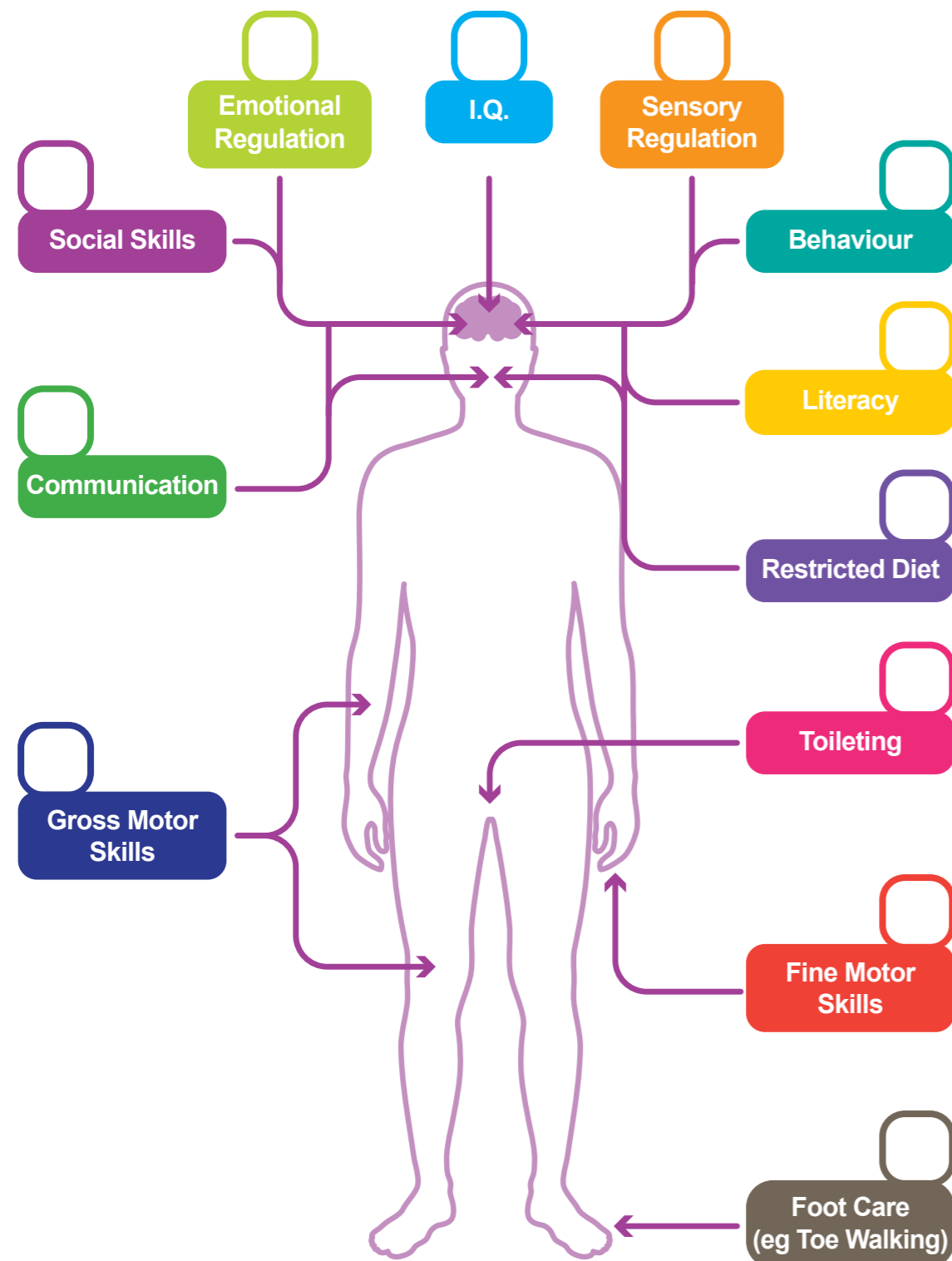
The levels are:

- Level 1 – The individual needs support.
- Level 2 – The individual needs substantial support.
- Level 3 – The individual needs very substantial support.

Currently, a diagnosis of autism level 2 or 3 is automatically eligible for NDIS. A diagnosis of autism level 1 may also be eligible for NDIS, but you would need to submit supporting evidence of the impact a person's autism has on their ability to function.



## What Do You Need Support With?



You can use this diagram to think about what you may need support with. This will be useful when you have your meeting with APM (see Section 2 for more information about APM).



## Handy Hint – Collecting evidence and information

You will probably be asked similar questions by GPs, other specialists, therapists and other services. You will also receive lots of forms, reports and paperwork. The best way to keep track of it all is to:

## HELPFUL TIPS



- Create a file where you can store everything in one place. Take print copies with you to appointments with your paediatrician, other specialists, therapists and APM. ☐
- Collect supporting evidence of your needs from a variety of sources. e.g. letters or reports from therapists or your GP. ☐
- Store digital backups of important reports and paperwork in the cloud. Dropbox, Google Docs and OneDrive are some options. ☐
- Never assume the health professional you are meeting has all your information. Take print copies with you, just in case. ☐

Who

What

Where

Why

Support Services

## Making Decisions

Making a decision means choosing what you want to do. Making decisions is an important part of being an adult. Making decisions helps us feel in control of our own lives and shapes who we are. You might not even realise it, but you make decisions every day.

Some decisions are small like deciding what to eat for breakfast, or deciding what colour shirt to wear. Some decisions are big like deciding to move out of home, or deciding what kind of job you want. It can be hard making decisions sometimes, but we hope that this section can help answer some of your questions about decision-making, and will also give you the details of places you can contact for advice and support if you need it.



### Your rights when making decisions

No matter who you are, there are some basic rights you have when making decisions:

- You have the right to make decisions
- You have the right to talk to other people about your decisions
- You have the right to change your mind about decisions you've made
- You have the right to make decisions that other people don't like
- You have the right to make decisions that are different to other people's decisions
- You have the right to ask other people for advice or support to make your decisions.

## Supported decision making

Sometimes it's helpful to get advice and support from people you trust when making big decisions. This is called supported decision making. Supported decision making doesn't mean someone makes the decision for you - instead they are there to support you while you make the decision for yourself.

You might decide to use supported decision making if you sometimes find it hard to make big decisions on your own, or you get stressed when asked important questions.

You can choose different support people for different decisions. For example, if it is a medical decision, you might choose your GP as your support person because they know all of your medical history. If it is a decision about moving house, you might choose a family member or support worker (or both) as your support persons because they know what kind of environment you like to live in. And it's important to choose support persons who will still let you make the final choice, and not make the decision for you.

Developmental Disability WA (DDWA) have a useful booklet that can help you and your support people plan for supported decision making:

[swanautism.org.au/ddwa-supported-decision](http://swanautism.org.au/ddwa-supported-decision)

WA Individualised Services (WaiS) also have a booklet to help plan your supported decision making:

[swanautism.org.au/wais-supported-decision](http://swanautism.org.au/wais-supported-decision)

## Microboards

One way to do supported decision making is to set up a microboard. A microboard is a small group of people, usually family members and friends of a person with a disability, who form an incorporated organisation that supports the person in their decision-making. Microboards use a 'person-centred' approach, which means putting the person's wants, needs and goals at the centre of the group's decisions and actions.

A microboard can support you in finding and keeping a job, helping you organise your supports, help you make decisions about your NDIS funding, and so on. You can even get funding in your NDIS plan to help cover the costs of setting up your microboard.

You can find more information about microboards at the Microboards Australia website: [swanautism.org.au/microboard](http://swanautism.org.au/microboard)



## Informed consent

When someone makes a big decision, it is important they give their informed consent. The term informed consent is often used in healthcare by doctors, and in hospitals. Informed consent means that a person fully understands the decision they are agreeing to, and has been given information about the decision, including any benefits or risks involved, before agreeing. For example, if your GP wanted to start you on a new medication, they need your informed consent first. Your GP would need to give you information about the medication including any side effects it might have, and they might tell you other important things like how much the medication will cost, so that you know enough to make an informed decision about whether you want to start taking it or not.

If you are ever being asked for your consent to do something but you don't have enough information to make your decision, or you don't understand the information that has been given to you, you have the right to say you do not consent. You have the right to ask for more information, or to ask for information in a different format (like an Easy Read booklet), and you have the right to speak with someone you trust such as a family member, friend or support person before you make your decision.

## Legal capacity

Having legal capacity means having the ability to make a legally binding decision, including understanding information about the decision, as well as any benefits and risks. Some examples of legally binding decisions are getting married, signing a contract, voting, and giving informed consent.

For example, people under 18 usually do not have legal capacity because this is their parents or guardians' responsibility. Some adults may not have legal capacity if they cannot make decisions about things on their own, like their medical treatment, managing their money or property, or making other big life decisions. Some adults may have legal capacity for some decisions, but not for others. Even if an adult does not have the legal capacity to make a decision, they still have the right to have their say in the decision-making process.

## Guardianship

If an adult does not have legal capacity, usually they will have an appointed guardian. An appointed guardian is a person who makes decisions on the other person's behalf. An appointed guardian is chosen by the State Administrative Tribunal, which is part of the Government.

An appointed guardian can be either a guardian, which is when the Tribunal decides who will be the person's guardian and what decisions they have control of, or an enduring guardian, which is where the person with a disability gets to choose who they want to be their guardian and has a say in what decisions their guardian can make on their behalf. A guardianship order lasts for up to 5 years, then the order is reviewed by the Tribunal who decide whether to extend, change, or cancel the order. A guardian can be a family member, friend, or the Tribunal can choose the Office of the Public Advocate as the person's guardian. The Office of the Public Advocate is an independent agency that supports people with disabilities who are under guardianship.

Guardianship is not very common, and it is preferred that someone who needs support in making decisions is done so by family members or friends. The Tribunal usually only makes a guardianship order as a last resort, like if the person with a disability is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited because of their inability to make legal decisions.

The Office of the Public Advocate can give you more information about guardianship

Phone: 1300 858 455 or (08) 9278 7300

Email: [opa@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:opa@justice.wa.gov.au)

or you can visit their website

[swanautism.org.au/public-advocate](http://swanautism.org.au/public-advocate)

## Choice and Control in the NDIS

Having choice and control means the decisions you make are heard and respected. Choice and control is one of the terms used by NDIS to describe how your NDIS funding can be used flexibly to help you get the supports you need. NDIS describes choice and control as:

"NDIS participants having the right to make their own decisions about what is important to them, and deciding how they would like to receive their supports and who from."

Some of the ways NDIS participants have choice and control are:

- Participants can use their core funding flexibly
- Participants can choose who they want to get supports from
- Participants can choose how they want to manage their funding
- Participants can ask for a review if they're not happy with their plan
- Participants can get funding to help manage their supports

The NDIS website can give you more information about having choice and control with your NDIS funding and about making your own decisions

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-using-your-plan](http://swanautism.org.au/ndis-using-your-plan)

## Knowing your Rights

Everyone has human rights. Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that every human deserves. People with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else.

You have the right to:

- make your own choices,
- be treated fairly,
- feel safe,
- have privacy, and
- stand up for yourself if someone is treating you badly.

It's important to know your rights so that you can speak up if you are being treated badly. This section will explain some of your rights, how you can speak up for yourself, and help you find places that can support you in speaking up for your rights.





## Disability Discrimination Act

Discrimination means the unfair or bad treatment of a certain group of people because of their religion, race, gender, age, or disability. In Australia, people with disabilities are protected by a set of laws called The Disability Discrimination Act (1992). The Disability Discrimination Act makes it illegal for anyone to discriminate against you or harass you based on your disability. These laws also support equal opportunity and access for people with disabilities. Equal opportunity means getting the same chance as everyone else at doing everyday things like getting a job, going to a sporting event, catching the bus, going to school, and so on.

Unfortunately, sometimes the rights of people with disabilities are not respected or listened to. Some examples of disability discrimination are:

- a supermarket refusing to let you in because you have an assistance dog
- you go to watch the footy at a sports stadium, but you can't get in because you use a wheelchair and the only way in is by stairs
- your boss making jokes about your disability to your co-workers

You have the right to speak up if someone is discriminating against you, treating you badly or harassing you. There are a few different ways you can speak up:

- If you're being discriminated against at work, you can talk to your boss or upper management. Most workplaces have a policy, which is a document that tells them the best way to sort out the problem
- If you're being discriminated against by a business or company, you can contact their head office to make a complaint and ask for them to fix the problem
- If you're being discriminated against or harassed by a person or group of people, you should contact the police. The police will be able to support you to fix the problem.

If you have tried speaking up but the problem is still happening, or if the person you made a complaint to wasn't helpful, you can contact the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).

The AHRC is the government body that deals with human rights laws and protections in Australia. You can even make a complaint in Auslan or in another language if English isn't your first language.

[swanautism.org.au/human-rights-make-complaint](https://swanautism.org.au/human-rights-make-complaint)

Phone: (02) 9284 9600

The AHRC website also has a resource called 'Know Your Rights: Disability Discrimination': [swanautism.org.au/human-rights-disability-discrimination](https://swanautism.org.au/human-rights-disability-discrimination)

## Advocacy

Advocacy means speaking up about an issue that is affecting you or something that you feel strongly about, in the hopes of making changes. The main types of advocacy are:

- Self advocacy - where someone speaks up for themselves about an issue affecting them,
- Advocacy - where someone speaks up on behalf of someone else about an issue affecting the person. This is someone the person trusts, like a family member, a friend, or a paid professional advocate; and
- Systemic advocacy - when a group of people or an organisation speaks up about an issue in the hopes of making a big impact, and is usually over a long period of time.

To be a self-advocate, you need to know what your rights are, and how to speak up for yourself in a way that you will be listened to. When you stand up for yourself, try to:

- prepare for the situation: you could write down and plan what you want to say before you contact the place or organisation with the issue. You could also ask a person you trust, like a friend or family member, to look over what you've written and to offer advice
- clearly explain what the problem is: it can be hard, but try to stay calm when explaining the issue. Make sure you also tell them how the issue makes you feel, and why it's important something is done about the issue
- have information with you that supports what you're saying: like a section of the Disability Discrimination Act that supports what you're saying, or written statements from other people who share the same issue
- be patient: advocacy can take time. Make sure to look after yourself, and speak to someone you trust about the way you feel if it helps you feel better.

Self-advocacy resources on the People with Disability Australia (PWDA) website

[swanautism.org.au/pwd-creating-access](https://swanautism.org.au/pwd-creating-access)

Some examples of things you could advocate to change are:

- Places or organisations that won't make reasonable adjustments to help support you, like providing forms in easy-to-read formats, or a person to help you fill them in.
- Buildings that are not physically accessible, such as no ramps or accessible toilets.
- When you feel you have been disrespected or treated badly by a person or people at an organisation who support you.

There are places that can support you with disability advocacy. Some places may provide advocacy services for free, and others are paid. The person that helps you with advocacy is called an advocate. Some things the advocate can help you with are:

- providing you with information about the issue,
- giving you advice on what can be done to resolve the issue,
- representing you or coming along with you to meetings held to resolve the issue,
- writing letters or contacting people on your behalf about the issue, and
- helping you make a complaint or with legal action about the issue.



SWAN is a free service and may be able to help you in some situations. We work with people with disability and their families to improve knowledge and understanding about the NDIS, mainstream, and disability services, and can attend meetings with you as an advocate if needed. It can be helpful to speak with a peer support organisation like SWAN before important meetings, to help you prepare. If you know more, and feel prepared, you will feel more confident in meetings.

Here are some other organisations that offer advocacy support:

### **Advocacy WA**

4 Plaza Street, South Bunbury WA

Phone: (08) 9721 6444

Website: [swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa](http://swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa)

### **Sussex Street Community Law Services**

29 Sussex Street, East Victoria Park WA

Phone: (08) 6253 9500

Website: [swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law](http://swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law)

### **Great Southern Community Legal Service**

4/15 Peels Place, Albany WA

Phone: (08) 9842 8566

Website: [swanautism.org.au/gt-southern-cls](http://swanautism.org.au/gt-southern-cls)

### **Midland Information Debt & Legal Advocacy Service (MIDLAS)**

23 Old Great Northern Highway, Midland WA

Phone: (08) 9250 2123

Website: [swanautism.org.au/midlas](http://swanautism.org.au/midlas)

You can also find disability advocacy services in your area using the Department of Social Service's Advocacy Finder website:

[swanautism.org.au/ask-izzy-advocacy-finder](http://swanautism.org.au/ask-izzy-advocacy-finder)

Developmental Disability WA (DDWA) have some great information booklets about advocacy on their website: [swanautism.org.au/ddwa-ind-advocacy](http://swanautism.org.au/ddwa-ind-advocacy)

Easy Read advocacy information on the Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) website :

[swanautism.org.au/your-rights-easy-read](http://swanautism.org.au/your-rights-easy-read)



## NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is an Australian government program that covers the costs of disability-related expenses. Western Australia has been part of the NDIS since 2018. The name of the government department that runs the NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). This section will talk about who is eligible for the NDIS, how you can apply for the NDIS, what types of supports can and can't be provided by the NDIS, using your NDIS Plan, your rights as a NDIS participant, and where to get support if you're not happy with your NDIS Plan.

### NDIS Eligibility

To apply for the NDIS you must be:

- between 7 and 65 years old
- an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- have a permanent and significant disability.

### How to apply

If you meet the criteria you can apply for the NDIS. This is called making an Access Request. To make an Access Request you can:

- Call the NDIA on 1800 800 110 and ask to make an Access Request application over the phone
- Go to the NDIS website and download an Access Request Form which you can find on this page: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-access-request-form](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-access-request-form) When you have completed the form, you can email it to [NAT@ndis.gov.au](mailto:NAT@ndis.gov.au)
- Call the NDIA on 1800 800 110 and ask to have an Access Request Form posted to you

- If you need support to make your Access Request, contact your region's Local Area Coordinator (LAC) office. The organisation providing LAC's for the South-West and Great Southern WA regions is APM. You can phone APM on 1800 276 522 or email [APMNET@ndis.gov.au](mailto:APMNET@ndis.gov.au) or you can visit one of the APM offices listed below.

### APM offices in South-West and Great Southern WA:

#### APM Albany

108 Stirling Terrace, Albany

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

#### APM Katanning

Shop 8, 100 Clive Street, Katanning

(Open by appointment only)

#### APM Busselton

2/71 Kent Street, Busselton

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

#### APM Bunbury

Unit 1, 16 Victoria Street, Bunbury

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

#### APM Margaret River

Unit 14, The Village at Margs, Townview Terrace, Margaret River

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

#### APM Mandurah

Unit 1, 15 Sholl Street, Mandurah

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

#### APM Rockingham

5 Goddard Street, Rockingham

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)



### Supporting evidence

You will need to show the NDIA evidence of your disability when you make your Access Request. The types of evidence you'll need to provide depends on your disability. Evidence may include assessments or reports from your GP, specialist doctors or therapists. You can find a list of the accepted types of evidence you'll need on the NDIS website: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-disability-evidence](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-disability-evidence)

If you haven't got any of the accepted assessments or reports for your type of disability, you will need to get your treating doctor to complete a NDIS Supporting Evidence Form or to fill in Section 2 of your Access Request Form. This information will tell the NDIA about:

- the type of disability you have
- the date your disability was diagnosed (if available)
- how long your disability will last
- available treatments (i.e., medications, therapies, or surgeries).

Your treating doctor will also need to show how your disability impacts your everyday life in the following areas, including a description of how each area is impacted:

- mobility/motor skills
- communication
- social interaction
- learning
- self-care
- self-management.

Once the NDIA receives your Access Request, they will decide whether or not you are eligible to access the NDIS. The NDIA will tell you within 21 days whether or not you are successful in accessing the NDIS.

Sometimes the NDIA will ask you for more supporting evidence before they make their decision. If this happens, you have 90 days to provide the extra evidence from the date they asked you to. Once the NDIA receives the extra evidence, they have 14 days to make their final decision and let you know. If your Access Request is successful, your LAC will contact you to organise your NDIS planning meeting.

If your Access Request is not successful, your LAC may still be able to help you find some supports. There is also a list of support services on the NDIS website: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-support-people-not-eligible](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-support-people-not-eligible)

For more information about applying to access the NDIS, visit the NDIS website: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-applying-access](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-applying-access)



### Preparing for your planning meeting

If you are successful in getting access to the NDIS your LAC will contact you to organise your first planning meeting. Before your planning meeting it's a good idea to think about what things you'd like NDIS to help you with and write them down. You should also write down any questions you'd like to ask the LAC about the NDIS. Have a think about:

- your interests: things that you enjoy doing
- your goals: what you'd like to achieve in the future
- your current supports: things that you already get help with
- your support needs: things that you would like to get more help with
- how you'd like to manage your NDIS Plan.

Booklet 2: Planning is a helpful booklet on the NDIS website that you can print out, fill in and take to your planning meeting. You can download it here: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-participants](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-participants)

## Reasonable and necessary

The supports you get in your NDIS plan will depend on what the NDIA thinks is suitable based on your goals, your current supports, and your support needs. Not everyone will get funding for all types of supports. Supports must be 'reasonable and necessary' for the NDIA to fund them in your NDIS Plan. To be considered reasonable and necessary, your supports:

- must be related to your disability
- must not include your day-to-day living costs, such as groceries, bills and rent
- must be value for money
- must be helpful to you and work well
- must not replace supports already provided for you elsewhere - such as assistance from family members, or supports already provided by another source of funding.

## Supports you can get funded by NDIS

NDIS can fund supports that help you:

- work towards your goals
- increase your independence
- increase your participation in the community and the workforce.

### This may include things like:

- A support worker to help you with daily activities such as going to the shops and doing housework, as well as help with personal care such as toileting and showering



- Someone to help you with house cleaning or gardening
- Nursing care if you have health-related disability needs
- Supported Independent Living options (such as residential support workers or overnight care)
- Transport costs such as taxi expenses or a community bus service if you can't use public transport
- Assistive technology - this means things that are made or modified to suit your disability and help you function better, such as modified eating utensils and non-slip mats, communication devices and continence products
- Home modifications such as ramps or lowered benches and sinks if you're in a wheelchair
- Support to access social and community events such as a support worker to transport you and assist you when going places like the zoo, an art class, or a camp
- Specialised driving assessments and driving lessons
- Therapy services such as a speech therapist, physiotherapist, behavioural therapist or occupational therapist (OT)
- Specialised programs or services that improve your ability and confidence to do everyday tasks, such as someone to assist you in becoming better at catching public transport, or someone to give you extra training or mentoring in the workplace
- Costs of plan management and support coordination (if required).

### NDIS won't fund:

- supports that aren't related to your disability
- day-to-day living costs such as groceries, bills or rent
- medication costs or medical bills
- disability diagnosis or assessment costs
- education costs such as university or TAFE fees
- anything that is likely to cause harm to you or others.

For more information about what supports can and can't be funded by NDIS, check out the websites below:

Supports funded by NDIS: NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-funded-supports](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-funded-supports)

What will NDIS pay for?: Leapin! website:

[swanautism.org.au/leapin-what-ndis-pay-for](https://swanautism.org.au/leapin-what-ndis-pay-for)

NDIS funding explained: My Plan Manager website:

[swanautism.org.au/my-plan-manager-funding-explained](https://swanautism.org.au/my-plan-manager-funding-explained)

## At your planning meeting

Your planning meeting may be in-person or over the phone. Your meeting may take up to 2 hours. You can bring a support person with you if you want.

Make sure you have copies of all your reports or assessments with you, as well as some I.D. (like your passport or Proof of Age Card), your bank account details (if you plan on managing your NDIS funds yourself) and your MyGov login details so your LAC can show you how to set up your Myplace Portal. The Myplace Portal is a way to keep track of your NDIS Plan and funds online. Your Myplace Portal will be linked to your MyGov account.

At your planning meeting, you and your LAC will talk about these things:

- your interests and goals
- your current supports and what other support you need
- how long your first plan will last. This can be from 1 to 3 years depending on what is happening in your life.
- how you would like to manage your plan and if you would like help with this (see the section below, Managing your NDIS funds).

All of these details will help your LAC create a NDIS Plan that best suits your needs.

If there's anything you don't understand, ask your LAC to explain it for you. At the end of the meeting your LAC will tell you the next steps, and give you their phone number or email in case you have more questions later. Once your plan has been approved by the NDIA, you will be sent a copy of it in the mail and you'll be able to view it on the Myplace Portal.



## Managing your NDIS funds

**There are 3 ways you can choose to manage your NDIS funds: NDIA managed, plan managed, or self-managed.**

### NDIA management

NDIA management is when the NDIA manage your funding. If you are NDIA managed:

- You can only use NDIS registered providers
- Providers send their bills straight to NDIA for payment
- Your providers cannot charge more than the price limits in the NDIS Price Guide
- The NDIA will do all of your book-keeping and records so you don't have to worry about organising invoices or keeping receipts.

To find out more about being NDIA managed, check out the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-ndia-managed](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-ndia-managed)

### Plan management

Plan management is when you have a provider manage your NDIS funds for you. These providers are called plan managers and they are trained in the financial and administrative parts of managing your funding. If you are plan managed:

- You can use NDIS registered providers OR your own choice of providers (anyone who has an ABN can be a provider)
- Your providers cannot charge more than the price limits set in the NDIS Price Guide
- Providers can either send their invoices to your plan manager for payment, or you can pay them then be reimbursed (paid back) by your plan manager
- Your plan manager will do all of your book keeping and records for you, but if you want to pay providers upfront then you will need to keep copies of invoices and receipts so you can be reimbursed by your plan manager.

Your LAC can help you find a plan manager, or you can look online. You can search for registered plan managers using the Provider Finder tool on the NDIS website, click on the link below:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-provider-finder](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-provider-finder)

To find out more about Plan Management, check out the NDIS website below which also provides links to information in easy read:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-plan-management](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-plan-management)

### Self management

Self management is where you manage your NDIS funds yourself. If you are self managed:

- You can use NDIS registered providers OR you can choose your own providers
- Your providers are able to charge more than the price limits set in the NDIS Price Guide
- Your providers will send their invoices directly to you to be paid. You can use the online Myplace Participant Portal to make a payment request or fill in a payment request form to mail or email to the NDIS. When the NDIS receives the payment requests, they will put the money to pay the providers into your bank account. You can also choose to pay your providers first and then put in a payment request for reimbursement.
- You have to do all your own book-keeping and records, including keeping track of your spending and keeping copies of invoices and receipts
- You will need to open a separate bank account for NDIA funds to be put into.

To find out more about self-managing your NDIS funds, check out these websites:

Self management: NDIS website

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-self-management](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-self-management)

NDIS Self-management vs. Plan management: My Care Space website

[swanautism.org.au/my-care-space-self-management](https://swanautism.org.au/my-care-space-self-management)

You can choose to have a combination of management types if you want. For example, you can choose to self-manage part of your funds and have the rest managed by a plan manager. You also have the right to change the way your NDIS funds are managed at any time. To discuss changing the way your funds are managed, contact your LAC.

## Support Coordinators

If you want help finding service providers and organising your supports, you can ask for support coordination to be included in your NDIS plan. A support coordinator can help you do things like finding suitable providers, making service agreements and service bookings, making sure you're getting the best value for money from your plan, and help you prepare for plan reviews. You can learn more about support coordination on the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-support-coordination](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-support-coordination)

## More NDIS planning resources

WA Individualised Services (WAiS) has created a series of NDIS Planning resources including Preparing to Plan cards, planning booklets and activities for you to fill in, a goal-setting plan, tips for your planning meeting, and more:

[swanautism.org.au/wais-planning](https://swanautism.org.au/wais-planning)

The Council for Intellectual Disability's Can Funding get me a Good Life? workbook talks about changes to disability funding, how you can use funding, and how funding can help you get a good life. There are spaces in the workbook for you to write down your goals and what supports you'd like to get with your funding. The workbook is also available in simplified and traditional Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic:

[swanautism.org.au/cid-funding-workbook](https://swanautism.org.au/cid-funding-workbook)

Down Syndrome WA has created a useful set of fact sheets and workbooks to help you with NDIS planning. You can download the NDIS and Me: Steps to Planning in WA resources here:

[swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-ndis-resources](https://swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-ndis-resources)



## Using your Plan: Funding categories

Your funding will be spread across 3 support categories: Core, Capacity building, and Capital.

Core funds everyday supports, such as support workers, transport, and consumables.

Capacity Building funds activities and supports that build your skills and help you live more independently, like therapy providers, training or mentoring in the workplace, health and wellbeing services like dietician or personal trainer, and the costs of plan management and support coordination.

Capital funds assistive technology (AT) and home and vehicle modifications. To learn more about funding categories, check out the websites below:

NDIS Services and Supports: LeapIn! website:

[swanautism.org.au/leapin-ndis-services](https://swanautism.org.au/leapin-ndis-services)

Plan budget and rules: NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-plan-budget](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-plan-budget)

## Changing your Plan

After you get your NDIS plan, the NDIS will check in with you sometimes to see if the plan is working for you. They may also ask if you need any help using the plan and if you think any changes are needed to the plan.

If you think changes are needed to your current plan you can talk to the LAC about this. They may decide to make some smaller changes to your plan which is called a Plan Variation or work with you on creating a new plan which is called a Plan Reassessment.

You can also ask for changes to your plan at any time and do not have to wait for an LAC to contact you first. You may not be happy with the funding and supports in your current plan or you may want to change how the plan is managed. There may also be some changes in your life that mean your support needs have changed and you need to let the NDIS know.

Some of the changes that may mean your support needs have changed include:

- if the impact of your disability on your life has changed
- if you have started a new life stage such as school or work
- there have been changes in how you live your life, including your living arrangements.

For more information on changing your plan, go to this page:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-changing-plan](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-changing-plan)

These are the ways you can ask for a change in your current plan:

- Phone or email your LAC: The LAC provider in the South-West and Great Southern WA regions is APM. You can call APM on 1300 276 522 or email [lac@apm.net.au](mailto:lac@apm.net.au)
- Go to your local APM office. Please see the list of office locations under the How to Apply heading above or use the search tool on this page: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-locations](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-locations)
- Complete the NDIS Change of Circumstances form which can be downloaded on this page: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-change-in-circumstance](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-change-in-circumstance)

(Please contact SWAN if you require assistance completing the Change of Circumstances form)

## End of Plan Reassessment

The NDIS will contact you about 3 months before the Reassessment date in your plan to let you know this is coming up. They will talk to you about booking a Plan Reassessment meeting which could be face to face, over the phone or video call. They will also tell you what information you might need for the meeting which may include letters, assessments or reports from your service providers showing how they are helping you to work towards your NDIS goals.

During the Plan Reassessment meeting, the LAC will ask you how your plan is working for you. To prepare for the meeting, you may want to think about some of the things in the list below:

- What worked well in your plan?
- What goals did you achieve?
- What didn't work as well?
- Do you have any questions about how your plan is managed?
- Would you like to change how you manage your funding?
- Do you have any new goals you would like in your next plan?
- Have there been any changes to your situation?
- Are you expecting any changes to your situation? (e.g. are you planning to leave school, start or leave work, or move out of home).

(ref: Changing Your Plan – NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-plan-reassessments](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-plan-reassessments))

After the Plan Reassessment meeting, your LAC will decide to approve a new plan or vary your current plan depending on what is happening for you. The LAC will work with you on this and help you understand any changes.

If the NDIS are unable to do a Plan Reassessment meeting with you before the end of your Reassessment date, your current plan will be automatically extended for 12 months. This means you will still have access to funding and your services will continue. The NDIS will provide additional funding to your plan

if it is extended which you will use in the same way as before until you have a Plan Reassessment meeting.

For more information about Plan variations and extensions, click here:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-changing-your-plan](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-changing-your-plan)

## Internal Reviews

If you are not happy with decisions made by the NDIS including what is in your plan, you can ask for a review of these decisions which is known as an Internal Review. This is when another staff member in the NDIS, who was not involved in making these decisions, checks to see if the decisions were correct or not.

**\*\*Please note, a request for an Internal Review must be made to the NDIS within 3 months of receiving a decision from them in writing, which includes receiving your plan or the outcome of another decision that you are unhappy with.**

These are the kinds of NDIS decisions that can be reviewed during an Internal Review:

- To deny access to the NDIS
- To decide you are no longer eligible for the NDIS
- To decide to approve your plan and the supports within it (which you may not be happy with)
- To not agree to a Plan Reassessment
- To not agree to a Plan Variation
- To vary your plan (and you are not happy with the changes)
- Decisions made about a Plan Nominee or Child Representative

If you are not happy with what is in your plan you can request a review of certain parts of the plan including:

- What funded supports are included in your plan
- How the supports are described in your plan
- How your funding is managed
- How long your plan goes for
- How your plan has been changed (if you are not happy with this)

These are the ways you can request an Internal Review of a decision:

- complete the Request for a Review of a Decision form which you can download from this page:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-internal-review](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-internal-review)

- Go to your local APM office. Please see the list of office locations under the How to Apply heading above or use the search tool on this page:  
[swanautism.org.au/ndis-locations](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-locations)
- send NDIS an email with supporting evidence to [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)
- call NDIS on 1800 800 110

For more information about Internal Reviews including how to prepare for a review meeting, click on the link below:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-internal-review](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-internal-review)

If you need support filling in the Request for a Review of a Decision form, your LAC can help you. Once completed you can send the form by email to [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au) or by post to:

Chief Executive Officer  
National Disability Insurance Agency  
GPO Box 700  
Canberra ACT 2601

### Assistance with NDIS Reviews

Advocacy WA is an organisation in Bunbury that provides free disability advocacy services including assistance to request and prepare for an NDIS Internal Review:

4 Plaza Street, South Bunbury  
(open Monday to Fridays, 8am - 8pm)  
Ph: (08) 9721 6444  
Email: [admin@advocacywa.org.au](mailto:admin@advocacywa.org.au)  
[swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa](https://swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa)

SWAN is also a free service, and we are able to assist in various ways, including understanding and preparing for an NDIS Internal Review. Click on this link to see what services we provide:

<https://www.swanautism.org.au/about-swan/peer-support/>

You can find more free disability advocacy services using the AskIzzy, Disability Advocacy Finder website:

[swanautism.org.au/ask-izzy-advocacy-finder](https://swanautism.org.au/ask-izzy-advocacy-finder)

### External Reviews

If you're still unhappy once you receive your NDIS Internal Review decision, then you can apply for a review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). This is called an External Review because the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) is separate from the NDIS and has its own process and laws for making decisions.

If you want to apply for an External Review, you need to do it within 28 days of receiving your NDIS Internal Review decision in writing. It is free to apply for an External Review and you can find the information you need to apply on this webpage, including the downloadable application form:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-how-to-apply](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-how-to-apply)

The AAT will send you a letter to confirm they received your application. They will also call you to talk about what happens next. If the AAT decides they can't take on your External Review appeal, they will write to you and let you know. If the AAT decides to take on your appeal, you will need to organise a NDIS Appeals support person or legal support to help you. These services won't cost you anything.

You can find a list of places that does NDIS Appeals support as well as more information about NDIS Appeals legal support on the Department of Social Services website:

[swanautism.org.au/dss-ndis-appeals](https://swanautism.org.au/dss-ndis-appeals)

If you want support or assistance with your External Review appeal application, please see the information under the heading "Assistance with NDIS Reviews" above.



## Who to contact if you're not happy with your service providers

You have the right to feel safe and to get good services from your NDIS service providers. The NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission is the independent agency that deals with concerns and complaints about NDIS service providers. They make sure that service providers are following the NDIS rules and guidelines, and have the power to investigate and give out penalties or ban any service providers that are doing the wrong thing.

To learn more check out the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-participant-rights](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-participant-rights)

The NDIS have produced an Easy Read brochure about making a complaint called "Handling complaints and fixing problems":

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-commission](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-commission)

## Your rights as a NDIS participant

As a NDIS participant you have the right to be treated fairly and with respect. The NDIS Participant Service Charter is a document that explains what participants can expect from the NDIS. In the Participant Service Charter the NDIS says they want their service to be.

You can read the NDIS Participant Service Charter at the link below. It is also available in Easy Read and translated into different languages:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-service-charter](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-service-charter)



## NDIS contact details

### NDIA postal address:

National Disability Insurance Agency  
GPO Box 700  
Canberra ACT 2601

### NDIS Contact Centre:

Ph: 1800 800 110 (Monday to Fridays, 8am to 8pm)

Email: [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)

Website: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-home](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-home)

Online feedback form:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-contact-feedback](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-contact-feedback)

## Entitlements

You may be able to get certain entitlements because of your disability. An entitlement is something that benefits you. This could be money from the government, discounts on some types of bills and on entry to certain places, or access to special programs or services that are for people with disabilities. This section talks about the different entitlements you may be able to get, who can get them, how to apply for them, and where you can get more information.

### Centrelink

Centrelink is the name of Australian government's welfare department, which is part of Services Australia. Services Australia includes Centrelink, Medicare and the Child Support Agency. Centrelink helps people by paying benefits called pensions or allowances, and discounts on certain programs and services, called subsidies [swanautism.org.au/services-australia-centrelink](http://swanautism.org.au/services-australia-centrelink)

### MyGov

MyGov is the online portal for Services Australia. If you get Centrelink or have a Medicare card you can use MyGov to do things like apply for and keep track of your Centrelink payments and submit Medicare claims. When you sign up for a MyGov account you get your own login details and password, so all the details on your MyGov account like your address, phone number, and bank account details, are kept safe and private.

You can also link your MyGov account with any other government services you use, like the Australian Tax Office, NDIS, JobSearch, and My Health Record, so you can keep track of all your different services in one place.

To learn how to get your own MyGov account go to the Services Australia website: [swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-my-gov](http://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-my-gov)

### Disability Support Pension

The Disability Support Pension (DSP) is a Centrelink income support payment for people with a permanent disability or condition that makes it difficult for them to work. Not everyone with a disability or condition can get the DSP. To get the DSP, you need to meet Centrelink's 'medical' and 'non-medical' rules. The 'non-medical' rules include things like your age, whether you're an Australian citizen or permanent resident, and your income and assets. To meet the 'medical' rules, you must be able to prove:

- your condition will last more than 2 years
- your condition is fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised: fully diagnosed means you have evidence of an official diagnosis from a medical professional, and fully treated and stabilised means you have received medical treatment for your disability, but it has been decided by the treating medical professional that your condition or disability will not improve over time if the treatment is continued

- you have an impairment rating of 20 points or more: an impairment rating is a score that Centrelink gives you based on how much your disability affects your ability to do everyday tasks. They decide this score after looking at all the information you give them, like your diagnosis letter, doctor's reports, and any other documents that show how your disability affects you and comparing these to their Impairment Tables. The impairment tables help Centrelink decide whether you qualify for DSP or not, and whether your disability is considered 'severe' or not.
- you meet Program of Support rules, if these apply to you: A Program of Support is a program for people who have an impairment rating of 20 points or more but are not considered to have a 'severe' impairment. Programs of Support are run by Centrelink's job provider agencies, and they will help you do things like looking for work, and support you to do training that will help you find a job. A person wanting to get DSP must have been in a Program of Support at least 18 months before they will be approved for DSP.
- your condition will stop you working at least 15 hours a week in the next 2 years.

The amount of DSP you get depends on a few different things including your age, how much you earn if you have a job, whether you have a partner or not and how much they earn if they have a job, if you have any kids, and how much any assets you own are worth. To apply for DSP you can either:

- complete an online claim form using your MyGov account
- download the claim form from the Services Australia website, then either email or post it back
- go into a Centrelink branch and ask for a claim form, then either email or post it back
- phone Centrelink's Disability, Sickness and Carers line and ask for a claim form to be posted to you, then either email or post it back.

You will need to be patient, because it can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months for Centrelink to assess your DSP claim. For more information about the Disability Support Pension you can visit the Services Australia website: [swanautism.org.au/svs-aust-disability-support-pension](http://swanautism.org.au/svs-aust-disability-support-pension)

The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) also have a really helpful booklet all about the Disability Support Pension called 'DSP and Me' available on their website: [swanautism.org.au/drc-advocacy-dsp-me](http://swanautism.org.au/drc-advocacy-dsp-me)

If your claim is rejected, you have the right to make an appeal. This means asking Centrelink to reconsider your claim. Sometimes Centrelink may agree that they made the wrong decision the first time around and decide to approve you for DSP. If you want to make an appeal, it must be within 13 weeks of receiving the claim rejection from Centrelink. For information about making an appeal, you can check out the Review and Appeals section on the Services Australia website: [swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-review-centrelink](http://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-review-centrelink)

If you can't get DSP, there are some other payments you might still be able to get from Centrelink:

- **JobSeeker:** an income support payment for people aged 22 or older who are looking for work, or are sick or injured and unable to work or study for a short time
- **Youth Allowance:** an income support payment for people between 16 and 24 years old who are looking for work, studying or are sick or injured and unable to work or study for a short time
- **Austudy:** for people 25 or older who are studying or doing an apprenticeship
- **ABSTUDY:** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16 or older who are studying or doing an apprenticeship
- **Rent Assistance:** for people aged 16 or older who live out of home and pay rent or board
- **Mobility Allowance:** for people aged 16 or older who don't have an NDIS plan and are either working, studying or looking for work, and need help using transport because of their illness or disability
- **Health Care Card:** a concession card that gives people aged 16 or older a discount on medications that are on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) as well as the ability to use bulk billing GP services and access to the Public Dental Service. Bulk billing is where Medicare covers the cost of your doctors appointment so you don't have to pay anything.

### Pensioner Concession Card

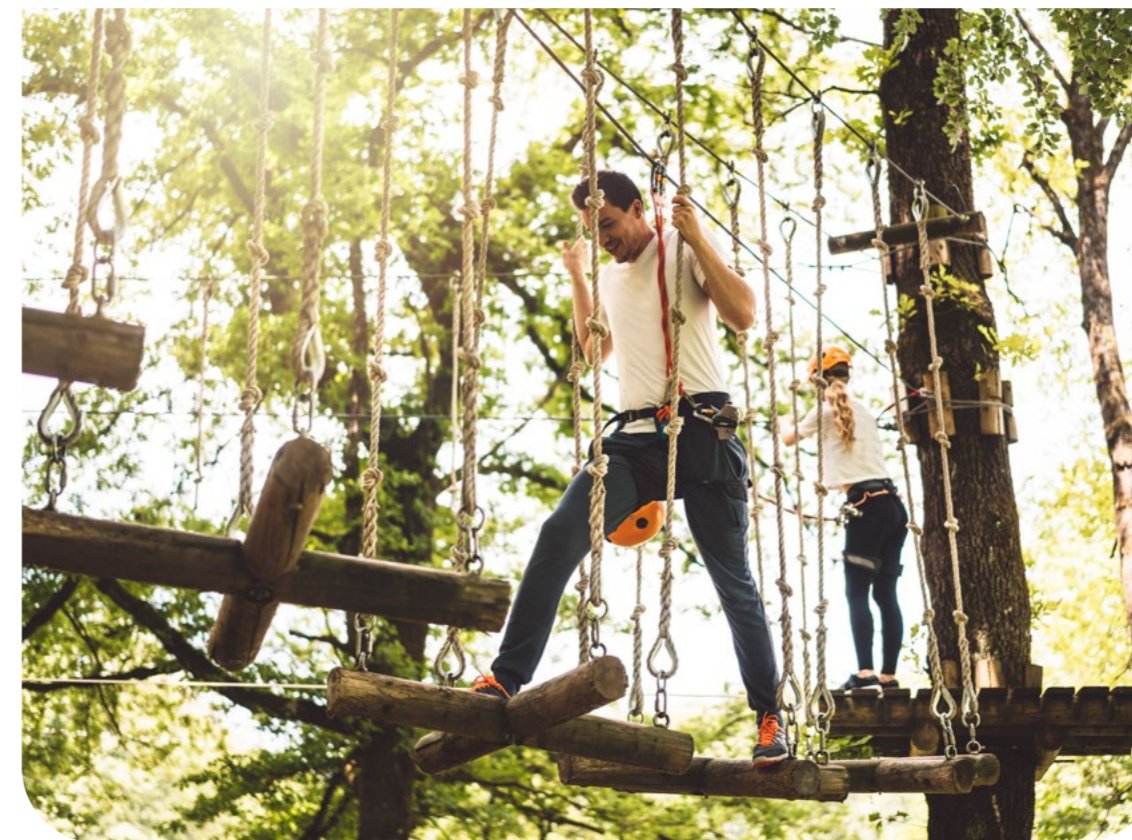
If you are approved for the Disability Support Pension, you will also be given a Pensioner Concession Card. A Pensioner Concession Card gives you the same benefits as a Health Care Card, plus discounts on:

- utility bills (electricity, gas and water)
- car registration fees
- council rates (if you own your home) and dog registration fees
- public transport costs
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) course costs
- Ambulance fees.

Many businesses and places of interest such as the Zoo, the WA Museum, some sporting venues, cinemas and so on also offer discounts for people with a Pensioner Concession Card. You will have to show them your Pensioner Concession Card to get the discount.

For more information about Health Care Cards, Pensioner Concession Cards, and other government concessions and discounts you can check out the Concessions WA website:

[swanautism.org.au/concessions-wa](https://swanautism.org.au/concessions-wa)



### Companion Card

The Companion Card is for people with a significant permanent disability who require a carer to be with them at all times when going to community venues and activities. The Companion Card gives the carer free entry to the venues and activities that they are attending with the person with disability.

It is free to apply for a Companion Card. You can find out how to apply and how to use the card at this website:

[swanautism.org.au/wa-companion-card](https://swanautism.org.au/wa-companion-card)

### Payments for Carers

There are also payments you may be able to get if you are a parent or guardian, or a carer for someone with a disability including Carer's Allowance and Carer's Payment. You can find details of these payments and how to apply for them on this page:

[swanautism.org.au/sa-carer-payment](https://swanautism.org.au/sa-carer-payment)



## Health

Looking after your health is very important. Being healthy makes you feel good and keeps your body running properly. This section will give you some tips on how to look after your health, and information about health services and supports.

### Eating healthy

Eating healthy is good for your body and gives you lots of energy. What you eat is called your diet. It's good to make sure your diet includes lots of fruit and vegetables, as well as some protein (found in foods like meat and eggs) and some carbohydrates (found in foods like bread and pasta) each day. You shouldn't eat junk food every day. Making sure you don't eat too much is also important. You should try to drink lots of water - about 8 glasses of water a day is recommended for adults. You can find out more about healthy eating in this fact sheet made by the Queensland Centre for Intellectual Disability:

[swanautism.org.au/efh-healthy-eating](https://swanautism.org.au/efh-healthy-eating)

### Exercise

Keeping fit is a big part of staying healthy. It is recommended that adults exercise at least 30 minutes a day, but even better if you can do longer. Some people like going to the gym to stay fit, but there are lots of other ways you can exercise:

- go for a walk or ride a bike around your neighbourhood
- go for a swim at the local pools
- join a sports team and take part in weekly training or games
- take your dog to the park and play fetch or frisbee.

Sometimes it can be hard to get motivated to exercise, so asking a friend, family member or support person to exercise with you can help. If you don't like going out much, you can exercise at home using a treadmill or exercise bike. Even if you have a physical disability or an injury that can make some exercises difficult, there are people like personal trainers, occupational therapists (OT's) or physiotherapists who can help you come up with some exercises that suit you.



## Sleep

Sleep is a very important part of keeping healthy. If you don't get enough sleep you can feel tired and grumpy during the day and have trouble focusing on everyday tasks. It's recommended that adults get between 6 and 8 hours sleep each night. Some people need a little bit more than this, but too much sleep can also be bad for you. It's okay once in a while to not get enough sleep, but if you don't get enough sleep over a long period of time, it can affect your health and the way you feel mentally. For more advice about sleep, check out these links from the Reachout website:

[swanautism.org.au/roaus-how-much-sleep](https://swanautism.org.au/roaus-how-much-sleep)

[swanautism.org.au/roaus-good-nights-sleep](https://swanautism.org.au/roaus-good-nights-sleep)

## Dental Health

It's important to look after your teeth. You should book an appointment with your dentist at least once a year for a check-up. If you have a Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card you can go to a Public Dental Clinic. These are dental clinics owned by the Government where you can get dental work done for a lot cheaper than other dentists.

If you live in the country and there's no Public Dental Clinic in your area then the Government will pay for you to see a regular dentist in your town through the Country Patients Dental Subsidy Scheme.

You might also be able to get free dental services through the Public Dental Service if you have an intellectual disability or autism. There are some rules about who can get these special services, so make sure to ask when you call. You can get more information about the special dental services by calling (08) 9201 9889.

There are 4 Public Dental Clinics in the South West and Greater Southern WA regions. They are in Albany, Bunbury, Busselton and Ravensthorpe. There is sometimes a waiting list so it's a good idea to contact your local Public Dental Clinic to make an appointment ahead of time. You can find contact details for all WA Public Dental Clinics on the WA Dental Health Services website:

[swanautism.org.au/dental-health-find-clinic](https://swanautism.org.au/dental-health-find-clinic)

## Visiting your Doctor

You should go to your doctor if you are feeling sick for more than a few days, or if you need a new prescription for your medication, as well as for a check-up at least once a year. You might also need to go to your doctor if you need a letter from them to give to your boss if you've been sick off work, or to give to Centrelink if they ask for one. A doctor is sometimes also called a GP. If you don't already have a doctor that you regularly see, you can ask a family member, friend or support person to help you find a good doctor.

If you have a Medicare Card, you might be able to get your doctor's visit for free if your doctor does bulk billing. Bulk billing is where the doctor sends your bill to Medicare who pay it for you. Not all doctors bulk bill, and some will only do bulk billing for people with a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card, so

you'll need to contact your doctor's clinic and ask what they offer. To find a bulk billing doctor in your area, you can search on the HealthDirect website:

[swanautism.org.au/health-direct-health-services](https://swanautism.org.au/health-direct-health-services)

## Medicare

Medicare is the name of Australia's public healthcare system. If you have a Medicare Card, Medicare will cover all or part of the cost of:

- seeing a doctor or specialist
- most medical tests and scans such as blood tests and x-rays
- most surgery and procedures done by doctors
- getting treatment at a public hospital
- eye tests by optometrists (eye doctors).

The amount covered by Medicare depends on which doctor you see and what services you get from them, so it's important to ask your doctor first. Medicare doesn't cover ambulance costs or pay for things like glasses or contact lenses. To see what's covered by Medicare visit the Medicare website:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-health-care-medicare](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-health-care-medicare)

A paediatrician or psychiatrist can refer a person aged 0-24 years for up to 8 Medicare claimable diagnostic/assessment services per lifetime from **psychologists, speech pathologists**, occupational therapists, audiologists, optometrists, orthoptists or physiotherapists to assist the referring Dr with diagnosis, treatment and management.

Note: psychologists and speech pathologists are highlighted here as the primary diagnosticians for autism.

<https://swanautism.org.au/mbs-assessment-rebate>

Once diagnosed with a Complex Neurodevelopmental Disorder (including Autism) a person aged 0-24 years, can be referred by a paediatrician or psychiatrist for up to 20 Medicare claimable treatment services from psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, audiologists, optometrists, orthoptists or physiotherapists.

<https://swanautism.org.au/mbs-treatment-rebate>

## Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

Some medications can cost a lot of money but if you have a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card you can get some medications at a cheaper price with the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). You will need to check with your doctor to see if your medication is on the PBS. If you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander with a Medicare card and a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card you can ask your doctor to put you on the Closing the Gap PBS Program so you can get PBS medications for free. To find out more about PBS go to the Medicare website:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-pbs](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-pbs)

## My Health Record

My Health Record is an online record of your health information. This includes things like any allergies you have, any medical conditions you have, and any medications you're taking. My Health Record can be looked at by you, your doctor, and the Emergency Department of a hospital if you go there. My Health Record helps doctors and medical staff give you the right help when you need it. To learn more about My Health Record:

[swanautism.org.au/my-health-record](https://swanautism.org.au/my-health-record)

You also can control the privacy of your My Health Record, including letting people you trust like a family member or support person look at your My Health Record, adding your own notes and removing things you don't want people to see. You can do this by linking your My Health Record to your MyGov online account. For information on how to link your My Health Record to your MyGov account:

[swanautism.org.au/my-health-record-how-to-register](https://swanautism.org.au/my-health-record-how-to-register)

## My Health Matters

My Health Matters is an Easy Read folder that can help people with disabilities to communicate with their doctor. Once you have a My Health Matters folder you can add the name and phone numbers of people you trust so they can be contacted in an emergency, as well as adding information about your diet, your likes and dislikes, how you communicate, and lots more. You can download the My Health Matters folder to your device then print it out and add all your details. To download the My Health Matters folder go to the Council for Intellectual Disability website:

[swanautism.org.au/cid-my-health-matters-folder](https://swanautism.org.au/cid-my-health-matters-folder)

## After Hours GP

If you need to see a doctor at night or on the weekend and your regular doctor's clinic is closed, you can visit an After Hours GP. You can find an After Hours GP in your area using the HealthEngine website:

[swanautism.org.au/gp-after-hours](https://swanautism.org.au/gp-after-hours)



## Urgent Care

There is an Medicare Urgent Care clinic located at the Health Hub at Eaton Fair. The walk-in clinic bulk bills and is open from 8:00am til 8:00pm every day:

[swanautism.org.au/urgent-care-bunbury](https://swanautism.org.au/urgent-care-bunbury)

## Health Direct

General health questions can be answered by Health Direct on 1800 022 222 or online at [swanautism.org.au/health-direct](https://swanautism.org.au/health-direct)

## Hospital Emergency Department

If you or someone you are with is very sick or have a serious accident you should go to the Emergency Department at your nearest hospital. Emergency Departments are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have doctors and nurses that can help. Getting help at an Emergency Department is free. Some examples of medical emergencies are:

- having trouble breathing
- having an accident and are seriously injured or bleeding a lot
- having heart pain
- having a serious reaction because of an allergy or a medication.

This link gives you a list of all the Emergency Departments in WA. It also tells you how much time you may have to wait in the Emergency Department before they can help you:

[swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-emergency](https://swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-emergency)

If you live in the country you may not have an Emergency Department nearby but most areas will have a nursing post. A nursing post is a clinic with nurses and other medical staff who can help you in an emergency. To find your closest nursing post go to the HealthDirect Find a Health Service link below and click on 'Other Services' then select 'Nurse-led Clinics'

[swanautism.org.au/health-direct-health-services](https://swanautism.org.au/health-direct-health-services)

## Calling 000 in an Emergency

If there's an emergency but you can't get to the hospital, you can call an ambulance by phoning 000. It's free to call 000 even if you have no credit on your phone. When you call 000, you will be asked by the operator if you want the police, the fire service, or an ambulance. Try to stay calm and give the operator any details they ask for, like your name, address, and what the problem is. Trained ambulance staff called paramedics will pick you up in the ambulance and take you to the nearest hospital. Going in an ambulance can be expensive, so only call 000 in an emergency.

If you call 000 in an emergency but can't speak, the operator will ask you to press 55. Pressing 55 connects you to the police who will be able to work out your address using your phone signal, and they will tell the ambulance where to find you.

If you live in rural or remote WA and have an emergency but can't get to your closest nursing post, call 000 and they will organise the WA Royal Flying Doctor Service to pick you up in a small plane or helicopter and they will fly you to the nearest hospital.

If you have a speech or hearing impairment and use a telephone typewriter (TTY) or computer to make calls, you can call for an ambulance by phoning 106.

### Police

You should ask for the Police if you see a serious crime happen, or someone is threatening to commit a serious crime. If you want to speak to the police but it's not a life-threatening matter you should call 131 444.

### Ambulance

You should ask for an ambulance if someone is seriously hurt or their life is in danger. If you or someone else need medical help but it's not an emergency then you should go to your GP or an after-hours doctor.

### Fire and emergency services

You should ask for fire and emergency services if there is a fire, flood, or any kind of life threatening natural disaster. If you're worried about fires, flooding, or another natural disaster happening in your area you should visit the Emergency WA website for updates and important information:

[swanautism.org.au/emergency-wa](https://swanautism.org.au/emergency-wa)

Sometimes you may need the police and an ambulance, like when there's been a serious car accident. If you're unsure which services you need, tell the 000 operator what is happening and they will be able to help you.

The WA Police website has more information about knowing when to call 000:

[swanautism.org.au/wa-police](https://swanautism.org.au/wa-police)

The Red Cross RediPlan is a useful Easy Read emergency planning resource that you can download, print out and fill in. It has space for you to write down emergency contact details, helps you plan where to go in an emergency, gives you advice about insurance and wills, and shows you how to make an emergency kit. You can download the RediPlan from the Red Cross website:

[swanautism.org.au/red-cross-resources](https://swanautism.org.au/red-cross-resources)



## Your Healthcare Rights

The Disability Discrimination Act and the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights WA make sure you have the same healthcare rights as everyone else. Your healthcare rights include the right to:

- receive the same level of care as everyone else
- be treated with respect
- have your health details remain private and confidential
- be protected from abuse and discrimination
- bring someone you trust with you to support you
- be given healthcare information if you ask for it.

You can view an accessible poster of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights WA here:

[swanautism.org.au/charter-healthcare-rights](https://swanautism.org.au/charter-healthcare-rights)

If you feel like you are not being listened to or are being discriminated against when you are receiving health care, there are a few different things you can do:

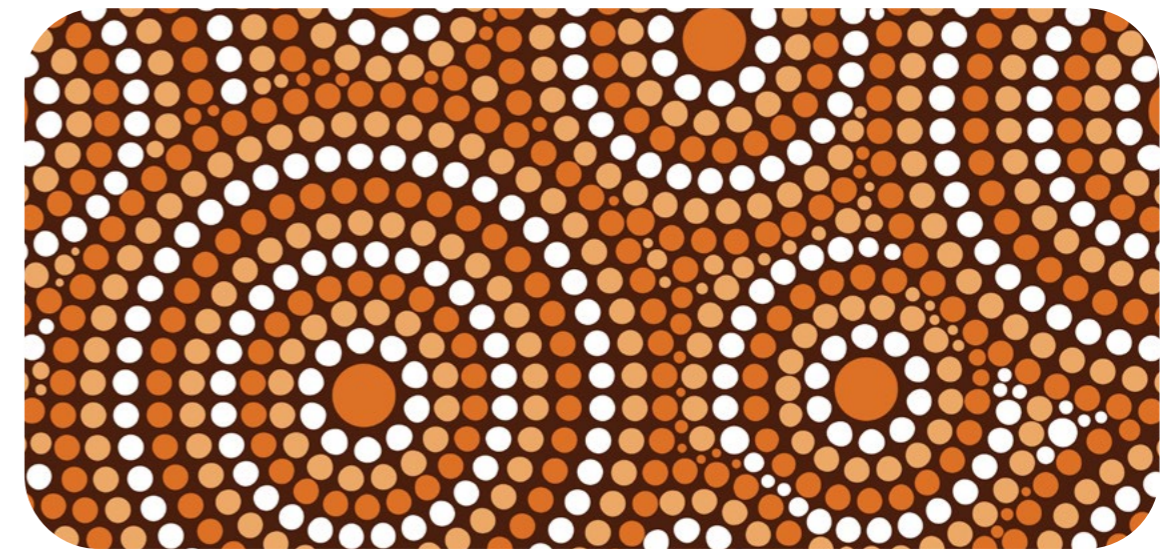
- talk to the healthcare staff looking after you and see if they can fix the problem
- make a complaint to the health service: most doctor's clinics and hospitals have a complaint or feedback form you can fill in
- if you're in a hospital you can ask to speak to the Patient Liaison or Aboriginal Liaison: these are people in the hospital who help patients stand up for their rights
- if you've already left the hospital but still want to make a complaint you can find contact details for Patient Liaisons here:  
[swanautism.org.au/healthywa-patient-liaison-contacts](https://swanautism.org.au/healthywa-patient-liaison-contacts)
- make a complaint to the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO):  
[swanautism.org.au/hadSCO-complaints-easy-english](https://swanautism.org.au/hadSCO-complaints-easy-english)
- if you're using a healthcare service in the country, you can make a complaint to the WA Country Health Service:  
[swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-feedback](https://swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-feedback)

## NDIS and Health

NDIS will not pay for any medical costs, but if you have a NDIS Plan you might be able to get supports funded by NDIS to help you with keeping healthy. These supports might be things like getting a personal trainer to help you with your fitness, or group fitness classes, or a support worker to go with you to the local pools. NDIS can also fund supports like horse riding therapy, or a dietician to help you with choosing healthy foods and planning your meals. If you need special sporting equipment because of your disability, this can also be funded in your NDIS Plan. To see which supports you can get funded, contact your Local Area Coordinator (LAC).

Your LAC provider in south-west WA is APM.

You can call APM on 1300 276 522.



## Aboriginal and Multicultural Health Services

The South West Aboriginal Medical Service (SWAMS) provides health services for Aboriginal people in the South West WA region. Their clinic is in Bunbury but they also do health visits to Australind, Busselton, Brunswick, Collie and Manjimup. To book an appointment call (08) 9726 6000 or fill in the Contact Form on their website:

[swanautism.org.au/swams-contact](https://swanautism.org.au/swams-contact)

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service is a bulk billed GP service for Aboriginal people with 4 clinics in the Perth metro area. To book an appointment call (08) 9421 3888.

[swanautism.org.au/dhys](https://swanautism.org.au/dhys)

Nidjalla Waangan Mia Health Centre is a bulk billing GP in Mandurah for Aboriginal people.

To book an appointment call (08) 9586 4580.

This Healthy WA Multicultural Health link has lots of translated health fact sheets:

[swanautism.org.au/health-wa-multicultural-health](https://swanautism.org.au/health-wa-multicultural-health)

Community Cue Cards is a picture communication system (PCS) with over 200 cards that can help people communicate with their doctor, emergency department staff or other health services if they have English language difficulties. It is available to download in over 60 different languages from the Eastern Health Services website:

[swanautism.org.au/eastern-health-cue-cards](https://swanautism.org.au/eastern-health-cue-cards)

For a list of all the community health services in the South West WA region, please click see:

[swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-south-west-directory](https://swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-south-west-directory)



## Sexuality and Relationships

Sexuality is about your sexual feelings, thoughts and actions. This includes how you feel about your body, who you're attracted to, and things like relationships, love, and having sex. Some people are embarrassed talking about sexuality, but it is a totally normal part of being an adult. This section will talk about some of the important parts of sexuality, relationships and staying safe, as well as contact details of places you can go if you need advice or support.

### What is a relationship?

There are lots of different types of relationships. Friends, family members, romantic or sexual partners (like a boyfriend or girlfriend, or a husband or wife) and workmates are all examples of relationships. This section will mostly talk about romantic and sexual relationships.

### Respect and Consent

One of the most important parts of any relationship is respect. Respect means showing someone that you care about them by treating them well. Respect goes both ways - you should be respectful to people you have a relationship with, and you also have the right to be respected by those people in return.

Having consent is one part of respect in a relationship. Consent is an agreement between two people to do something, like saying it's okay for the other person to hug or kiss you. It's up to you whether you consent to something or not. You have the right to say 'no' if you don't want something to happen. The other person in the relationship also has the right to say 'no' to you, and that's okay.

Having respect and consent makes sure that both people in a relationship feel happy, safe, cared about, and can trust each other. This is called a healthy relationship. Some signs of a healthy relationship are:

- listening to each other's needs
- being able to talk about things calmly and openly, even if you don't agree with each other
- telling each other how you feel about them to show them you care
- trying to help each other out when you can

- not getting angry or upset if the other person wants some time by themselves
- not getting angry or making the other person feel guilty if they say 'no' to something.

If the people in a relationship don't respect each other, this is called an unhealthy relationship. An unhealthy relationship can make you feel sad, angry or even scared. Some signs of an unhealthy relationship are:

- ignoring or not caring about each others needs
- having a lot of arguments with each other
- abusing each other (this can be hurting each other physically such as hitting or punching, or hurting each other emotionally, like bullying or saying mean things)
- ignoring the other person if they say 'no' or making them feel bad for saying 'no'.

Down Syndrome Australia have a really great Easy Read booklet about Healthy Relationships, Consent and Respect:

[swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-relationships-sexuality](https://swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-relationships-sexuality)

Your Rights and Responsibilities in a Relationship poster, made by VALID Victoria:

[swanautism.org.au/valid-relationship-rights](https://swanautism.org.au/valid-relationship-rights)

### Where to get support if you are in an unhealthy relationship

If you are being treated badly or abused by a person you're in a romantic relationship with, this is called domestic violence. Sometimes it can be really hard to speak up for yourself if you're experiencing domestic violence, but there are places that can give you help and support:

1800RESPECT is an information, counselling and referral service for women who are experiencing domestic violence. Their phone line and online chat are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone: 1800 737 732

Online chat: [swanautism.org.au/1800-respect](https://swanautism.org.au/1800-respect)

Sunny is an accessible app that provides advice and support for women with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence. You can download it on iOS and Android devices from the App Store or Google Play, or you can download it here:

[swanautism.org.au/1800-respect-sunny](https://swanautism.org.au/1800-respect-sunny)

## Staying Safe

It's important to know the signs of feeling and being unsafe. It also helps to know the correct words for your body parts, and the different ways you can keep yourself safe. These things are called protective behaviours. This Family Planning Victoria flyer explains more about protective behaviours:

[swanautism.org.au/shvic-protective-behaviours-plain-english](http://swanautism.org.au/shvic-protective-behaviours-plain-english)

Ways to Stay Safe is an Easy Read booklet made by People with Disabilities WA (PWDWA) that talks about staying safe at home, work, and in the community, and who you can talk to if you need help:

[swanautism.org.au/disability-safe-week](http://swanautism.org.au/disability-safe-week)



## Sexual Health

When you're in a relationship with someone you might want to start doing sexual things to each other, like kissing and touching each other's bodies, or having sex. Doing these sexual things can be very fun for both people, but it's very important to make sure you do these sexy things in a safe way. This is called having safe sex.

Having safe sex helps prevent you and your partner from catching any infections or diseases from each other. Infections and diseases that spread by doing sexual things are called sexually transmitted infections (STI's). Catching a STI can make you very sick, but some people with a STI might not have any signs at all. Some of the signs of having a STI can be:

- itching, sore skin, rashes or lumps on your body or your private areas (called your genitals)
- feeling like your genitals are burning when you go to the toilet
- pain when you touch your genitals or have sex
- feeling tired and unwell
- diarrhea or vomiting.

## Safe Sex

There are lots of different ways you can have safe sex, but the most common way is by using a condom. A condom is a thin rubber sheath that goes over the man's penis and stops any STI's from passing between you and your partner when having sex. Condoms are also better at stopping STI's than any other safe sex method, but any type of safe sex is better than having unsafe sex (which is called unprotected sex). Condoms also prevent pregnancy (having babies).

What are STI's? is an Easy English booklet made by Family Planning Victoria:

[swanautism.org.au/shvic-stv-bbd-plain-english](http://swanautism.org.au/shvic-stv-bbd-plain-english)

## Contraception

Contraception is something you or your partner can use to prevent getting pregnant. Having a baby is a very big decision and is a decision that both people in a relationship have to agree on, so it is important to use contraception if you don't want to have a baby. Using a condom is a very effective type of contraception, and is the only contraception that also stops STI's.

There are also lots of other types of contraception, like a tablet that a woman can take every day called the contraceptive pill, as well as injections and other methods that can be given to females by their doctor.

SECCA's Safe Sex Brochure was made for people with disabilities to learn about STI's, contraception, how to have safe sex, and who to contact if you need support or advice:

[swanautism.org.au/secca-safe-sex](http://swanautism.org.au/secca-safe-sex)

This Easy English booklet by Family Planning Victoria talks all about safe sex and contraception:

[swanautism.org.au/shvic-contraception-plain-english](http://swanautism.org.au/shvic-contraception-plain-english)





## Sexual Diversity

The most common type of romantic relationship is between a man and a woman. This is called a heterosexual relationship. But sometimes people want to be in a romantic relationship with people that are the same sex as them - this is called being homosexual. Some examples of this are when a man is attracted to other men - this is called being gay. And when a woman is attracted to other women, its called being lesbian. And sometimes, people like to be in a romantic relationship with more than one person at a time - this is called polyamory.

Sometimes a person is born a male, but wants to be a female, or a person is born a female and wants to be a male - this is called being transgender. And some people don't want to be called either male or female - this is called being non-binary. All these different types of sexualities are part of sexual diversity. Everyone has the right to do what they want with their bodies and their lives, and you should treat everyone the way you want to be treated, and respect their sexual diversity.

The Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) website has lots of information about gender and sexual diversity:

[swanautism.org.au/our-site-gender-sexuality](http://swanautism.org.au/our-site-gender-sexuality)

What is LGBTQIA+? is an Easy Read booklet about sexual and gender diversity, made by Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA):

[swanautism.org.au/women-disabilities-lgbtqa](http://swanautism.org.au/women-disabilities-lgbtqa)

## Where to get support and advice about sexuality, sexual health and relationships

SECCA is an organisation that helps people with disability learn about sex, sexuality, relationships and sexual health. They also do workshops, sex education and counselling for people with disability and their families and carers, and have lots of resources that you can download on their website. You can visit or contact them for more information:

City West Lotteries House  
2 Delhi St, West Perth  
Phone: (08) 9420 7226  
Email: [admin@secca.org.au](mailto:admin@secca.org.au)  
[swanautism.org.au/secca](http://swanautism.org.au/secca)

SECCA have also made an accessible free App that teaches people with disability about relationships and sex education and helps them to communicate their sexual needs. You can download it from the App Store or Google Play or by going to this link:

[swanautism.org.au/secca-app](http://swanautism.org.au/secca-app)

On the Family Planning Victoria website you can find heaps of Plain English sexual health fact sheets about things like consent, protective behaviours, sex, contraception and more:

[swanautism.org.au/shvic-factsheets-plain-english](http://swanautism.org.au/shvic-factsheets-plain-english)

## Mental Health

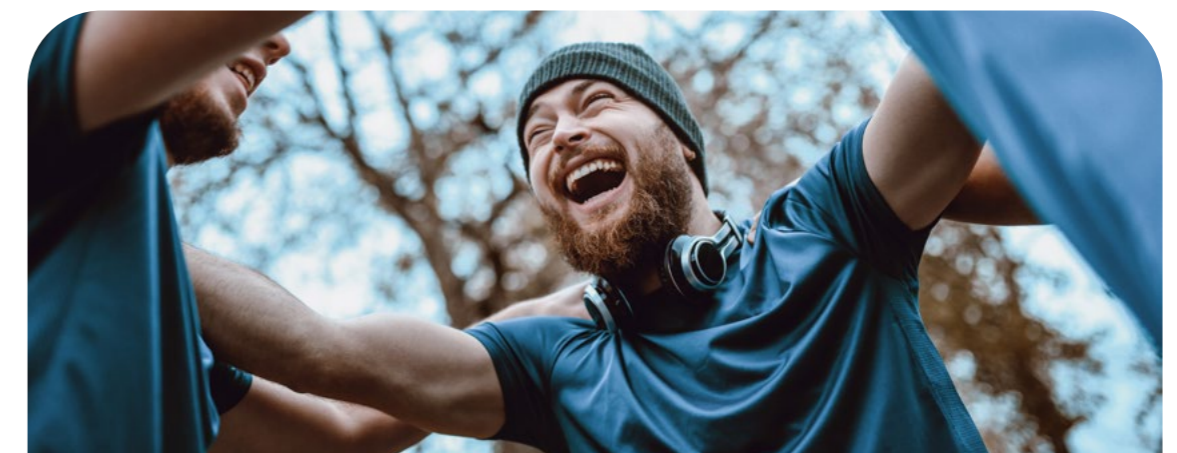
Mental health is about keeping your mind healthy. Your feelings can change the things you do and how you act. Making sure you look after your mental health is very important. This section will give you ideas and tips on how to look after your mental health. It will also talk about different problems that can change your mental health, and where you can get support to feel better.

## Ways to look after your mental health

There are lots of different ways you can look after your mental health. You could:

- go for a walk
- go to lunch with a friend
- visit a friend or family member
- go to the movies
- watch a funny TV show
- go to the gym
- put on some music and dance around
- go to the beach
- take a long relaxing bath.

You can choose to do these things, or you can choose to do things that make you feel good that aren't on the list. It's up to you. The space on the following page is for you to write down or draw some things you can do that make you feel good.



## Things I can do to look after my mental health:

[illegible]

Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) have this Easy Read booklet with more tips to help you keep mentally well:

[swanautism.org.au/cid-tips-mental-health](http://swanautism.org.au/cid-tips-mental-health)

## Mental health concerns

We have all had times where we feel sad or angry, but sometimes you might feel sad or angry for a long time. You might not even know why you are feeling sad. If you feel this way for more than 2 weeks and your feelings are making it hard for you to cope, then you might have a mental health condition.

The first thing you should do is talk about the way you are feeling to someone you trust such as a friend, family member, or support worker. You can ask them to come see the doctor with you if you want. Your doctor knows a lot about mental health and can help you work out what supports you might need to start feeling better. These supports are called treatments.

## GP Mental Health Care Plan

If your doctor agrees that you need support to look after your mental health, they can make a GP Mental Health Care Plan for you. A GP Mental Health Care Plan can include referrals to people who are trained to support you with your mental health like a psychologist or a social worker. Medicare will cover up to \$124.50 per hour of the cost of seeing a psychologist for up to 10 sessions per year. This means if your psychologist costs more than \$124.50 per hour you just have to pay the difference. This is called a gap fee.

To get a GP Mental Health Care Plan you need to make an appointment with your usual doctor. It's a good idea to let them know that you want to get a GP Mental Health Care Plan when you book your appointment because it can take a bit longer to write your Plan than a usual appointment. At your appointment be honest with your doctor about how you've been feeling so they can choose the right supports for you. You might find it useful to write down your feelings so you don't forget to mention anything important. Your doctor will give you 6 psychologist sessions in your Plan to start with. If you think you need more sessions after the first 6 then go see your doctor to talk about it and they can add another 4 psychologist sessions to your Plan.

For more information about GP Mental Health Care Plans go to the Headspace website:

[swanautism.org.au/headspace-mental-health-plan](http://swanautism.org.au/headspace-mental-health-plan)

## Medications

Your doctor might decide to give you medication to help with your mental health. Your doctor will talk to you about the different types of medications available as well as how it will help you and any side effects. If you start taking a medication but it doesn't make you feel better within a few weeks, or it makes you feel even worse, make sure you speak to your doctor straight away.

## Community mental health services

Community mental health services are free services run by the Government for people with serious mental health conditions and for people who have just gotten out of hospital so they can stay mentally well. Each community mental health service has a team of doctors, nurses, social workers and psychologists that support people to look after their mental health.

You can find Community Mental Health Services in the South West WA region in the WACHS South West Health Services Directory:

[swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-south-west-mental-health](http://swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-south-west-mental-health)

To find Community Mental Health Services in the Great Southern WA (Albany) region go to the Great Southern Mental Health Service website:

[swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-great-southern-mental-health](http://swanautism.org.au/wa-country-health-great-southern-mental-health)

## Support groups

A support group is a small group of people with the same condition who meet regularly to talk about their feelings and experiences and to share ways that help them cope. Support groups are a really good way to meet new people and to learn more about looking after your mental health. Most support groups are free.

You can find support groups in your area using the Black Dog Institute website:

[swanautism.org.au/black-dog-support-groups](http://swanautism.org.au/black-dog-support-groups)

ConnectGroups has a directory of contact details for hundreds of different support groups across Western Australia:

[swanautism.org.au/connect-groups-directory](http://swanautism.org.au/connect-groups-directory)

## NDIS and Mental Health

The NDIS uses the term psychosocial disabilities for people who have a disability because of their mental health condition. If you have a psychosocial disability you might be able to get funding in your NDIS Plan for supports to help you stay mentally healthy. Some examples of supports you might get funded include getting a support worker to help you with everyday tasks or to help you participate in activities in your community, or funding for a psychosocial recovery coach. A psychosocial recovery coach is a person who will spend time with you and the people who help you (like your family members or support people) to understand what your needs are and will give you advice and information about different services and supports that might help you.

To get psychosocial funding from NDIS you will need to be able to prove your psychosocial disability has a severe and lifelong impact on your ability to do everyday tasks. To do this you will need to get your doctor and your support worker or other appropriate person (like a social worker or mental health worker who supports you regularly) to fill in a NDIS Evidence of Psychosocial Disability Form.

If you already have a NDIS Plan and want to see if you can get more supports added to your plan because of your psychosocial disability you should talk about it with your Local Area Coordinator (LAC).

Your LAC service provider in the South West and Great Southern regions of WA is APM. You can contact APM by calling 1300 276 522.

For more about how NDIS can support people with psychosocial disabilities as well as fact sheets and information on how to apply go to the NDIS website:

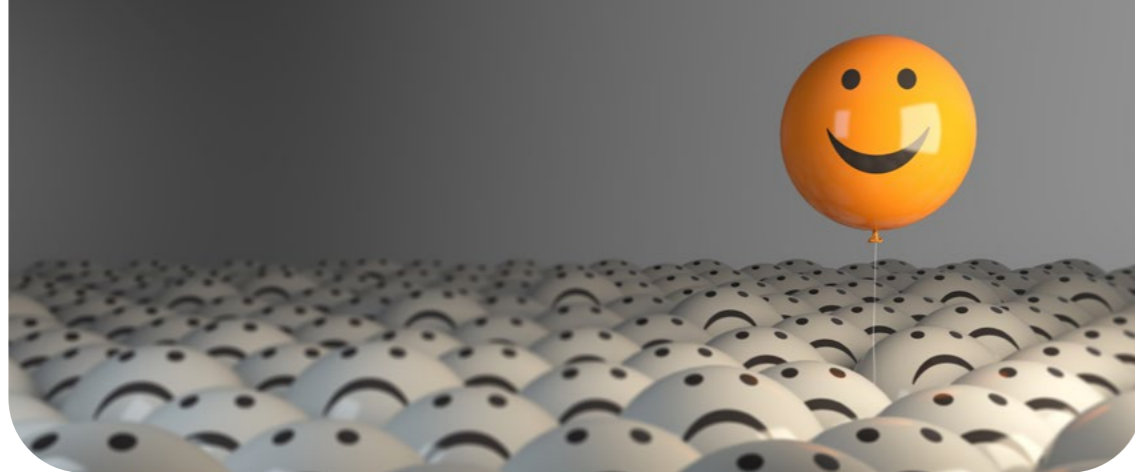
[swanautism.org.au/ndis-mental-health](http://swanautism.org.au/ndis-mental-health)

The Reimagine Today website helps people with psychosocial disability to understand the NDIS, including who can apply, how to apply, and how to make sure your NDIS Plan helps you get the supports you need:

[swanautism.org.au/reimagine-today](http://swanautism.org.au/reimagine-today)

Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWa) has made this set of really useful NDIS resources that includes fact sheets, tips, and printable booklets you can fill in that will help you choose the supports and services for you:

[swanautism.org.au/comhwa-ndis-supports](http://swanautism.org.au/comhwa-ndis-supports)



## Mental health crisis helplines

### Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)

Phone line for anyone involved in a mental health emergency including the person's family members, carers, people in the community or health professionals. MHERL can give information, advice and referrals to people in the Perth metro and Peel (Mandurah-Waroona) areas.

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Perth metro area: 1300 555 788

Peel (Mandurah-Waroona area): 1800 676 822

### RuralLink

After-hours mental health phone service for people living in country and remote WA regions. The trained mental health staff can give advice, information and referrals to other mental health services. Available Monday to Friday 5pm - 8am and 24 hours a day on weekends.

Freecall: 1800 552 002

### Lifeline

Crisis support given by trained volunteers to anyone experiencing mental health distress. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone: 13 11 14

Text chat: 0477 13 11 14

(Available everyday, 10am - 10pm AWST)

Online chat: [swanautism.org.au/lifeline-crisis-chat](https://swanautism.org.au/lifeline-crisis-chat)

(Available everyday, 5pm - 10pm AWST)

### Beyond Blue

Talk to trained mental health professionals and get advice, information and referrals to other mental health services. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Online chat: [swanautism.org.au/beyond-blue-chat-counsellor](https://swanautism.org.au/beyond-blue-chat-counsellor)

(Available everyday, 11am - 10pm AWST)

## Suicide Call Back Service

Phone line and online chat with trained counsellors who can give support and advice to anyone affected by suicide. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone: 1300 659 467

Online chat: [swanautism.org.au/suicide-call-back-counselling](https://swanautism.org.au/suicide-call-back-counselling)

## More mental health resources

Visit the SANE website for more information about the different types of mental health treatment available:

[swanautism.org.au/sane-treatments-mental-illness](https://swanautism.org.au/sane-treatments-mental-illness)

Healthy Mind is an Easy Read website created to help people with intellectual disabilities look after their mental health by doing fun online activities and worksheets:

[swanautism.org.au/healthy-mind](https://swanautism.org.au/healthy-mind)

People who can help me with my Mental Health is an Easy Read booklet made by the University of NSW:

[swanautism.org.au/unsw-mental-health-help](https://swanautism.org.au/unsw-mental-health-help)

## Online Safety

Doing things online can be useful and fun but it's important to know how you can keep yourself safe online.

### Keeping your personal information safe when you're online:

- Be careful about sharing your personal information, including where you live, and where you go to school or work
- Use passwords that people won't be able to guess
- Keep your passwords safe and don't tell other people. You might want to share your passwords with a loved one, but don't share them with friends or strangers
- If you use a computer that doesn't belong to you, always log out when you have finished
- Don't use public computers or public WiFi to do your online banking or shopping.

**Making and meeting online friends and online dating:**

- Always talk to someone you can trust if you are thinking about online dating
- Never give anyone on an online dating website your personal information, such as your address or bank details, and never send people money
- Remember anyone can make a fake profile – you don’t really know if they are who they say they are
- Never meet a stranger for a date by yourself, and never meet in places such as their home. Choose a busy public place such as a café
- If something feels wrong, tell a parent or someone else you trust immediately
- If you have been hurt or abused by someone you met up with from online, tell the Police.

**Tips for staying safe on social media:**

- Don’t put too much personal information in your profile
- You can change your privacy settings in Facebook so that only your Facebook friends can see what you post
- Don’t accept friend requests from people you haven’t met or you don’t like or trust
- You can ‘un-friend’ anyone who is upsetting you
- You can also block people so they can’t see anything about you on Facebook, and you can’t see them.

**Tips for staying safe when using online banking or online shopping:**

- If you use internet banking, make sure it is the real bank website. You can do this by typing the URL into the address bar and making sure there is a locked padlock icon next to the URL
- Don’t let your computer auto-save your username or password
- Always log out of online banking when you have finished
- Contact your bank to block cards and bank accounts if you’ve been hacked.

To report an online scam go to the ScamWatch website:

[swanautism.org.au/scam-watch-report](http://swanautism.org.au/scam-watch-report)

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is online bullying. Some examples of cyberbullying are:

- People saying mean things in text messages and emails
- People sending you messages, pictures or videos that make you upset or embarrass you
- People gossiping or spreading nasty rumours about you.

**What can I do if I’m being cyberbullied?**

- Leave any groups or chats where people are being mean and upsetting you.
- Keep copies of messages or photos that have been sent to make you feel bad. You can do this by taking screen shots and saving them or printing them out.
- Don’t reply to the person who is bullying you. Don’t say bad things back to them either, because this can also get you into trouble.
- Block the bully’s phone number and social media account so they can’t contact you.
- Talk to someone you trust about what is happening.

You also need to make sure you don’t become a cyberbully yourself. Don’t share anything online that could upset someone. This could be things like mean comments, gossiping, cruel or rude jokes, rude or upsetting photos or videos.

For more information about Cyberbullying visit the eSafety Commissioner website:

[swanautism.org.au/esafety-cyberbullying](http://swanautism.org.au/esafety-cyberbullying)

For fact sheets and Easy English resources about staying safe online, visit the ThinkUKnow website:

[swanautism.org.au/thinkuknow-resources](http://swanautism.org.au/thinkuknow-resources)

**More online safety resources**

The eSafety Commissioner website has Easy Read booklets about being safe online and image-based online abuse:

[swanautism.org.au/esafety-living-with-disability-easy-read](http://swanautism.org.au/esafety-living-with-disability-easy-read)

Down Syndrome Australia have made this useful booklet about how to stay safe online:

[swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-social-media](http://swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-social-media)

**Notes**

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# Life after School



## Leaving school – what now?

### Your options after leaving school

Some people may choose to go on to further education or training, to get the skills and qualifications they need to get the job of their choice. Other people might want to start working and earning a wage as soon as possible when they leave school. What you decide to do is up to you. Some options of what you can do after leaving school include:

- Post-secondary education and training: gaining formal qualifications at university or TAFE, undertaking a vocational education and training (VET) course, studying at a registered training organisation (RTO), or doing an apprenticeship or traineeship
- Open employment: finding a job on your own, or with assistance from job agencies or Disability Employment Services (DES)
- Supported employment: usually provided by organisations called Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE), this is where you have a support worker to work alongside you and assist you at work
- Self-employment: working for yourself, or starting a business or microenterprise either on your own or with help from a service provider or NDIS
- Day programs or community day centres: where organisations run programs that help people with disability participate in the community, or can focus on independent life skills such as meal preparation and using public transport, or recreational activities such as music, cooking and crafts
- Volunteering: doing unpaid work, either for an organisation doing something that interests you and connects you with the local community, or for a business so you can gain work experience
- Post-school transition programs: usually funded by the government and run by organisations and disability service providers, transition programs can prepare you for employment or further education by helping you plan what you want to do, and building your skills with things like training and job trials.

The 'Launchpad - Leaving School and Leading your own Life' website created by Autism Spectrum Australia is also an awesome resource for autistic people transitioning from high school into adult life. It has tons of information and real life stories about post-secondary study, employment, becoming independent, looking after your health, and more.

[swanautism.org.au/autism-launch-pad](https://swanautism.org.au/autism-launch-pad)

'Get Ready for Study and Work' is a workbook to help you decide what you'd like to do once you leave school. It has information and advice as well as activities to complete. The workbook is available in Easy English, a version for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and a Parent's Guide. You can download the workbooks and parent guide from the National Disability Coordinator's Office (NDCO) website

[swanautism.org.au/wsu-ready-for-study-work](https://swanautism.org.au/wsu-ready-for-study-work)

## ACTIVITY: Exploring my options

You can use this activity to help you think about what you'd like to do moving forward. You can write down your answers, and there's extra space for notes at the end if you need it.

My interests: These are things I enjoy doing.

For example: I like animals. I enjoy helping other people. I like using computers.

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My strengths: These are good characteristics I have.

For example: I am a good listener. I am very organised. I am artistic.

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My skills: These are things that I do well, or already have experience at doing.

For example: I have computer skills. I am a fast learner. I am really good at maths.

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## Employment

Most people want to get a job when they finish high school or tertiary studies. Having a job gives you more independence and your own money. This section will talk about the different types of employment available for people with disabilities, support services that can help you find and keep a job, how to make sure you're treated fairly in the workplace, and where you can get help and advice about employment.

### Deciding what kind of job you want

If you're not sure what kind of job you want, a good place to start is by thinking about your interests, skills, and goals:

- your interests: things that you enjoy doing
- your skills: things you do well
- your goals: things you want to achieve in the future.

You will need further education or training for some jobs. If you want to do further studies to get the job you want, go to the Education section earlier in this chapter.

There is a quiz called 'My Employment Pathway' on the Everyone Can Work website that can help you decide the best employment options for you:

[swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-employment-pathway](https://swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-employment-pathway)

The Ticket to Work website has lots of information about transitioning to employment after high school:

[swanautism.org.au/ttw-resources-young-people](https://swanautism.org.au/ttw-resources-young-people)

### Work experience

Another good way to find out what type of job you might like is by doing work experience. This is where you try out a job for a set amount of time (this could be 1 full day, or a few hours over a couple of weeks). Work experience gives you a chance to try out different jobs and see what interests you. You don't get paid for doing work experience.

You can find out more about work experience on the Everyone Can Work website:

[swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-experience-volunteering](https://swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-experience-volunteering)

The Everyone Can Work website has a section all about work experience as well as an Easy Read booklet you can download:

[swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-interests](https://swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-interests)

## NDIS and Employment

NDIS can provide lots of different supports for people looking for work and those who already have a job. Some of these supports include:

- Support preparing for getting a job: this can include things like working on your interview skills, help writing a resume, travel training
- Support to find a job including work experience opportunities
- Transport costs of getting to and from work
- Personal care supports at work if you have high support needs: such as someone to help you eat and go to the toilet
- On-the-job training and mentoring
- Individual and group employment supports for people working in an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE)
- Support for people wanting to start a microenterprise
- Support for people who want to change jobs
- Workplace assessments and counselling.

NDIS participants who are 15 – 24 years old can get employment support added to their plan. This is called Finding and Keeping a Job funding. You can use this funding to:

- find more work experience opportunities
- get support and training while on work experience
- support deciding what kind of work might suit you
- help creating a resume and preparing for job interviews
- help to develop work-related skills.

To get employment supports in your NDIS plan you'll need goals that relate to employment. An example of a long-term goal could be to get a job. A short-term goal could be about the next steps you need to take towards getting a job. To discuss getting employment supports funded in your NDIS plan contact your LAC. LAC services in South-West and Great Southern WA are provided by APM. You can call APM on 1300 276 522 or email [lac@apm.net.au](mailto:lac@apm.net.au)

For more information about NDIS employment supports check out the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-work-study-support](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-work-study-support)

### Types of employment

There are many different types of employment available to people with disabilities:

Open employment is working in regular employment instead of for a disability employer. Some examples of open employment are working in a clothing store or at a cafe. You can make better money working in open employment rather than working for an ADE. If you want to know more about open employment

check out the Everyone Can Work website:

[swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-open-employment](https://swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-open-employment)

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE's) are also known as supported employment or 'sheltered workshops'. ADE's are not-for-profit organisations that employ people with disabilities. They can provide ongoing employment or they can act as a stepping stone, helping to give people with disabilities skills and confidence before they move onto another job. ADE's use a supported wage system - this means you are paid a percentage of a normal working wage based on your ability to work compared to an employee without disabilities. More about the supported wage system can be found on the Job Access website:

[swanautism.org.au/job-access-supported-wage](https://swanautism.org.au/job-access-supported-wage)

Volunteering is unpaid work. It can be a step towards getting paid work and has benefits like giving you work experience, giving you work skills, and helps you give back to the community.

Microenterprises, also known as micro-businesses, are small businesses run by 1 person rather than a big company. They usually have between 1 and 4 employees. An example of a microenterprise is a small family business, or a business set up for a person with disability by their family. You can learn more about microenterprises on the Valued Lives website:

[swanautism.org.au/valued-lives-microenterprises](https://swanautism.org.au/valued-lives-microenterprises)

Self-employment is where you work for yourself instead of for a company or business. You make money directly from what you do in your business.

### Disability Employment Services

Disability Employment Services (DES) are funded by the Government to help people with disabilities find and keep a job. DES can help you prepare and look for work, and give you support once you have a job with things like workplace modifications and mentoring. DES can also help you get work experience opportunities and short job placements. DES can also help people with disabilities who live in rural and remote areas of WA through the Community Development Program.

To get support from DES you need to be 15 or older and have a disability. You will also need to do a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA). A JCA is a test Centrelink uses to decide how many hours per week you can work. You can usually get support from DES for 6 months, but DES can give you ongoing support if they think you need it. You can find more information about DES on the Everyone Can Work website:

[swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-des](https://swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work-des)

Job Access Advice Line

Ph: 1800 464 800

(Monday to Fridays, 7am – 5pm AWST)

Online enquiry form: [swanautism.org.au/job-access-online-enquiry](https://swanautism.org.au/job-access-online-enquiry)

Webpage: [swanautism.org.au/job-access](https://swanautism.org.au/job-access)

## Financial supports to help people with disabilities find and keep a job

If you want to start your own business or microenterprise, the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme is a Government program that can give you free business training, mentoring, and extra money from Centrelink to support you in the first 6 months of your business. You can find out more about the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme here:

[swanautism.org.au/dese-neis](https://swanautism.org.au/dese-neis)

Mobility Allowance is a Centrelink payment to help with travel costs for people with disabilities who are on Disability Support Pension, Jobseeker, Austudy or Youth Allowance that either work, are looking for work, or study, for at least 8 hours a week and don't already have transport funding in their NDIS plan.

To get more information about who can apply and how much you can get call Centrelink on 13 27 17 or visit the Services Australia website:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-mobility-allowance](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-mobility-allowance)

The Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) gives financial help to eligible people with disability and their employers to buy work related modifications, equipment, Auslan services and workplace assistance and support services. EAF is available to eligible people with disability who are about to start a job, are self-employed or who are currently working. It is also available to people with disability who need Auslan assistance or special work equipment to look for and prepare for a job.

EAF can help to buy workplace modifications and services like:

- modifications to work vehicles
- special equipment for the workplace
- information and communication devices
- Auslan interpreting services
- Disability awareness training for management and other staff at your workplace.

You can find out more about EAF on the Job Access website:

[swanautism.org.au/job-access-employment-assistance](https://swanautism.org.au/job-access-employment-assistance)



## Financial support for employers of people with disabilities

Disabled Apprentice Wage Support payments are for employers who employ an apprentice who has a disability or currently employ an apprentice who acquired a disability since they started their apprenticeship and now need extra support. Tutoring and mentoring services are also available to apprentices through this program.

Wage subsidy payments are also available through Disability Employment Services (DES) to organisations that employ people with disabilities on a long term basis.

More about financial support for employers can be found on the Job Access website:

[swanautism.org.au/job-access-financial-support](https://swanautism.org.au/job-access-financial-support)

## Disability disclosure

Disability disclosure means deciding whether or not to tell your employer that you have a disability. You only have to disclose your disability if it might affect your ability to do your job or to work safely. By law an employer cannot discriminate against you because of your disability, and they must keep all information about your disability private. Sometimes it can be a good idea to disclose your disability to your employer because if you have an understanding boss they will offer you extra support or training because of your disability. Employers can also get subsidies and support to make workplace adjustments for you if you disclose your disability to them. For more about disability disclosure check out the MyFuture website:

[swanautism.org.au/my-future-disclosing-disability](https://swanautism.org.au/my-future-disclosing-disability)



## Getting paid

It's important to make sure you're getting paid the right amount for the work you do. When you start a job it's a good idea to ask what your wage or pay rate is, so you can work out approximately how much you'll get each week. Your pay rate will depend on what type of work you do, how old you are, and whether you're a full time, part time, or casual employee.

A full-time employee is someone who works 38 hours per week. A part time employee works less hours than a full-time employee, but usually gets the same hours each week. Both full time and part time employees get leave entitlements.

A casual employee is someone who can work different hours each week. Some weeks they may have lots of hours, and some weeks they may have none. A casual employee doesn't have leave entitlements.

Leave entitlements are when you get paid even if you don't go to work. Full time and part time employees get annual leave (which is where you get paid when you're on holidays or a break from work) and sick leave (which means if you're sick and can't go to work you will still get paid). There are other types of leave too, and leave entitlements have some rules such as the amount of paid sick leave days you can have, so it's best to check with your boss or visit the FairWork website for more information:

[swanautism.org.au/fair-work-leave](https://swanautism.org.au/fair-work-leave)

If you're a casual employee you don't get leave entitlements, but you get a higher pay rate than a full time or part time employee.

Everyone who works in Australia has to pay tax. Tax is a small part of your pay that is given to the government. Your boss should take your tax out of your earnings before paying you. It's illegal to not pay tax. At the end of the financial year (which is 30 June each year) you can do a tax return and you might get a bit of your tax money back. You can find out more about paying tax in the Money section of this booklet.

If you are a full time or part time employee, or a casual employee who earns more than \$450 a month, your boss should also be putting money into your superannuation account. Superannuation is money that you can only use once you reach retirement age (which is currently 65 years old). It's illegal for your boss not to pay you superannuation if you're entitled to it.

To learn more about paying tax and tax returns, visit the Australian Tax Office website:

[swanautism.org.au/ato-working-employee](https://swanautism.org.au/ato-working-employee)

For more about superannuation and leave entitlements, visit the FairWork WA website:

[swanautism.org.au/fair-work-pay-wages](https://swanautism.org.au/fair-work-pay-wages)

If you think your boss isn't paying you the right amount or isn't paying your superannuation or leave entitlements you can contact Wageline. Wageline is the WA government's helpline for people having wage issues.

Wageline

Ph: 1300 655 266 (Monday to Fridays, 9am - 4.30pm)

Email: [wageline@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:wageline@dmirs.wa.gov.au)

[swanautism.org.au/commerce-wa-wageline-contact](https://swanautism.org.au/commerce-wa-wageline-contact)

Check out the Fair Work WA website for useful tools and resources about getting paid:

[swanautism.org.au/fairwork-contact](https://swanautism.org.au/fairwork-contact)

## Bullying in the workplace

Bullying in the workplace is when a person or group of people repeatedly act unreasonably towards another employee (or group of employees). Some examples of workplace bullying include:

- behaving aggressively
- teasing or practical jokes
- pressuring someone to behave inappropriately
- excluding someone from work-related events
- unreasonable work demands.

Everyone has the right not to be bullied or harassed at work. It is against the law to bully someone at work. Almost all employees are covered by these anti-bullying protections, including volunteers.

If you're being bullied at work you should speak to your boss or to upper management. If nothing changes, or you're unhappy with their response, you should contact the Fair Work Commission.

Fair Work Commission

Ph: 13 13 94

(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 5.30pm)

Online enquiries:

[swanautism.org.au/fairwork-online-enquiry](https://swanautism.org.au/fairwork-online-enquiry)

Webpage: [swanautism.org.au/fairwork-workplace-bullying](https://swanautism.org.au/fairwork-workplace-bullying)

You can also get free legal advice and support about workplace bullying from the Fair Work Commission's Workplace Advice Service. To learn more about the Workplace Advice Service:

[swanautism.org.au/fwc-legal-advice](https://swanautism.org.au/fwc-legal-advice)



## Discrimination in the workplace

Discrimination means the unfair or bad treatment of a certain group of people because of their religion, race, gender, age, or disability. In Australia, people with disabilities are protected by a set of laws called The Disability Discrimination Act (1992). The Disability Discrimination Act makes it illegal for anyone to discriminate against you or harass you based on your disability. These laws also support equal opportunity and access for people with disabilities. Equal opportunity means getting the same chance as everyone else at doing everyday things like getting a job, going to a sporting event, catching the bus, going to school, and so on.

Unfortunately, sometimes the rights of people with disabilities are not respected or listened to. Some examples of disability discrimination in the workplace are:

- your workplace refusing to make reasonable adjustments to help you work
- your boss making jokes about your disability to your co-workers
- your boss refusing to give you a promotion because of your disability.

You have the right to speak up if someone is discriminating against you, treating you badly or harassing you in the workplace. If you're being discriminated against you should first talk to your boss or to upper management. Most workplaces have an anti-discrimination policy and a conflict management policy, which is a document that tells them the best way to sort out any problems in the workplace.

If you have tried speaking up but the problem is still happening, or if the person you made a complaint to wasn't helpful, you can contact the WA Equal Opportunity Commission. To make a complaint you can fill in their online form, or you can print out the form, fill it in and post it to the Commission:

WA Equal Opportunity Commission

Albert Facey House

469 Wellington Street

PERTH WA 6000

Online complaint form: [swanautism.org.au/wa-gov-make-complaint](https://swanautism.org.au/wa-gov-make-complaint)

You can also contact the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). The AHRC is the government body that deals with human rights laws and protections in Australia. You can even make a complaint in Auslan or in another language if English isn't your first language. You can call the AHRC on (02) 9284 9600.

Online complaint form: [swanautism.org.au/human-rights-make-complaint](https://swanautism.org.au/human-rights-make-complaint)

You can find more information about discrimination protections on the Legal Aid website:

[swanautism.org.au/legal-aid-discrimination](https://swanautism.org.au/legal-aid-discrimination)

## More places to get information and advice about employment

The Everyone Can Work website has information and advice about available employment options and supports for people with disabilities in Australia, including lots of Easy Read resources:

[swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work](https://swanautism.org.au/everyone-can-work)

The MyWay Employability website is a career planning platform that was designed in WA by and for autistic people. You can discover further education and training and employment pathways and track your progress:

[swanautism.org.au/my-way-employability](https://swanautism.org.au/my-way-employability)

JobAccess is the Australian Government's Disability Employment Services website:

[swanautism.org.au/job-access-people-with-disability](https://swanautism.org.au/job-access-people-with-disability)

The National Disability Coordination Officer program (NDCO) helps people with disabilities transition from high school to further education and training or employment. The NDCO website also has some great resources like the Get Ready for Study or Work workbook. The NDCO Coordinator for the South-West and Great Southern WA regions is Bernard Tarbotton from Edge Employment. You can call him on (08) 9286 6600 or by email: [ndcowa@edge.org.au](mailto:ndcowa@edge.org.au)

NDCO website: [swanautism.org.au/ndcowa](https://swanautism.org.au/ndcowa)

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# Housing

## Housing

Having a home is important to everyone. There are lots of different housing options. Some people choose to stay living at home with their family, but most people want to move into their own home at some stage. Some people live on their own, or with their friends or a partner. Some people live in supported accommodation. This section will talk about some of the different housing options available to people with disabilities and some useful tips when choosing your housing, and where you can get advice and support.

### Housing and NDIS

There are lots of different ways that your NDIS plan can fund supports that give you choice and control to live in housing that suits your needs. NDIS calls these supports Individual Living Options (ILO's). NDIS will not give you funding to buy or rent a home, but can fund supports that help you live independently, like support workers who visit you and help you with household tasks or personal care (like getting dressed or showering), or support workers who help you do tasks that help you to live independently like help with budgeting, meal planning or going grocery shopping with you. ILO's can also include things like home modifications or assistive technology that helps you live independently, or assistance with household chores like paying for a house cleaner or gardener.

### Individual Living Options (ILO's):

- Living in your own home, with supports that suit your needs
- Living in shared accommodation (such as with friends or a partner), with supports that suit your needs
- Co-residency: a support person lives part time or full time in your home and gives you supports to live independently
- Host family: living in a support person's home (sometimes their family lives there too), where they support you to live independently
- Home modifications or assistive technology to help you live independently
- If you have a microboard, you can get supports funded that help your microboard in supporting you to live independently.

More information about Individual Living Options (ILO) from the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-individualised-living-options](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-individualised-living-options)

MySupports website: Individual Living Options

[swanautism.org.au/my-supports-individual-living-options](https://swanautism.org.au/my-supports-individual-living-options)

About Home Modifications and Assistive Technology funded by NDIS:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-home-modifications](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-home-modifications)

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-providing-assistive-technology](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-providing-assistive-technology)

## Supported Independent Living

Another housing support NDIS can fund is Supported Independent Living (SIL). Supported Independent Living is more commonly known as living in a group home. This is where a few people with disabilities live together and get help from support workers to do everyday tasks. Some group homes will have support workers there all the time, and other group homes will only have support workers there some of the time. You can find more information about Supported Independent Living (SIL) on the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-supported-independent-living](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-supported-independent-living)

## Specialist Disability Accommodation

NDIS can also fund Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). SDA is housing support for people with very complex and high support needs. More information about Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is available on the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-supported-disability-accommodation](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-supported-disability-accommodation)

## More NDIS housing resources:

To get funding for housing supports included in your NDIS Plan, you can talk to your Local Area Coordinator (LAC), or you can complete the 'Supporting Evidence Form – Home and Living Request Form' which is available on the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-home-living-supporting-evidence](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-home-living-supporting-evidence)

WayHome is an online platform that helps people with disabilities to find individual housing options that suit them, such as finding a co-resident or host family, finding housemates for shared supported living, or finding Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA):

[swanautism.org.au/way-home](https://swanautism.org.au/way-home)

The Summer Foundation made this useful guide to housing and the NDIS in WA:

[swanautism.org.au/summer-foundation-housing-possibilities](https://swanautism.org.au/summer-foundation-housing-possibilities)

## Renting privately

Even if you don't have a NDIS Plan, you still have lots of housing options. You might be able to rent your own house, either on your own, or with friends or a partner. To see if you can afford to rent a house, you will need to create a budget. A budget is a list of your income (like money you earn from working, and any money you get from Centrelink) and your expenses (things you have to pay for, like food, petrol for your car, or paying back a loan), then working out how much money you have left over. You can find advice on making a budget in the 'Money' section of this booklet.

## Rent Assistance

Rent Assistance is a Centrelink payment that can help you pay your rent. If you receive Disability Support Pension, Austudy, ABSTUDY, Youth Allowance or JobSeeker and pay rent or board, you can get Rent Assistance. Find out more about Rent Assistance here:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-rent-assistance](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-rent-assistance)

## Bond assistance

Bond Assistance is a loan from the Department of Housing that helps you pay for the costs of moving into a rental. Bond Assistance can help pay your rental bond (the same amount as 4 weeks rent), plus your first 2 weeks of rent payments. You have a bit of money taken out of your Centrelink payments each fortnight to pay back the loan. To qualify for Bond Assistance, you have to be under the Low Income Limits and Asset Limits decided by the Department of Housing. Visit the Department of Housing website for more information and to download an Application Form:

[swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-bond-assistance](https://swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-bond-assistance)

## National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

NRAS is a program run by the Department of Social Services that provides houses to rent at a reduced cost. You need to be under the Tenant Income Limits set by the Department of Social Services. You can find more information here:

[swanautism.org.au/dss-rental-affordability-scheme-tenant-info](https://swanautism.org.au/dss-rental-affordability-scheme-tenant-info)

NRAS Income Limits fact sheet:

[swanautism.org.au/dss-rental-affordability-scheme-income-index](https://swanautism.org.au/dss-rental-affordability-scheme-income-index)

## Public housing

The Department of Housing makes some houses available for a lot cheaper than usual rental costs. This is called public housing. Most people know public housing as 'Homeswest housing'. The amount you pay for a public housing property depends on your income. The most you have to pay is 25% of your income. For example, if your income is \$400 a week, your weekly rental payment in a public housing property would be \$100.

There is a long waiting list and sometimes people have to wait a year or longer to get a public housing property, so if you are interested in public housing, it's a good idea to put your name on the waiting list as soon as you can. You might be able to get on the 'Priority Assistance' waiting list because of your disability, so make sure you ask. There are income limits and other rules to be able to get public housing, so for more information you can visit or contact your local Housing Authority office, or check out the Department of Housing website:

[swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-public-housing](https://swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-public-housing)

Public housing information for people with disabilities:

[swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-disability-options](https://swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-disability-options)

About the Priority Assistance waiting list:

[swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-priority-housing-assistance](https://swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-priority-housing-assistance)

## Community housing

Community housing is similar to public housing, except that the houses are owned and managed by organisations and charities instead of the Department of Housing. For more information you can visit or contact your local Housing Authority office, or check out the Department of Housing website:

[swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-community-housing](https://swanautism.org.au/housing-wa-community-housing)



## Housing Authority offices in South-west WA:

### Mandurah

1/17 Sholl St, Mandurah

Phone: (08) 9583 6100

Email: [mandurah@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:mandurah@communities.wa.gov.au)

### Bunbury

22 Forrest Avenue, Bunbury

Phone: (08) 9792 2111

Email: [bunbury@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:bunbury@communities.wa.gov.au)

### Busselton

88 Kent Street, Busselton

Phone: (08) 6277 3666

Email: [busselton@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:busselton@communities.wa.gov.au)

### Manjimup

Unit 10, 30-32 Rose Street, Manjimup

Phone: (08) 9771 7800

Email: [manjimup@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:manjimup@communities.wa.gov.au)

### Albany

131 Aberdeen Street, Albany

Phone: (08) 9845 7144

Email: [albany@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:albany@communities.wa.gov.au)

## Buying your own home

You might want to buy your own home. Buying a house can be expensive, so you will need to create a budget to see what you can afford. You can find out about making a budget in the 'Money' section of this booklet.

When you buy a house, usually you get a loan from the bank and pay it back over many years. The loan is called a mortgage. The bank will charge you fees on top of your loan repayments. This is called interest. Some other expenses that you have to pay on top of your loan repayments include:

- council rates: money you pay each year to cover the costs of things like rubbish and recycling bin collection
- water rates: money you pay the Water Corporation on top of your usual water bill costs
- home and contents insurance: money you pay to an insurance company in case your house is destroyed by a fire, or your house gets robbed. If this happens and you have insurance, the insurance company will give you money to replace what got destroyed or stolen.
- costs of any home repairs or maintenance, like fixing broken taps, and lawn mowing.

The Government has a few different ways to support you in buying a home. People with disabilities can apply for a Keystart Access Home Loan. Keystart is the Housing Authority's home loan department. An Access Home Loan is a shared equity loan. Shared equity means that part of your home belongs to the Government, so your mortgage payments cost less than if you had to buy the house on your own. There are income limits and other rules for Access Home Loans, so you need to contact Keystart or visit their website for more information:

### Keystart Loans

Level 3, 502 Hay Street, Subiaco WA  
Phone: 1300 578 278  
Email: [info@keystart.com.au](mailto:info@keystart.com.au)  
Contact form: [swanautism.org.au/keystart-contact](https://swanautism.org.au/keystart-contact)

More about Access Home Loans:  
[swanautism.org.au/keystart-access-home-loan](https://swanautism.org.au/keystart-access-home-loan)

### First Home Owners Grant (FHOG)

The Government helps people buy their first home with the First Home Owners Grant (FHOG). The FHOG is a payment of \$10,000 given to people buying or building their first home. The house has to be new - you can't get the FHOG for already-built houses. There are some rules about getting the FHOG, so check the First Home Owners Grant website:

[swanautism.org.au/dept-finance-first-home-grant](https://swanautism.org.au/dept-finance-first-home-grant)

The Department of Consumer Protection has created the 'Home Buyer's Survival Guide' which is full of useful info and advice about buying your own home:

[swanautism.org.au/commerce-wa-home-buyers-guide](https://swanautism.org.au/commerce-wa-home-buyers-guide)

### Emergency and crisis housing

If you don't have anywhere safe to sleep at night and need help finding somewhere to stay, contact these emergency accommodation services:

#### EntryPoint Perth

Referrals to crisis and emergency accommodation services  
Phone: (08) 6496 0001 or 1800 124 684  
(Open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 5pm)  
Online registration form: [swanautism.org.au/entry-point-perth-registration](https://swanautism.org.au/entry-point-perth-registration)

#### Crisis Care

Phone: (08) 9223 1111  
(Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)  
Country callers (free call): 1800 199 008

#### Homeless Advisory Service

Referrals to crisis accommodation services, and information about bond assistance and public housing.

Phone: 1800 065 892  
(Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

### AccordWest Busselton

Short-term emergency accommodation service  
6/89 Duchess Street, Busselton  
(08) 9722 9000  
[swanautism.org.au/accord-west](https://swanautism.org.au/accord-west)

### Salvation Army Bunbury

Crisis and emergency accommodation service  
Corner Bussell Highway and Timperley Road, Bunbury  
Phone: (08) 9721 4519  
Email: [corps.bunbury@aus.salvationarmy.org](mailto:corps.bunbury@aus.salvationarmy.org)

### Salvation Army Crisis Centre Albany

Crisis accommodation service  
155-160 North Road, Albany  
Phone: (08) 9841 1068

### Other housing resources:

The Concessions WA website has a list of all the housing concessions available to people with a Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card:

[swanautism.org.au/concessions-wa-accommodation-housing](https://swanautism.org.au/concessions-wa-accommodation-housing)

For some useful fact sheets or advice about renting and legal advice, check out the Circle Green Community Legal WA website:

[swanautism.org.au/circle-green](https://swanautism.org.au/circle-green)





# Money

## Money

Everyone likes having money. It feels good to have money to buy the things you want and need. It's very important to learn how to manage your money so that you can afford the things you need. This section will talk about ways you can manage your money, how to protect your money, and where to go if you need help or advice.

### Writing a budget

The best way to work out what you can afford with your money is by making a budget. A budget is where you work out how much money you get each month and how much money you need to pay each month. If there is money left over then you can use this money to buy things you want or you can save it.

The first step is to work out how much money you get each month. You might get money from a job. You might get money from a pension or other Centrelink payments. Some people might get both. The second step is to work out how much money you need to pay each month. This could be things like:

- paying rent or board
- buying food
- paying power and gas bills
- paying phone bill or buying phone credit
- buying any medications you need
- paying for bus or train tickets or putting credit on your SmartRider.

To work out how much money you have left over to buy the things you want, minus the total amount of money you need to pay from the money you get.

Wants can be things like:

- new clothes
- a new video game
- Netflix or similar subscription

or they might be more expensive things like:

- saving up for a holiday
- saving up to buy a car.

Following is a budget for you to fill in with space to write some ideas of things you might want to save up for.

# My Budget

Table 1: Money I get each month

I get money from...	How much?
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Table 1 Total:	\$

Table 2: Money I need to pay each month

Things I need to pay...	How much?
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Table 2 Total:	\$

Now use a calculator to work out *Table 1 Total minus Table 2 Total*

Table 1 Total:	\$
minus	
Table 2 Total:	\$
=	
How much I have left over:	\$

If you have **more than 0** left over, well done! This means you are saving money. If you have **less than 0**, you are spending too much money. This is not good. You need to speak to someone you trust like a family member, friend, support person or the bank, and get them to support you in finding a better way to manage your money.

Table 3: Things I want to buy

Things I want...	How much does it cost?
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$

You can look at Table 3 and work out what things you can buy now and work out which things you need to save up for.

The Services Australia website has a great section about managing your money including information about budgeting, paying your debts and saving money:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-manage-money](https://www.swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-manage-money)

Manage Your Money Easy Read booklet made by the Council for Intellectual Disability has tips about managing your money and has a budget that you can print out and fill in:

[swanautism.org.au/cid-manage-money](https://www.swanautism.org.au/cid-manage-money)

The MoneySmart website has information and advice to help you manage your money and an easy to use online Budget Planner:

[swanautism.org.au/moneysmart](https://www.swanautism.org.au/moneysmart)



## Banking

To get money from a job or from Centrelink you need to have your own bank account. You will need some ID (identification) like your Proof of Age Card, Passport or Driver's Licence to open a bank account. Some banks will also want to know your Tax File Number. There are lots of different banks and accounts to choose from so ask someone you trust for help if you need help deciding which bank to open an account with. There are two main types of bank accounts:

**A transaction account:** a transaction account is an everyday account that your money from your job or Centrelink goes into, and the bank gives you a card called a debit card that you use to pay for things using the money in your transaction account. You can also use your debit card to get out money from ATM's and to pay for things online.

**A savings account:** a savings account is an account that you can put money into if you're saving up for something, like a holiday or a car. Most savings accounts let you earn interest, which is when you get a small amount of money put in your account from the bank each month as long as you keep saving. The more money you have in your savings account the more interest you earn. Some savings accounts have bank cards and some don't so you will have to ask your bank.

Commonwealth Bank has made this Easy English guide about banking:

[swanautism.org.au/comm-bank-banking-in-australia-easy-english](https://swanautism.org.au/comm-bank-banking-in-australia-easy-english)

## Centrepay

If you get money from Centrelink you can ask them to take money out of your payment for bills using Centrepay. You can use Centrepay to pay your rent, power and gas bills, internet bills, court fines and more. Centrepay is free to use. Find out more about Centrepay by visiting the Services Australia website:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-centrepay](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-centrepay)

## Credit cards and loans

Sometimes you might want to buy something that you don't have the money for right now, like a car or a holiday. Banks and finance companies may offer you a loan so you can buy what you want now. A loan is where the bank or finance company lets you borrow the money from them, and you pay it back over time. You must also pay interest on your loan. Interest is extra money on top of the amount you borrowed. A credit card is similar to a loan except that the bank gives you a bank card that you can use to buy things with. When you use the credit card to buy something, the bank lets you borrow the money, and you pay it back over time. You must also pay interest on a credit card. Interest is extra money on top of the amount you borrowed.

A loan or a credit card might seem like a good idea, but it is a very big decision so it's important to know all the details before you agree to getting one. For example, borrowing a \$5000 loan from the bank and you need to pay it back within 3 years. If the bank charges 10% interest, you will end up paying the bank back almost \$6500 by the end of the 3 years!

A payday loan is a small loan from a finance company that you pay off in a short amount of time which can be anywhere between a month and a year. It might seem like a good idea but payday loans charge very high interest. For example, if you got a \$1500 payday loan that needs to be paid back within 6 months, you would end up paying back over \$2000 by the end of the loan!

Some important things to think about before getting a loan or a credit card are:

- Do I really need the item the loan or credit card is for, or is it just something I want?
- Can I afford to get a loan or credit card?

If you don't have much money left after paying for the things you need each month, then you probably can't afford to get a loan or credit card

- Is there a better way I can get the money for the things I want?

Like saving up, getting a Centrelink advance, or seeing if your parents can lend you the money so you don't have to pay any interest.

You can learn more about loans and credit cards on the Services Australia website:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-loans-credit](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-loans-credit)

The MoneySmart website has a section all about Loans including a Personal Loan Calculator and a Payday Loan Calculator which let you type in the loan amount and interest rate and tells you how much you'd have to pay back:

[swanautism.org.au/moneysmart-loans](https://swanautism.org.au/moneysmart-loans)

## No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

If you have a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card you might be able to get a loan through the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS). NILS gives loans of up to \$1500 and there's no interest to pay. Some of the things you can use a NILS loan for are:

- household items like a washing machine, fridge, TV or computer
- health related items like a wheelchair, mobility scooter, or to get dental work done
- equipment and tools if you're doing an apprenticeship
- car related items like driving lessons, car registration, car repairs or new tyres.

To find out more about NILS call (08) 9263 2199 or visit the WA NILS website:

[swanautism.org.au/wanils](http://swanautism.org.au/wanils)

## Where to get money advice & support

A person who is trained to support you by giving you advice and information about money is called a financial counsellor. You can get free financial counselling almost anywhere in WA.

You can call the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 to talk to a financial counsellor or you can use the websites below to help you find free financial counsellors in your area by entering your postcode or clicking on their interactive maps:

National Debt Helpline

[swanautism.org.au/ndh-find-a-financial-counsellor](http://swanautism.org.au/ndh-find-a-financial-counsellor)

MoneySmart

[swanautism.org.au/moneysmart-financial-counselling](http://swanautism.org.au/moneysmart-financial-counselling)

## Doing your Tax

Most people that have a job or get money from Centrelink need to do a tax return. Doing a tax return helps the Government know if you paid enough tax during the year. If you ended up paying too much tax during the year then you might get some money back after doing your tax return. Most people do their tax return in July, but you have until 31 October each year to do it. Doing your tax return can sometimes be confusing, but there are a few ways you can get help to do it:

### MyTax

If you have a MyGov account you can do your own tax return online using MyTax. You can find out more information about MyTax at:

[swanautism.org.au/ato-lodge-return-online](http://swanautism.org.au/ato-lodge-return-online)

### TaxHelp

You can get someone to do your tax return for you for free using the TaxHelp program. TaxHelp has trained volunteers that do tax returns for people with disabilities and people on low incomes. You can learn more about TaxHelp by calling the Australian Tax Office (ATO) on 13 28 61 or visit their website at:

[swanautism.org.au/ato-tax-help-program](http://swanautism.org.au/ato-tax-help-program)

Or you can pay a tax agent to do your tax return for you. A tax agent is a person who is professionally trained in doing tax returns. You can use your suburb name or postcode to search for a tax agent in your area at:

[swanautism.org.au/tpb-registration-search](http://swanautism.org.au/tpb-registration-search)

If you need advice or have questions about doing your tax return call the ATO on 13 28 61 (Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm AWST, Saturday 10am - 2pm AWST), or you can find out more in the ATO's Easy Read booklet 'How to do your tax':

[swanautism.org.au/ato-tax-easy-read](http://swanautism.org.au/ato-tax-easy-read)

## Consumer protection rights

In Australia, whenever you buy a product or service in-person, on the phone or online you have legal rights called consumer protections. Some of your consumer protections are:

- you have the right to ask as many questions as you want about a product or service
- you have the right to take your time making the decision whether to buy it or not
- you have the right to say no if you don't want to buy it anymore or if the seller is being pushy
- you have the right to be given all the important and correct information about a product or service you want to buy
- a product or service must live up to any guarantees (promises) about what it's supposed to do
- you have the right to speak up if a product breaks or doesn't work how it's meant to
- you have the right to speak up if a service wasn't done properly
- if a product is being delivered you have the right to receive it within a reasonable amount of time.

The first thing you should do if you aren't happy with a product or service you bought is call the person or business you bought it from. Make sure you keep your receipt because this will prove when and where you bought the item. If the product is faulty (this means it's broken or doesn't do what it's supposed to) and you have the receipt then the person or business has to organise a repair or replacement or give you your money back - this is called a refund.

If the person or business refuses to help solve the problem you can call Consumer Protection on 1300 304 054 or lodge your complaint using their online form:

[swanautism.org.au/commerce-wa-consumer-complaint](https://swanautism.org.au/commerce-wa-consumer-complaint)

You can also lodge a complaint in person at one of the Consumer Protection offices below: (Open Monday to Fridays, 9am - 5pm)

### Bunbury

8th Floor, 61 Victoria Street, Bunbury  
Phone: (08) 9722 2888

### Albany

Unit 2/129 Aberdeen St, Albany  
Phone: (08) 9842 8366

### Perth

Level 2, 140 William St, Perth  
Phone: 1300 304 054

Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) has an Easy Read guide about how to make a complaint about goods or services:

[swanautism.org.au/cid-making-complaint](https://swanautism.org.au/cid-making-complaint)

## Scams

A scam is when someone lies about who they are or what they are selling so they can steal your money. An example of being scammed is if you got a phone call, text message or email from someone saying they're from your bank and they ask you to confirm your bank account or bank card details, and then suddenly a lot of money is missing from your account. Another example is if you bought a product online, but the package never arrives and then when you go to contact the seller their website has disappeared.

Social media apps, such as Facebook, are commonly used by scammers. They might send fake messages pretending to be your friend or family member and chat to you for a while, then ask for money. Scammers might also create fake ads or pages selling things like cheap products, prizes, or jobs that don't exist. Some scammers try to get your Facebook login details by sending links to fake websites that look real.



Scams don't happen very often, but it's important to know the signs of a scam. To learn how to spot a scam, find out about current scams or to report a scam, visit ScamWatch: [swanautism.org.au/accc-scamwatch](https://swanautism.org.au/accc-scamwatch)

Sometimes people pretend to be staff from a government department such as Centrelink or the Australian Tax Office to try and get personal details like your name, address or bank details. The Services Australia website shows you how to tell the difference between real contact from a government agency and a scam:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-how-to-know-scam](https://swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-how-to-know-scam)

The MoneySmart website has information about Banking and Credit Scams:

[swanautism.org.au/moneysmart-banking-credit-scams](https://swanautism.org.au/moneysmart-banking-credit-scams)

## Emergency financial and food assistance

If you are struggling to get enough money to pay your bills or buy food, there are lots of places that can help:

### WA Emergency Relief and Food Access Service

Helps you find and apply for emergency financial assistance and food relief in your area. Make sure you have a form of ID (such as a Proof of Age Card, Passport or Drivers Licence) as well as your Medicare Card or Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card details when you call.

Free call: 1800 979 777 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

After hours online enquiry form: [swanautism.org.au/fwc-emergency-relief](https://swanautism.org.au/fwc-emergency-relief)

### Anglicare WA

Anglicare WA can help with emergency financial assistance, food hampers and financial counselling. They have 10 offices across the South-West WA and Great Southern WA regions. To find one near you call 1300 11 44 46 or visit the Anglicare WA website: [swanautism.org.au/anglicare-locations](https://swanautism.org.au/anglicare-locations)



# Transport

## Transport

Most people use transport to get around. You might use different transport depending on where you're going. Maybe you catch the train to work and catch the bus to visit your friends. Or maybe you have your driver's license and drive your car everywhere. This section will give you information and advice about your transport options, what discounts and subsidies are available to people with disabilities, and where to go if you need support or advice.

In Perth the public transport system is called Transperth and in regional WA it is Transwa. Transperth has hundreds of bus routes and 6 train lines across the Perth Metro and Peel (Mandurah) areas, and Transwa has train and coach buses travelling all over WA each day.

### SmartRider

To catch a bus or train with Transperth you can buy a ticket with cash or you can use a SmartRider. A SmartRider is a reusable card that you put money onto instead of having to buy a cash ticket. To use a SmartRider you just tap it on a 'Tag On Tag Off' machine at the start and end of your trip. If you have a Health Care Card you can apply for a Concession SmartRider. A Concession SmartRider makes your bus and train trips much cheaper than a standard ticket. To learn more about using a SmartRider and how you can get your own SmartRider card visit the Transperth website:

[swanautism.org.au/transperth-smartrider](https://swanautism.org.au/transperth-smartrider)

If you get the Disability Support Pension you can apply for a Pensioner SmartRider. A Pensioner SmartRider card lets you travel for free between 9am - 3.30pm and after 7pm Monday to Friday and all weekend, and trips at the concession rate at all other times. To get a Pensioner SmartRider application form call the Transperth InfoLine on 13 62 13 or visit the Transperth website:

[swanautism.org.au/transperth-pensioner-smartrider](https://swanautism.org.au/transperth-pensioner-smartrider)

### Free travel

People on the Disability Support Pension who work more than 8 hours a week can apply for a Transperth Unrestricted Ticket. This gives you free travel on all Transperth services all the time. There are rules about who can apply so visit the Transperth website to find out more:

[swanautism.org.au/transperth-concession-guide](https://swanautism.org.au/transperth-concession-guide)



## Transperth Disability Assistance

There are accessible toilets and telephones at all major Transperth bus and train stations, and free accessible parking at all train stations that have parking bays. All Transperth buses are wheelchair accessible. Most Transperth train stations are wheelchair accessible and all Transperth buses and trains also have Priority Seating for people with disabilities.

Communication Cards are available for people with disabilities that catch Transperth buses who may have trouble communicating with the bus driver. The cards have space to write which bus stop you want to get off at and any assistance you may need. You can get some Communication Cards by calling the Transperth InfoLine on 13 62 13.

If you are in a wheelchair or have a vision impairment you can get special assistance from a Transperth staff member with getting around the train station. To organise special assistance call 1800 800 022 at least one hour before you will be needing assistance. For more information about all of Transperth's disability assistance services go to

[swanautism.org.au/transperth-disability-assistance](https://swanautism.org.au/transperth-disability-assistance)

or call the Transperth InfoLine on 13 62 13. The InfoLine is open 5am - midnight Sunday to Thursday, and 5am - 2am on Fridays and Saturdays.

## Transwa

Transwa runs the buses and trains in regional WA. Even though there's not as many services available as there is in Perth, there are still local bus routes in Albany, Bunbury, Busselton and Esperance. You can use a SmartRider on these local bus routes. There are also Transwa coach buses going from Perth to many WA regional towns and back each day. To find out where and when the coach buses travel, check out the Transwa website:

[swanautism.org.au/transwa-coaches](https://swanautism.org.au/transwa-coaches)

The Australind is the Transwa train that services the South-West and Great Southern regions of WA. It runs from Perth to Bunbury and back again, stopping at Armadale, Byford, Mundijong, Serpentine, North Dandalup, Pinjarra, Waroona, Yarloop, Cookernup, Harvey, Brunswick Junction along the way. The Australind runs twice a day, 7 days a week. For more information visit:

[swanautism.org.au/transwa-australind](https://swanautism.org.au/transwa-australind)

All Transwa coach buses and trains are wheelchair accessible and if you have a registered assistance dog or guide dog, they are allowed to travel with you. If you have a Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or a Concession SmartRider you get Transwa trips for half price. And Pensioner Concession Card holders can also get 2 free Transwa trips each year. To find out how to apply for Pensioner Free Travel go to the Transwa website:

[swanautism.org.au/transwa-pensioner-free-travel](https://swanautism.org.au/transwa-pensioner-free-travel)

## Taxis

If you don't like getting the bus or train or you live somewhere where there isn't any public transport, getting a taxi is another transport option. Taxis can be expensive if you use them often, but if you have a permanent mobility impairment (like using a wheelchair), are legally blind or have an intellectual disability you can apply for the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. The Taxi Subsidy Scheme gives you a discount of between 50 - 75% on your taxi fares. To be able to apply you will need your doctor to confirm your disability by completing part of the application form. For more about the Taxi Subsidy Scheme and to download an application form go to:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-taxi-subsidy-scheme](https://swanautism.org.au/dot-taxi-subsidy-scheme)

## Country Age Pension Fuel Card

If you are on the Disability Support Pension and live in regional WA you might be able to get a Country Age Pension Fuel Card. The Country Age Pension Fuel Card gives you up to \$575 a year towards the cost of fuel or taxi fares. For an application form call 1300 666 609 or visit your local regional post office. There are rules about who can apply so it's a good idea to check out the Department of Regional Development website for more information:

[swanautism.org.au/drd-country-pension-fuel-card](https://swanautism.org.au/drd-country-pension-fuel-card)



## Mobility Allowance

Mobility Allowance is a Centrelink payment to help with travel costs for people with disabilities who are on Disability Support Pension, Jobseeker, Austudy or Youth Allowance that either work, are looking for work, or study, for at least 8 hours a week and don't already have transport funding in their NDIS plan.

To get more information about who can apply and how much you can get call Centrelink on 13 27 17 or visit the Services Australia website:

[swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-mobility-allowance](https://www.swanautism.org.au/svs-aus-mobility-allowance)

## Driving

Getting your driver's licence can make you feel more independent. It's a good feeling driving your own car and not relying on anyone else to get around! But getting your licence and owning a car are both big responsibilities. This section will help you think about the steps involved in getting your driver's licence and some tips about having your own car.

### Getting your driver's licence

Everyone who wants to drive a car needs to go through the process of getting a driver's licence. The 6 steps to getting your full driver's licence are:

#### 1. Do your Learner's Permit Test

You can do your Learner's Permit Test once you are 16 years old. The Learner's Permit Test is a theory test. This means it's a question-based test with no actual driving involved. There are 30 multiple choice questions about road rules and laws and driver safety. You need to get at least 24 questions correct to pass. To get ready for your Learner's Test you should study the 'Drive Safe Handbook' which you can download from the Department of Transport website

[swanautism.org.au/dot-learner-resources](https://www.swanautism.org.au/dot-learner-resources)

There's also a practice Learner's Permit Test on their website:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-road-rules-theory](https://www.swanautism.org.au/dot-road-rules-theory)

You will need photo ID (like a passport or Proof of Age Card) to do your test. You can find your closest Licensing Centre or regional agent here:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-licensing-centre](https://www.swanautism.org.au/dot-licensing-centre)

It's important that you let the Department of Transport know about your disability when you complete your Learner's Permit application form. You may be asked to get a Medical Driving Assessment or Occupational Therapist (OT) Driving Assessment done before you can get your driver's licence. If you have goals in your NDIS Plan that support you getting your driver's licence, you can use your NDIS funding for an OT assessment. A list of OT driving assessment providers in South West and Great Southern WA is available further in this section. You can learn more about reporting medical conditions on the Department of Transport website:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-medical-condition](https://www.swanautism.org.au/dot-medical-condition)

#### 2. Learn to drive

Once you pass your Learner's Permit Test you will be given a Log Book and you can begin driving supervised. Your supervisor can be anyone who has had their full driver's licence for at least 4 years. This could be a friend, family member, support person or a driving teacher. If you are under 25 years old you will need to do 50 hours of supervised driving including 5 hours of night time driving before you can go for your practical driving test. You record your supervised driving hours in your Log Book.

If you're older than 25 you don't need to do 50 supervised hours or keep a Log Book, but you will still need to practice driving supervised before you go for your practical driving test.

#### 3. Do the Hazard Perception Test

You must have your Learner's Permit for at least 6 months before you can sit the Hazard Perception Test. The Hazard Perception Test is a simulated driving test. This means you complete the test using a computer and you're not actually driving. The test will see if you know the road rules and assesses your reaction speed to different situations. There are 28 different situations You can try a practice Hazard Perception Test on the Department of Transport website:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-hazard-perception-test](https://www.swanautism.org.au/dot-hazard-perception-test)

#### 4. Continue learning to drive

Once you pass the Hazard Perception Test you should complete your 50 supervised hours of driving (if you're under 25) or keep practising driving supervised until you're confident enough to go for your Practical Driving Assessment.

## 5. Do your Practical Driving Assessment

You must be 17 years or older to sit your Practical Driving Assessment. This is a practical test which means you're actually driving a car. You will need to take your photo ID and your completed Log Book (if you're under 25) with you to your Practical Driving Assessment as well as supplying a car to do your test in. This can be any car as long as it is roadworthy. Roadworthy means the car is in a good safe condition to be legally driven. Before the assessment a Department of Transport assessor will check your car is roadworthy.

The assessor will be in the passenger seat of the car and will assess while you drive. They may ask you to do different things to test your driving skills like parallel parking or doing a hill start. Once you're finished the assessor will tell you if you've passed or not. Don't worry if you didn't pass because you can sit the test as many times as you need to, but you will have to pay an assessment fee each time.

To find out more about the Practical Driving Assessment:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-practical-assessment](https://swanautism.org.au/dot-practical-assessment)

## 6. Getting your 'P' plates

Once you pass your Practical Driving Assessment you will be allowed to drive on your 'P plates', short for provisional plates. For the first 6 months you will have red P plates and there are certain rules that will apply during this time. On your red P plates you can't drive between midnight - 5am unless you have proof that you need to for work or school, you cannot have any alcohol in your system, and you can only have one passenger in your vehicle. More information can be found here:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-p-plates](https://swanautism.org.au/dot-p-plates)

For more information about getting a driver's licence call Driver and Vehicle Licensing on 13 11 56 or check out the Department of Transport website

[swanautism.org.au/dot-learn-to-drive](https://swanautism.org.au/dot-learn-to-drive)

You can find your closest Licensing Centre or regional agent here:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-licensing-centre](https://swanautism.org.au/dot-licensing-centre)

## Vehicle and licence concessions

If you are on the Disability Support Pension or have a Pensioner Concession Card you can get a discount on your vehicle and licence costs. You can get the application form by visiting your closest Licensing Centre or regional agent or from the Department of Transport website:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-concessions](https://swanautism.org.au/dot-concessions)



## Driving schools for people with disabilities

Below are a few providers in WA that do driving lessons and OT driving assessments for people with disabilities. If you have funding in your NDIS Plan to support you in learning to drive then you can use it with any of these providers.

### Six Star Disabled Driver Training

Pinjarra, Bunbury and Busselton areas  
Driving lessons only  
Modified vehicles available  
NDIS registered provider

Ph: 0406 456 353 or 0411 511 729

Email: [info-sixstar@iinet.net.au](mailto:info-sixstar@iinet.net.au)

[swanautism.org.au/six-star-driver-training](https://swanautism.org.au/six-star-driver-training)

### Eclipse Driving School

Rockingham, Mandurah and Bunbury areas  
Driving lessons and OT driving assessments  
Modified vehicles available  
NDIS registered provider

Ph: (08) 9557 5010

Email: [eclipsedriving-school@westnet.com.au](mailto:eclipsedriving-school@westnet.com.au)

[swanautism.org.au/eclipse-driving-school](https://swanautism.org.au/eclipse-driving-school)

### Drive and Pass Specialised Driver Training

Dianella (Perth metro area)  
Driving lessons only  
Modified vehicle available (automatic transmission only)  
NDIS registered provider

Ph: 0449 995 456  
Email: [roanne@driveandpass.com.au](mailto:roanne@driveandpass.com.au)  
[swanautism.org.au/drive-and-pass](http://swanautism.org.au/drive-and-pass)

### OT Services Group

Visiting the Peel (Mandurah), Bunbury, Busselton and Esperance areas fortnightly  
Driving lessons and OT driving assessments  
NDIS registered provider

Ph: (08) 9332 1783  
Email: [info@otservicesgroup.com](mailto:info@otservicesgroup.com)  
[swanautism.org.au/ot-services-group](http://swanautism.org.au/ot-services-group)

### Functional Revival

Albany area  
OT driving assessments only  
NDIS registered provider

Ph: (08) 9842 6038  
Email: [contacts@functionalrevival.com](mailto:contacts@functionalrevival.com)  
[swanautism.org.au/functional-revival-driver-assessments](http://swanautism.org.au/functional-revival-driver-assessments)



### ACROD Parking Permit

ACROD parking permits are for people who are unable to walk and use a wheelchair or their ability to walk is severely restricted due to a medical condition or disability. If you have an ACROD permit you can park in ACROD parking bays. Most people know ACROD parking bays as 'disabled parking' bays. The bays are usually marked by a sign, as well as the figure of a blue person in a wheelchair painted on the ground.

If you park in an ARCOD bay and don't have an ACROD permit you can be fined \$500. There are rules who can get an ACROD parking permit so to find out more contact the ACROD Parking Program:

Ph: (08) 9242 5544  
(Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm)  
Email: [acrod@nds.org.au](mailto:acrod@nds.org.au)  
[swanautism.org.au/acrod](http://swanautism.org.au/acrod)

### Special vehicle modifications

If you need special modifications put in your car because of your disability, you need to get it approved by the Department of Transport first. They may need you to get a vehicle assessment done before they approve the modifications. Find out more on the Department of Transport website:

[swanautism.org.au/dot-modify-vehicle](http://swanautism.org.au/dot-modify-vehicle)

Technology for Ageing and Disabled WA (TADWA) do vehicle modifications for people with disabilities in Perth and Bunbury. You can call their Bunbury office on 1300 663 243 or check out their website: [swanautism.org.au/tadwa](http://swanautism.org.au/tadwa)

## Other driving supports

RYDE (Regional Youth Driver Education Program) helps learner drivers under 25 who live in WA and don't have access to a car, can't afford driving lessons or don't have a person to supervise them in doing their 50 hours of supervised driving. RYDE charges a small fee of \$15 per 90 minute driving lesson and they provide the car and a volunteer supervisor.

RYDE has regional programs in Mandurah, Bunbury and Busselton.

South West RYDE (Bunbury and Busselton)

Ph: 0419 730 550 or (08) 9721 6951

[swanautism.org.au/ryde-south-west](https://swanautism.org.au/ryde-south-west)

Mandurah RYDE

Ph: (08) 9550 3670 or (08) 9581 3365

[swanautism.org.au/ryde-mandurah](https://swanautism.org.au/ryde-mandurah)

The Curtin University Autism Research Group (CARG) is running a pilot project to help Autistic people with learning to drive. If you want to find out more or be involved in the project email [priscilla.vindin@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:priscilla.vindin@postgrad.curtin.edu.au) or check out the CARG website: [swanautism.org.au/carg-driving-transport](https://swanautism.org.au/carg-driving-transport)

## NDIS and Transport

NDIS can provide funding for transport supports in a few different ways.

### Providing Transport

If you can't use public transport because of your disability you can get transport funding in your NDIS Plan. How much you get depends on whether you're working or studying, or just need transport to get to social and recreational activities like visiting friends. You might get transport funding for taxis, rideshare services (like Uber), or a community bus service. Community bus services are transport that is shared with other people with disabilities. These transport supports are funded under the category of Core: Transport Allowance.

You can learn more about Transport Allowance funding on the NDIS website:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-transport-funding](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-transport-funding)

NDIS might also give you transport funding that covers the cost of a support worker to drive you to and from your social and community activities such as going shopping, going to the doctors or going swimming at the local pools. This is funded under the category of Core: Assistance with Social and Community Participation.

### Transport Capacity Building

NDIS can fund supports like a therapist who can help you get better and become more confident at using public transport on your own. This is called transport capacity building and is funded under the category of Capacity: Improved Daily Living.

### Vehicle Modifications

NDIS can help fund vehicle modifications that you need because of your disability. They may cover part or all of the costs. This is funded under the category Core: Assistive Technology.

To learn more about NDIS-funded transport supports check out the Plan Partners website:

[swanautism.org.au/plan-partners-transport](https://swanautism.org.au/plan-partners-transport)

### Learning to Drive

If you want to learn how to drive you might be able to get driving lessons funded in your NDIS Plan under the category Capacity: Improved Daily Living Skills or Capacity: Increased Social and Community Participation. NDIS can also cover the costs of an OT Driving Assessment if the Department of Transport requires you to get one.

For more information about NDIS learning to drive supports, go to the LeapIn website:

[swanautism.org.au/leapin-learning-to-drive](https://swanautism.org.au/leapin-learning-to-drive)

If you want any of these transport supports funded in your NDIS Plan the first thing you need to do is contact your Local Area Coordinator (LAC). They can tell you if transport funding is suitable for you and help you write up goals for your NDIS Plan that reflect your need for transport supports.

Your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) in the South West and Great Southern WA regions is APM. You can contact APM by calling 1300 276 522 or by emailing [lac@apm.net.au](mailto:lac@apm.net.au)



For Further Information  
- Services Directory

## Advocacy

**Free individual advocacy support services in WA:**

### Advocacy WA

4 Plaza Street, South Bunbury WA

Phone: (08) 9721 6444

Website: [swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa](http://swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa)

Email: [admin@advocacywa.org.au](mailto:admin@advocacywa.org.au)

### Sussex Street Community Law Services

29 Sussex Street, East Victoria Park WA

Phone: (08) 6253 9500

Website: [swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law](http://swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law)

### Great Southern Community Legal Services

4/15 Peel Place, Albany WA

Phone: (08) 9842 8566

Website: [swanautism.org.au/gt-southern-cls](http://swanautism.org.au/gt-southern-cls)

### Midland Information Debt & Legal Advocacy Service (MIDLAS)

23 Old Great Northern Highway, Midland WA

Phone: (08) 9250 2123

Website: [swanautism.org.au/midlas](http://swanautism.org.au/midlas)

Email: [admin@midlas.org.au](mailto:admin@midlas.org.au)

**You can also find disability advocacy services in your area using the Department of Social Service's Advocacy Finder**

[swanautism.org.au/ask-izzy-advocacy-finder](http://swanautism.org.au/ask-izzy-advocacy-finder)

### Developmental Disability WA

Developmental Disability WA provide family peer support, individual advocacy services and NDIS support coordination for people in WA with developmental disability, intellectual disability and Autism:

City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth WA

Ph: (08) 9420 7203

Website: [swanautism.org.au/ddwa](http://swanautism.org.au/ddwa)

Email: [ddwa@ddwa.org.au](mailto:ddwa@ddwa.org.au)

## The Office of the Public Advocate

The Office of the Public Advocate provides information, advice and training on guardianship, administration, Enduring Powers of Attorney, Enduring Powers of Guardianship and protecting vulnerable adults, advocates for adults with decision-making disabilities, and provides guardianship services when appointed by the State Administrative Tribunal:

Level 23, 28 Barrack Street, Perth WA  
Ph: 1300 858 455 or (08) 9278 7300  
(Monday to Fridays, 9am – 4.30pm AWST)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/public-advocate](https://swanautism.org.au/public-advocate)  
Email: [opa@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:opa@justice.wa.gov.au)

## National disability advocacy support services:

### People with Disabilities Australia (PWDA)

People with Disabilities Australia (PWDA) provides information, advice, referrals and individual advocacy support to people with disability and their families. They are based in Sydney NSW.

Ph: (02) 9370 3100 or 1800 422 015  
(Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm AEST)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/pwd](https://swanautism.org.au/pwd)  
Email: [pwd@pwd.org.au](mailto:pwd@pwd.org.au)

### The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) gives advice, information and support about human rights laws and protections in Australia. They are based in Sydney NSW:

AHRC National Information Service  
Ph: 1300 656 419  
(Monday to Fridays, 10am – 1.30pm AEST)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/human-rights](https://swanautism.org.au/human-rights)  
Email: [infoservice@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:infoservice@humanrights.gov.au)

## Autism Research and Projects

The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism (Autism CRC) is the world's first national research centre focused on autism. Autism CRC has programs, surveys and other ways for autistic adults across Australia to participate in their research. For more information about how you can get involved, visit their website:

[swanautism.org.au/autismcrc](https://swanautism.org.au/autismcrc)

## Disability Organisations and Support Groups

### South West Autism Network (SWAN)

SWAN provide peer support, training and workshops, and resources about Autism for autistic people and their families living in the South West and Great Southern WA areas:

Ph: 0476 315 694 or 0499 819 038  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/](https://swanautism.org.au/)  
Email: [info@swanautism.org.au](mailto:info@swanautism.org.au)

### SWAN Busselton

12 Pettit Cres, West Busselton WA  
(Mondays to Fridays, 9.00am - 3.00pm)

### SWAN Bunbury

Milligan Community Learning & Resource Centre  
35 Milligan St, Carey Park WA  
(By appointment)

### Autism Association of WA

Autism Association of WA provide therapy and support services for autistic people in WA and the only Disability Employment Service (DES) specifically for autistic people in Australia. They also provide online therapy services via Zoom and do regional visits:

215 Stubbs Terrace, Shenton Park WA  
Ph: (08) 9489 8900  
Regional: 1800 636 427  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/autism-wa](https://swanautism.org.au/autism-wa)  
Email: [autismwa@autism.org.au](mailto:autismwa@autism.org.au)

## Carers WA

Carers WA provides support, referral services and resources for carers of people with disability in WA:

The Carer Centre, 182 Lord Street, Perth WA

Ph: 1300 227 377

(Monday to Fridays, 8.30am - 4.30pm)

Website: [swanautism.org.au/carers-wa](http://swanautism.org.au/carers-wa)

Email: [info@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:info@carerswa.asn.au)

## Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)

DDWA provide peer support groups, individual advocacy services and NDIS support coordination for people in WA with developmental disability, intellectual disability and Autism:

City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth WA

Ph: (08) 9420 7203

Website: [swanautism.org.au/ddwa](http://swanautism.org.au/ddwa)

Email: [ddwa@ddwa.org.au](mailto:ddwa@ddwa.org.au)

## Spectrum Space (formerly Autism West)

Spectrum Space holds social groups and life skills workshops for autistic people and their families. They also run a Women's Council and Youth Advisory Council for autistic people:

B Block, Ground Floor (at the old Fremantle Hospital)

2 Alma Street, Fremantle WA

Website: [swanautism.org.au/spectrum-space](http://swanautism.org.au/spectrum-space)

Email: [info@spectrumspace.org.au](mailto:info@spectrumspace.org.au)

## Emergency Services

To contact police, ambulance or fire services in an emergency call 000

TTY users call 106

For non-urgent police assistance call 131 444

The Police Conduct Investigation Unit handles complaints about WA Police:

Ph: (08) 9223 1000

Email: [police.complaints@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:police.complaints@police.wa.gov.au)

## Employment

### JobAccess Advice Line

JobAccess Advice Line provides information and advice about disability employment:

Ph: 1800 464 800

(Monday to Fridays, 9am - 7pm AEST)

Website: [swanautism.org.au/job-access](http://swanautism.org.au/job-access)

Online enquiry form: [swanautism.org.au/job-access-online-enquiry](http://swanautism.org.au/job-access-online-enquiry)

### WA Fair Work Commission

WA Fair Work Commission handles complaints about workplace bullying and harassment:

Ph: 13 13 94

(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 5.30pm)

Website: [swanautism.org.au/fair-work-ombudsman](http://swanautism.org.au/fair-work-ombudsman)

Online enquiries: [swanautism.org.au/fairwork-online-enquiry](http://swanautism.org.au/fairwork-online-enquiry)

### Wageline

Wageline provides information about pay rates, leave entitlements and other working conditions in WA:

Ph: 1300 655 266

(Monday to Fridays, 9am – 4.30pm AWST)

Email: [wageline@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:wageline@dmirs.wa.gov.au)

### The WA Equal Opportunity Commission

The WA Equal Opportunity Commission handle complaints about workplace harassment or discrimination:

469 Wellington Street, Perth WA

Ph: (08) 9216 3900 or 1800 198 149

Email: [eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au](mailto:eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au)

Online complaint form: [swanautism.org.au/wa-gov-make-complaint](http://swanautism.org.au/wa-gov-make-complaint)

## Entitlements and Concessions

### Centrelink contact numbers

#### Disability, Sickness and Carers Line

For enquiries about Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment and Mobility Allowance:

Ph: 132 717  
(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 5pm)

#### Employment Services Line

For enquiries about JobSeeker payments and crisis payments:

Ph: 132 850  
(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 5pm)

#### Self Service Line

To check your payment information, past and future payments, apply for an Advance Payment or to order mailed copies of documents:

136 240  
(Line open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

#### Reporting Line

To report your employment income or mutual job requirements:

Ph: 133 276  
(Line open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

#### Youth and Students Line

For enquiries about Austudy, Youth Allowance and Pensioner Education Supplement:

Ph: 132 490  
(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 5pm)

#### National Relay Service Line

For anyone with a hearing or speech impairment who wants to use the National Relay Service to contact Centrelink or Medicare:

Ph: 1800 555 660  
(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 6pm)

#### Online Services Support Line

For help with your Centrelink online account, Centrelink Express app, or MyGov:

Ph: 132 307  
(Monday to Fridays 7am – 10pm, Saturday and Sundays 10am – 5pm)

### Concessions WA (run by Department of Communities WA)

For information about entitlements and concessions available:

Ph: (08) 6217 6888 or country free call 1800 176 888  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/concessions-wa](http://swanautism.org.au/concessions-wa)  
Email: [enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au)

### Companion Card WA

Ph: 1800 617 337  
(Monday to Fridays, 9am – 4pm)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/wa-companion-card](http://swanautism.org.au/wa-companion-card)  
Email: [wacompanioncard@nds.org.au](mailto:wacompanioncard@nds.org.au)

## Financial Services

### The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

NILS can help people on low incomes with no interest loans:

Ph: (08) 9263 2199  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/wanils](http://swanautism.org.au/wanils)

### The National Debt Helpline

The National Debt Helpline provides free financial counselling over the phone and can connect you to local financial counsellors in your area:

Ph: 1800 007 007  
(Monday to Fridays, 9.30am – 4.30pm)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/ndh](http://swanautism.org.au/ndh)

### Australian Tax Office (ATO)

Ph: 13 28 61  
(Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm AWST, Saturday 10am - 2pm AWST)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/ato](http://swanautism.org.au/ato)

### Consumer Protection

Consumer Protection can provide information and support about your consumer rights:

Ph: 1300 304 054  
Consumer Protection office locations in South West and Great Southern WA:

### Bunbury

8th Floor, 61 Victoria Street, Bunbury  
Phone: (08) 9722 2888  
(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am - 5pm)

## Albany

Unit 2/129 Aberdeen St, Albany  
Phone: (08) 9842 8366 (Open Monday to Fridays, 9am - 5pm)

## Perth

Level 2, 140 William St, Perth  
Phone: 1300 304 054 (Open Monday to Fridays, 9am - 5pm)

## Emergency financial and food assistance:

### WA Emergency Relief and Food Access Service

WA Emergency Relief and Food Access Service can help you find and apply for emergency financial assistance and food relief in your area:

Free call: 1800 979 777  
(Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

### Anglicare WA

Anglicare WA have 10 offices across the South West and Great Southern WA areas and can help with emergency financial assistance, food hampers and financial counselling:

Ph: 1300 11 44 46  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/anglicare-locations](http://swanautism.org.au/anglicare-locations)

## Further Education and Training

### South Regional TAFE

Ph: 1800 621 445  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/south-regional-tafe](http://swanautism.org.au/south-regional-tafe)  
Email: [enquiry@srtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:enquiry@srtafe.wa.edu.au)

Student Services - Bunbury campus  
Phone: (08) 6371 3245 or 0417 937 894  
Email: [StudentServices@srtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:StudentServices@srtafe.wa.edu.au)

Disability Liaison Officer - Albany campus  
Phone: (08) 6371 3741  
Email: [DisabilityServices@srtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:DisabilityServices@srtafe.wa.edu.au)

### South West VETLink

South West VETLink is a service in Bunbury that can help students and their families find out about pathways to further education and employment.

Ph: 0409 200 702  
Email: [donna@southwestvetlink.wa.edu.au](mailto:donna@southwestvetlink.wa.edu.au)

## Department of Education

Department of Education regional offices can provide information on local public school options, special programs and services such as school psychology, behaviour centres, home education and so on:

South Metropolitan Education Regional Office  
184 Hampton Road, Beaconsfield WA  
Ph: (08) 9336 9563  
Email: [southmetro.ERO@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:southmetro.ERO@education.wa.edu.au)

Southwest Education Regional Office  
Bunbury Tower 5th Floor, 61 Victoria Street, Bunbury WA  
Ph: (08) 9791 0300  
Email: [southwest.ERO@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:southwest.ERO@education.wa.edu.au)

## Health Services

### Medicare general enquiries line

Ph: 132 011  
(Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

### Medicare telephone claims line

For rural and remote Medicare claims:  
Ph: 1300 360 460  
(Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

### National Relay Service Line

For anyone with a hearing or speech impairment who wants to use the National Relay Service to contact Medicare:  
Ph: 1800 555 660  
(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 6pm)

### South West Community Alcohol and Drug Service

109 Beach Road, Bunbury  
Phone: (08) 9721 9256  
(Monday – Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm)  
Email: [admin.swcads@sjog.org.au](mailto:admin.swcads@sjog.org.au)

### WA Alcohol and Drug Support Line

Phone: (08) 9442 5000  
Country Free Call: 1800 198 024  
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

## South West regional WA Public Dental Service clinic locations:

### Public Dental Clinic Albany

34 Warden Avenue, Spencer Park WA  
Ph: 08 9842 2211  
Email: [AlbanyGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au](mailto:AlbanyGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au)

### Public Dental Clinic Bunbury

South West Health Campus, Robertson Drive, Bunbury WA  
Ph: 08 9791 3661  
Email: [BunburyGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au](mailto:BunburyGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au)

### Public Dental Clinic Busselton

Busselton Health Campus  
25 Mill Rd, Busselton WA  
Ph: (08) 9753 6301  
Email: [BusseltonGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au](mailto:BusseltonGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au)

### Public Dental Clinic Ravensthorpe

Martin Street, Ravensthorpe  
Ph: 0439 475 283  
Email: [RavensthorpeGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au](mailto:RavensthorpeGDC@dental.health.wa.gov.au)

### WA Public Dental Service: Special Needs Bookings Line

Ph: (08) 9201 9889

### Doctor To Me: After Hours GP (Bunbury)

Ph: 1300 37 86 63  
(Available Monday to Friday 6pm - 8am, and 24 hours a day on weekends)

## South-West and Great Southern WA public hospitals with 24 hour emergency departments:

### Peel Health Campus (Mandurah)

110 Lakes Rd, Greenfields WA  
Ph: (08) 9531 8000

### Bunbury Hospital

Bussell Highway (cnr Robertson Drive), Bunbury WA  
Ph: (08) 9722 1000

### Albany Hospital

30 Warden Ave, Spencer Park WA  
Ph: (08) 9892 2222

### Busselton Health Campus

4 Mill Road Busselton WA  
Ph: (08) 9753 6000

### Collie Health Service

Deakin St, Collie WA  
Ph: (08) 9735 1333

### Margaret River Hospital

Farrelly St, Margaret River WA  
Ph: (08) 9757 0400

### Bridgetown Hospital

28 Peninsula Road, Bridgetown WA  
Ph: (08) 9782 1222

### Harvey Hospital

Wright St, Harvey WA  
Ph: (08) 9782 2222

### Augusta Hospital

8 Donovan St, Augusta WA  
Ph: (08) 9758 3222

### Katanning Hospital

Francis St, Katanning WA  
Ph: (08) 9821 6212

### Denmark Health Service

50 Scotsdale Road, Denmark WA  
Ph: (08) 9848 0600

### Plantaganet Hospital (Mount Barker)

59 Langton Road, Mount Barker WA  
Ph: (08) 9892 1222

### Ravensthorpe Health Service

74 Martin Street, Ravensthorpe WA  
Ph: (08) 9838 2211

### WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Complaints

South West WACHS Director: Kerry Winsor  
Ph: (08) 9781 2350  
Email: [kerry.winsor@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:kerry.winsor@health.wa.gov.au)

Great Southern WACHS Director: Geraldine Ennis  
Ph: (08) 9892 2672  
Email: [gs.ces@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:gs.ces@health.wa.gov.au)

### **South West Aboriginal Medical Service (SWAMS)**

SWAMS provides health services for Aboriginal people in the South West WA region. Their clinic is in Bunbury, but they also do health visits to Australind, Busselton, Brunswick, Collie and Manjimup.

Ph: (08) 9726 6000  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/swams](http://swanautism.org.au/swams)

### **Nidjalla Waangan Mia Health Centre**

Nidjalla Waangan Mia Health Centre is a bulk billing GP in Mandurah for Aboriginal people.

Ph: (08) 9586 4580

### **SECCA**

SECCA is an organisation that helps people with disability learn about sex, sexuality, relationships and sexual health:

City West Lotteries House  
2 Delhi St, West Perth  
Phone: (08) 9420 7226  
Email: [admin@secca.org.au](mailto:admin@secca.org.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/secca](http://swanautism.org.au/secca)

## **Housing**

### **Public Housing Authority (Homeswest) offices in South West & Great Southern WA:**

#### **Mandurah**

1/17 Sholl St, Mandurah  
Phone: (08) 9583 6100  
Email: [mandurah@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:mandurah@communities.wa.gov.au)

#### **Bunbury**

22 Forrest Avenue, Bunbury  
Phone: (08) 9792 2111  
Email: [bunbury@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:bunbury@communities.wa.gov.au)

#### **Busselton**

88 Kent Street, Busselton  
Phone: (08) 6277 3666  
Email: [busselton@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:busselton@communities.wa.gov.au)

### **Manjimup**

Unit 10, 30-32 Rose Street, Manjimup  
Phone: (08) 9771 7800  
Email: [manjimup@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:manjimup@communities.wa.gov.au)

### **Albany**

131 Aberdeen Street, Albany  
Phone: (08) 9845 7144  
Email: [albany@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:albany@communities.wa.gov.au)

### **Keystart Loans**

Keystart Loans can help eligible people with disability buy their own home:

Level 3, 502 Hay Street, Subiaco WA  
Ph: 1300 578 278  
Email: [info@keystart.com.au](mailto:info@keystart.com.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/keystart-access-home-loan](http://swanautism.org.au/keystart-access-home-loan)

## **Emergency and crisis accommodation services:**

### **EntryPoint Perth**

EntryPoint Perth provides referrals to crisis and emergency accommodation services:

Phone: (08) 6496 0001 or 1800 124 684  
(Open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 5pm)  
Online registration form: [swanautism.org.au/entry-point-perth-registration](http://swanautism.org.au/entry-point-perth-registration)

### **Crisis Care**

Phone: (08) 9223 1111  
(Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)  
Country callers (free call): 1800 199 008

### **The Homeless Advisory Service**

The Homeless Advisory Service gives referrals to crisis accommodation services, and information about bond assistance and public housing:

Phone: 1800 065 892  
(Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

### **AccordWest Busselton**

AccordWest Busselton provides short-term emergency accommodation:

6/89 Duchess Street, Busselton  
(08) 9722 9000  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/accord-west](http://swanautism.org.au/accord-west)

### **Salvation Army Bunbury**

Salvation Army Bunbury crisis and emergency accommodation service

Corner Bussell Highway and Timperley Road, Bunbury

Phone: (08) 9721 4519

Email: [corps.bunbury@aus.salvationarmy.org](mailto:corps.bunbury@aus.salvationarmy.org)

### **Salvation Army Crisis Centre Albany**

Salvation Army Crisis Centre Albany crisis accommodation service

155-160 North Road, Albany

Phone: (08) 9841 1068

## **Legal Services**

### **Free legal advice and support services in WA:**

#### **Legal Aid WA**

Legal Aid (Perth office)

32 St Georges Terrace, Perth

Ph: 1300 650 579 (Monday to Fridays, 9am – 4pm AWST)

#### **Legal Aid (Bunbury office)**

7th Floor Bunbury Tower, 61 Victoria St, Bunbury

Ph: 1800 813 732 or (08) 9721 2277

#### **Legal Aid (Albany office)**

Suite 3, 43 - 47 Duke St, Albany

Ph: 1800 813 874 or (08) 9892 9700

#### **Sussex Street Community Law Centre**

29 Sussex Street, East Victoria Park WA

Phone: (08) 6253 9500

Website: [swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law](http://swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law)

#### **Midland Information Debt & Legal Advocacy Service (MIDLAS)**

23 Old Great Northern Highway, Midland WA

Phone: (08) 9250 2123

Website: [swanautism.org.au/midlas](http://swanautism.org.au/midlas)

## **Mental Health Services**

### **Regional mental health services:**

#### **Bridgetown Community Mental Health Team**

Ph: (08) 9782 1444

#### **Busselton Community Mental Health Service**

Busselton Health Campus

Mill St, Busselton WA

Ph: (08) 9753 6400 (Monday to Fridays, 9am – 4pm)

#### **South West Mental Health Service (Margaret River and Dunsborough areas)**

Ph: (08) 9757 3547

(Monday to Fridays, 8am – 4.30pm)

#### **Warren Mental Health Team (Manjimup)**

Warren Health Service

16 Hospital Avenue, Manjimup WA

Ph: (08) 9722 1300

#### **Great Southern Mental Health Service (Albany)**

Albany Health Campus

Hardie Road, Albany WA

Ph: (08) 9892 2440 (Monday to Fridays, 8:30am - 4:30pm)

#### **Great Southern Mental Health Service (Katanning)**

Katanning Hospital

11-31 Kobeelya Avenue, Katanning WA

Ph: (08) 9821 6341

(Monday to Fridays, 8:30am - 4:30pm)

#### **RuralLink**

After Hours regional mental health phone service

Ph: 1800 552 002

(Monday - Fridays 4:30pm - 8:30am, 24 hours on Saturdays and Sundays)

#### **Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)**

MHERL can give information, advice and referrals to people in the Perth metro and Peel (Mandurah-Waroona) areas:

Perth metro area: 1300 555 788

Peel (Mandurah-Waroona area): 1800 676 822

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

## Lifeline

Lifeline can provide crisis support to anyone experiencing mental health distress:

Ph: 13 11 14

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Text chat: 0477 13 11 14

(Available everyday, 10am - 10pm AWST)

Online chat: [swanautism.org.au/lifeline-crisis-chat](https://swanautism.org.au/lifeline-crisis-chat)

(Available everyday, 5pm - 10pm AWST)

## Suicide Call Back Service

The Suicide Call Back Service is a phone line with trained counsellors that can give support and advice to anyone affected by suicide:

Phone: 1300 659 467

(Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

## ConnectGroups

ConnectGroups provides information and referrals to people looking for support groups in WA:

Ph: (08) 9364 6909

Email: [info@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:info@connectgroups.org.au)

# NDIS

## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is managed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

### NDIA postal address:

National Disability Insurance Agency

GPO Box 700

Canberra ACT 2601

Website: [swanautism.org.au/ndis-home](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-home)

### NDIS Contact Centre

Ph: 1800 800 110 (Monday to Fridays, 8am to 8pm)

Email: [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)

NDIS online feedback form:

[swanautism.org.au/ndis-contact-feedback](https://swanautism.org.au/ndis-contact-feedback)

## APM Communities

APM Communities is the NDIS provider and Local Area Coordinators for the South West and Great Southern WA regions.

## APM Communities (South West and Great Southern)

Ph: 1300 276 522

Email: [lac@apm.net.au](mailto:lac@apm.net.au)

APM office locations in South-West and Great Southern WA:

### APM Albany

108 Stirling Terrace, Albany

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

### APM Katanning

Shop 8, 100 Clive Street, Katanning

(Open by appointment only)

### APM Busselton

2/71 Kent Street, Busselton

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

### APM Bunbury

Unit 1, 16 Victoria Street, Bunbury

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

### APM Margaret River

Unit 14, The Village at Margs, Townview Terrace, Margaret River

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

### APM Mandurah

Unit 1, 15 Sholl Street, Mandurah

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

### APM Rockingham

5 Goddard Street, Rockingham

(Open Monday to Fridays, 9am – 5pm)

## The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) can help you appeal your NDIS plan:

### AAT postal address:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal

GPO Box 9955

Perth WA 6001

Ph: 1800 228 333

Email: [generalreviews@aat.gov.au](mailto:generalreviews@aat.gov.au)

Website: [swanautism.org.au/aat](https://swanautism.org.au/aat)

## Transport

### Transperth

Transperth is the public transport provider for the Perth and Peel (Rockingham and Mandurah) areas.

### Transperth InfoLine

Ph: 13 62 13  
(Sunday to Thursdays 5am - midnight, Fridays and Saturdays 5am - 2am)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/transperth](http://swanautism.org.au/transperth)

### Transperth Special Assistance Service

Ph: 1800 800 022

### TransWA

TransWA is WA's regional public transport provider.

### TransWA bookings line

Ph: 1300 662 205  
(Monday to Saturdays 8.30am - 5.00pm, Sundays 10.00am - 4.00pm AWST)  
Email: [info@transwa.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@transwa.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/transwa](http://swanautism.org.au/transwa)

### Department of Transport Driver and Vehicle Licensing Services

Ph: 13 11 56  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/dot-licensing](http://swanautism.org.au/dot-licensing)

## Driving schools in WA for people with disabilities:

### Six Star Disabled Driver Training

Pinjarra, Bunbury and Busselton areas  
Driving lessons only  
Modified vehicles available  
NDIS registered provider  
Ph: 0406 456 353 or 0411 511 729  
Email: [info-sixstar@iinet.net.au](mailto:info-sixstar@iinet.net.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/six-star-driver-training](http://swanautism.org.au/six-star-driver-training)

### Eclipse Driving School

Rockingham, Mandurah and Bunbury areas  
Driving lessons and OT driving assessments  
Modified vehicles available  
NDIS registered provider  
Ph: (08) 9557 5010  
Email: [eclipsedriving-school@westnet.com.au](mailto:eclipsedriving-school@westnet.com.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/eclipse-driving-school](http://swanautism.org.au/eclipse-driving-school)

### Drive and Pass Specialised Driver Training

Dianella (Perth metro area)  
Driving lessons only  
Modified vehicle available (automatic transmission only)  
NDIS registered provider  
Ph: 0449 995 456  
Email: [roanne@driveandpass.com.au](mailto:roanne@driveandpass.com.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/drive-and-pass](http://swanautism.org.au/drive-and-pass)

### OT Services Group

Visiting the Peel (Mandurah), Bunbury, Busselton and Esperance areas fortnightly  
Driving lessons and OT driving assessments  
NDIS registered provider  
Ph: (08) 9332 1783  
Email: [info@otservicesgroup.com](mailto:info@otservicesgroup.com)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/ot-services-group](http://swanautism.org.au/ot-services-group)

### Functional Revival

Albany area  
OT driving assessments only  
NDIS registered provider  
Ph: (08) 9842 6038  
Email: [contacts@functionalrevival.com](mailto:contacts@functionalrevival.com)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/functional-revival-driver-assessments](http://swanautism.org.au/functional-revival-driver-assessments)

ACROD Parking Program

Ph: (08) 9242 5544  
(Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm)  
Email: [acrod@nds.org.au](mailto:acrod@nds.org.au)  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/acrod](http://swanautism.org.au/acrod)

Technology for Ageing and Disabled WA (TADWA)

TADWA do vehicle modifications for people with disabilities in Perth and Bunbury.  
TADWA Bunbury office:  
Ph: 1300 663 243  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/tadwa](http://swanautism.org.au/tadwa)

RYDE

RYDE can help people under 25 years old with heavily discounted driving lessons given by trained volunteers:

South West RYDE (Bunbury and Busselton)

Ph: 0419 730 550 or (08) 9721 6951  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/ryde-south-west](http://swanautism.org.au/ryde-south-west)

Mandurah RYDE

Ph: (08) 9550 3670 or (08) 9581 3365  
Website: [swanautism.org.au/ryde-mandurah](http://swanautism.org.au/ryde-mandurah)

Contact List

Write down any useful contacts you may have e.g., GP, Therapist, School etc

What they do								
Email								
Phone								
Name								

## Notes

[illegible]



Current as of June 2025