

HOW TO CHOOSE A SUITABLE DISABILITY SERVICE PROVIDER



How to choose a suitable disability provider

Choosing a disability service provider that is right for you can be challenging, however there are lots of things you can do to ensure that your choice is a good one.

It's useful to speak with different providers before you choose one so you can see what is on offer and get a feel for their culture and values, assess their qualifications and experience, and ensure they offer services that align with your needs.

A provider can be a person, business or organisation who delivers NDIS funded supports. A participant, or their carer/nominee, are required to choose a provider who can deliver the services specified in their NDIS plan.

You can use the 'provider finder' on the NDIS website (www.ndis.gov.au/provider-finder) to find registered providers.





Things to consider when choosing a provider

Are the services on offer a good fit for you?

It is important that the services you are offered are covered by your NDIS plan and will help you work towards achieving your goals.

Make sure you ask about availability for groups, activities and services and check that they align with your current schedule and/or therapy appointments.



TIP

You can use different providers for activities or services if required.

Is the service provider located in suitable area for you?

Does the provider offer services in your local area? It is important that the location is convenient for you and not too far away from your home.

Consider if the provider offers transport to get you to your activities and services, or will you need to arrange this yourself.

The Interchange Illawarra head office, The Wallis Centre, is a brand new, purpose built centre, located at Church Street, Wollongong.

We also own several other properties in Wollongong and Lake Illawarra that are used for social activities and short-term accommodation.

Is the provider registered?

The difference between registered and unregistered providers can be enormous. Providers who are not registered do not need to follow the same rules as registered providers.

Registered NDIS providers are regulated by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, and have to meet strict conditions to ensure the quality and safety of their services.

Registered providers are required to undergo external audits every two years. Unregistered Providers are not subject to any oversight of their quality and safety standards.

All providers must follow the NDIS Code of Conduct which is a list of rules about how providers must behave.

How much do the services you require cost?

Pricing can vary from provider to provider for the services they offer. You should ask for a quotation of costs before signing a service agreement.

Some therapy appointments covered by the NDIS are charged at a set price e.g. Occupational Therapy.

For some activities, especially Social Support group activities, there may be costs that are not covered by the NDIS.

For example: If the group is attending a lunch at a local club, the Support Workers who go with you are covered by the NDIS, but you will have to pay for your meal out of your own money. This is called an out-of-pocket cost.

Interchange Illawarra will always let you know what the out-of-pocket cost is, or if you need to bring money with you, before you choose to attend an event or activity.



Things to consider when choosing a provider

Is the provider easy to contact?

Your provider should let you know how you can contact them, either by a phone number or email.

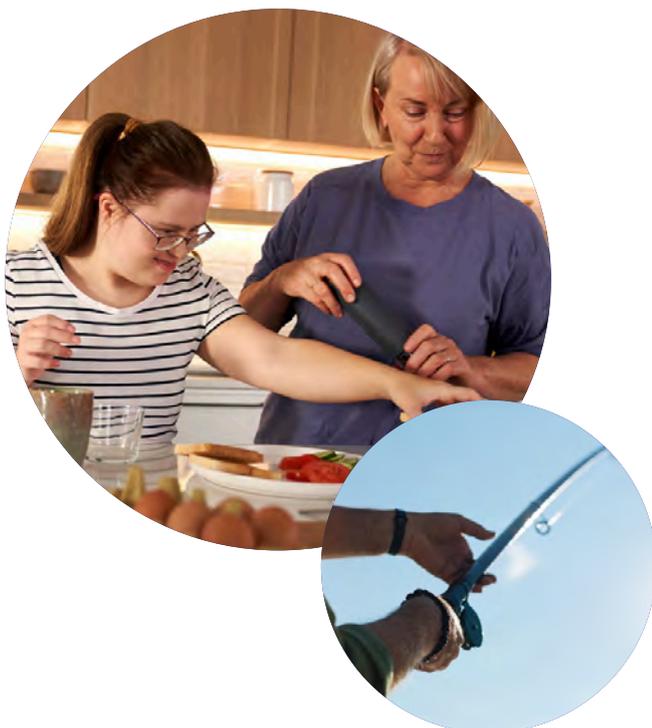
At Interchange Illawarra every participant has a dedicated contact person, called a Support Planner, that they can call if they need assistance with one of our services.

Is the provider experienced or brand new?

When looking for a service provider it is a good idea to ask how long they have been in operation.

Organisations that have been around for a while are generally more experienced, and better resourced than a brand-new provider.

Interchange Illawarra has been operating for over 43 years.



Does the provider have a good network of Support Workers to assist you if your regular Support Worker is on leave?

Interchange Illawarra employs over 130 Support Workers. This means that if your regular Support Worker is unwell or on holidays, we can usually arrange for another worker to take their place.

If your provider is a smaller organisation, or a single worker with an ABN, they might not be able to arrange for another Support Worker at short notice.

Does the provider have a good reputation or reviews?

To find out if your preferred provider has a good reputation, you can ask friends and family, your Support Coordinator, your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or look for reviews online.

If you know someone who uses the provider, it is good idea to ask them if they are happy with the service they receive.



TIP

You can ask the provider to let you do a site visit, so you can see if the 'vibe' feels right for you. Some organisations might also offer a trial day before you commit to a program.



Changing your provider

Changing your existing provider

If you feel that you want to change providers, for whatever reason, you are able to do this at any time.

You will need to determine what supports you require and what aspects of your current service are not meeting your needs. This will help you to choose a new service provider.

Your service agreement will detail the notice period you need to provide your current provider. At Interchange Illawarra the notice period is 4 weeks, and must be provided in writing. If there is a serious breach of any terms then the notice period may be waived.

It is also important to give consent to the current provider so that they are able to easily share information with the incoming provider.

If you need support or information, you can talk to your:

- Support Coordinator.
- Your NDIS contact.
- Support person, a carer or disability advocate.
- Your Local Area Coordination (LAC). In the Wollongong area this is Uniting (<https://lac.uniting.org/home>).



Need more information?

For more in-depth information about choosing a service provider, we encourage you to visit the NDIS website <https://www.ndis.gov.au/> or call the NDIS on 1800 800 110.

The information provided in this fact sheet is general in nature. Please contact your Support Planner or Coordinator if you need further clarification.

We are here to help!