

FACT SHEET

WHO CAN CARERS CONTACT FOR SUPPORT?



Caring for someone with a disability can be rewarding but it can also be physically and mentally challenging. Even if you have a suite of disability service supports in place, issues can arise if the primary carer becomes unwell, requires surgery or needs respite.

What happens if an emergency situation arises for someone who is a carer of a person with a disability?

When the primary carer is unable to undertake their usual caring role, additional, or new supports may be required for a person with a disability.

Carer Gateway is an Australian Government initiative that provides free support services for carers. They can help to organise emergency respite services to take over care, if a suitable service is available in your local area. They also offer wellbeing initiatives and other support services.

Carer Gateway staff are available Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm by calling 1800 422 737. You can also request a call back or send an email. Check out the Carer Gateway website (<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>) for a full list of their services and contact options.



Other organisations that can offer assistance to carers include:

Organisation	Description	Website
Carers NSW	Information, education, resources and referrals to support carers	https://www.carersnsw.org.au/
Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Carer Program	Carer information and education programs in the Illawarra/ Shoalhaven areas	https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/carers-program/carers-education-information-and-support-programs
ARAFMI Illawarra	Support for Mental Health Carers in the Illawarra	https://www.onedoor.org.au/our-services/carers-supports/arafmi-illawarra



TIP

It is always a good idea to let your disability service provider(s) know of any changes to your caring capacity/home situation as they may be able to suggest additional options for the participant. The support of family members or friends, if available, could also be called upon to assist you during an emergency situation.



Who can carers contact for support?



How do I request a change of situation for a NDIS participant?

If the person with a disability will require longer term care as a result of their primary carers illness or injury, you may be eligible to request a change of situation review of their NDIS plan. To request a change to a NDIS plan, you need to inform the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) of the exact changes to the situation. You can do this through the NDIS participant portal, by phone, email, or in writing. If you have a Support Coordinator they can assist you with this process.

If you don't have a Support Coordinator your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) should be able to assist you. To find out if you have an LAC, you can contact Uniting on 1300 453 303 or via their website (<https://lac.uniting.org/home>).

Is short term accommodation an option for the person with disability?

At Interchange Illawarra we have several options for short term accommodation with a Villa at Lake Illawarra and a Cottage in Wollongong.

A Support Worker will stay with the participant and can transport them to get to their group activities, therapy appointments or workplace, if required.

Short term accommodation is available for participants who have the appropriate funding in their NDIS plan and is booked on a first-in basis.

Are there support groups for carers?

There are many support groups for carers. The Carer Gateway website (<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>) can help you find a suitable group in your area or there are online options too. Carer Gateway can also assist with counselling for carers. They are able to speak to you over the phone or in person.



Who can carers contact for support?

What is the Interchange Illawarra's Parent/Carer Health & Wellbeing Program?

The Interchange Illawarra Parent/Carer Health and Wellbeing Program aims to develop social and support opportunities for parents and carers of registered Interchange Illawarra participants.

We do this by offering free social events which assist parents and carers to meet others in a similar circumstance, strengthen informal networks, socialise, learn new skills and enjoy some fun that's all about them.

Our health and wellbeing activities vary from year to year and have included wine tasting bus trips, lunches, spa days, craft activities, fishing expeditions and information workshops.

We also celebrate Carers Week each year with a lunch event hosted by our CEO and Chairperson.

What is MyTime?

MyTime is for parents and carers of a child (aged 0-16 years) with a disability, chronic medical condition or other additional needs including developmental delay. It is a funded Federal Government program, and run by TAFE NSW, Big Fat Smile and Interchange Illawarra.

An experienced educator from Big Fat Smile and a TAFE teacher lead a group of Diploma of Early Childhood Education students to engage and care for the children, while a trained facilitator runs a group session with parents at North Wollongong TAFE.

You are welcome to stay with your child or join the facilitator in another room and enjoy the company of other parents in a relaxing environment.



For more information or to register your interest see our website <https://interchangeillawarra.org/services/mytime-project/> or call our office on 4227 1079.

Why is self-care so important for carers?

It is essential for people who are carers to recognise the importance of self-care. Taking time for self-care is essential for maintaining your physical and mental health, preventing burnout, and being able to effectively support others.

The saying 'You can't pour from an empty cup' highlights the value of self-care. It means that if you don't prioritise your own well-being, you won't have the energy, resources, or capacity to care for others. We strongly encourage carers to take time for themselves and set healthy boundaries.

Need more information?

For more in-depth information about support for carers, 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!