



New ways to attract, train and keep disability support workers

The panel's vision

We need a larger, more skilled workforce that can meet the future demand for quality services and improved outcomes. More targeted strategies are needed in areas such as allied health and to increase peer workers. Employers should be incentivised to invest in supervision and training. Training credits and leave should be 'portable' because most care and support workers do not work in traditional full-time jobs. There needs to be more opportunities to progress careers through micro-credentials (short courses).



What is the problem?

We have heard from many support workers that they feel burnt out and are not sure they want to stay in the disability sector. We have also heard how hard it is for people with disability to find good skilled workers that meet their needs.

We know we need more workers, both now and in the future, to meet the needs of people with disability. Yet large workforce shortages remain. We have heard that finding and keeping disability workers with the right skills, values and attitudes is difficult. We have heard that workers are frustrated by lack of good training, limited career opportunities and not enough supervision. There are particularly greater shortages of allied health professionals.

We have also heard that current arrangements for pricing and payments are not set up well. It is often hard for providers to meet the needs of participants who are more complex, including providing appropriate training and higher levels of worker supervision which may be required. There is not enough information or guidance about how to deliver high quality supports, and good quality support is not recognised and rewarded.

Worker screening is inconsistent across states and territories and can be slow and complicated. First Nations communities and remote communities also need a more localised workforce.

All of these problems stop people from joining and staying in the workforce. Each year, 17%–25% of NDIS support workers leave their job. This can be because jobs are sometimes short term or have poor conditions – or both.



What is the solution?

We want to make sure people with disability can find good quality support workers that meet their needs. We recommend:

- Trialling portable leave and training so that the learning and training of support workers is more widely recognised and workers can build up leave balances across the care and support sector.
- Improving worker screening processes to be faster, smoother and more consistent.
- Worker screening processes should work better across the care and support sector.
- Minimum online training to ensure workers understand their obligations, and then more opportunities to progress careers through micro-credentials (short courses and competencies).
- Targeted strategies to increase the allied health workforce and peer workers.
- A new pricing and payments framework, including independent pricing setting to support providers to invest in workforce capability.
- Partnerships with First Nations communities and remote communities to design and roll out place-based, community-led alternative commissioning approaches, to build and keep localised workforces.

Who will this benefit?

Participants should benefit from higher quality services including preventing poor outcomes and harm. Over time there should also be a greater availability of supports and services as more high quality workers stay in the sector.

Disability support workers should benefit from better availability of training and access to portable leave, making it easier to work across the care and support sector, with more opportunities to progress their careers.

What happens next?

We strongly recommend that support workers, their representative organisations, providers and people with disability and their families are closely involved in designing and testing the changes, to make sure they work well. We also recommend that changes are introduced gradually so everyone has time to get ready.

Want more information? Read the final NDIS Review report and recommendations, NDIS Review Guide, NDIS Review fact sheets and FAQ at www.ndisreview.gov.au