



## Orthoptics - impact of changes to NDIS

Participants do not need a specific diagnosis to access vision supports. This has not changed with the new legislation. Participants need to spend their NDIS funding on NDIS supports and in line with any requirements listed in their plan. The plan does not need to specifically state 'vision impairment' for participants to access vision supports.

Under section 34(1)(aa), supports must relate to impairments that meet the disability requirements or early intervention requirements. Supports may relate to multiple impairments. Additionally, the new legislation notes that support needs may be impacted by environmental factors or impairments that do not meet the access criteria.

For example, a participant may meet the disability requirements for a neurological impairment related to Multiple Sclerosis. As their condition progresses, they develop Optic Neuritis which leads to a sensory impairment. This participant could receive vision supports related to both their neurological and sensory impairments.

The NDIA will issue notices of impairments from 1 January 2025 for new participants, and at a later date for existing participants. Under section 32BA, notices of impairments will be listed in one or more of six impairment categories: intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, physical, and psychosocial.

If participants have multiple permanent impairments, the NDIA considers the combined impact of these impairments when issuing the notice.

For example, a participant may have neurological and sensory impairments that do not result in substantially reduced functional capacity when considered individually. However, when considered together, these impairments substantially reduce their functional capacity in mobility and self-care. For this participant, the notice of impairments would state they meet the disability requirements for both neurological and sensory impairments.

In future, the NDIA will introduce a holistic support needs assessment process as part of new framework planning. This will create a more consistent and transparent process for determining needs and will provide greater flexibility in how funding is spent.

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