



Individual Support Packages (ISP)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an ISP?

An Individual Support Package is funding assistance that people with a disability can apply for. Disability ACT only offers ISPs when the ACT Government budget allocates funding for this purpose. This may not be every year.

An ISP is a 'package' of money allocated (in the first instance) to an individual — and not to an agency.

An ISP is not income, but it allows you to make choices about what support and services you want, and (within the policy guidelines) — to change supports and services if they need to at a later date.

Disability ACT offers three types of ISP funding, each with different management arrangements and different benefits:

- Individualised Funding
- Individual Tied Funding
- Individual Grants

Each type of ISP will allow a person to negotiate how, when or where they receive the services identified.

How does ISP funding differ from government benefits (eg: Disability Support Pension)?

The Disability Support Pension (DSP) is an entitlement. It is available to all people whose disability prevents them from working, and assists them to meet their costs of living.

The DSP is considered to be a form of income, and a DSP recipient may use their pension on whatever goods and services they wish. The DSP is means tested and ceases to be provided if the person's income is higher than a certain level.

Disability ACT does not provide ISP funding as a form of income. ISPs are provided to meet the additional support some people require to live an ordinary life.

ISPs are not an entitlement. People with disabilities must apply for ISP funding when it is available if they wish to be considered.

There is a high demand for ISPs and they are allocated to those people with the highest priority of need, through an application and assessment process.

Who is eligible to apply for an ISP?

To be eligible to apply you must be an ACT resident, and have a disability that is recognised under the ACT Government's agreement with the Australian Government (Commonwealth State & Territories Disability Agreement).

As there is always more demand for ISP than there are available funds, Disability ACT normally limits the availability of the funds to particular target groups and priority criteria.

These target groups and criteria will be based on the ACT Government's assessment of where the greatest need exists in the ACT community, and what other resources are available to assist.

There is no age limit for eligibility for ISP funding. However, people who acquire a disability over the age of 65 are often not considered in the target group for ISP funding, as people over the age of 65 are eligible to receive support from the age care sector.

You **do not** have to hold a concession card to apply.

How much ISP funding can I apply for?

There are upper and lower limits for ISP funding. This can vary between funding processes, depending on the type and purpose of the funding offered. However at the time of drafting the policy (2006) the maximum ongoing funding that can be allocated for any new ISP is \$125,000.00

However, in completing your application, Disability ACT would encourage you to think in terms of the support you need — rather than how much it will cost.

The application process only asks you to identify what kind of support you need, and how often you need it. The application process does not require you to cost the support.

What kind of services and supports can I get with an ISP?

The ISP policy provides An ISP can be used to obtain supports and services that you need because you have a disability.

For many people this means getting support staff, e.g. to help you in your home, or to help you get out in the community. ISPs can also pay for some other services and equipment.

However, unless there are exceptional circumstances ISP's **cannot** be used for:

- things that you could reasonably be expected to purchase if you did not have a disability e.g. cars, furniture, TVs, groceries, medicines etc.
- services and equipment that you get from other funded services or schemes, e.g. you cannot use your ISP to buy a new wheelchair if you can get the chair from the ACT Equipment Scheme, nor can you use it to meet the client contributions charges in such schemes.

Are items or services purchased through an ISP subject to GST?

Yes, you need to pay the GST on services and items purchased with your ISP. For Individualised Funding or Individually Tied Funding Disability ACT will provide your agency with additional funding to cover the GST.

How do I apply for an ISP?

You can only apply for an ISP when Disability ACT advertises that individual funds are available and invites applications.

Disability ACT will advertise an ISP funding process in local newspapers. Application forms and information packs will be also be available at that time on the Disability ACT's website (www.dhcs.act.gov.au).

You can register an Expression of Interest in receiving information about future funding rounds by contacting Disability ACT on disabilityACT@act.gov.au or by calling Disability ACT's Information Service on 6207 1086. You will need to advise us if your contact details change.

Disability ACT's Information Service can also provide you with general information about funding processes.

How is my application for ISP funding assessed?

Disability ACT appoints a panel comprising of representatives from Disability ACT, sector organisations and people with disabilities or families. The panel assesses all applications and ranks them in order of needs-based priority.

The panel then makes recommendations to the Executive Director of Disability ACT who allocates funding informed by these recommendations.

For some ISP funding types, the application process may also involve a face-to-face interview with an assessor.

More information on the application process is at Chapter 3 of the *ISP Policy and Procedures Manual*, which is available at www.dhcs.act.gov.au/disabilityact

What happens if I am unsuccessful in receiving an ISP?

Disability ACT will advise you in writing that your ISP Application was unsuccessful.

Your application and the panels' recommendations will remain current for a period of up to 2 years. Disability ACT may be able to act on these applications should new sources of funding become available (for example if someone leaves the Territory and relinquishes their funding).

However, if the ACT Government allocates new funding to Disability ACT in subsequent years, and Disability ACT advertises a new funding round you will have to reapply.

If you have given Disability ACT permission to retain the information in your application, Disability ACT will use this information to advise the ACT Government of the level of demand for disability services in the ACT. Only the raw data from your application will be used. No personal information will be used in advice to the ACT Government.

If I am successful do I have to reapply every year — or is the support provided on a permanent basis?

If you are allocated ISP funding you will be advised whether the funding is **recurrent** (which means that it is available to you each year on an ongoing basis), or **non-recurrent** (which means that it is allocated to you once only for a set period of time, generally for 1 year or less).

If you are allocated recurrent funding you do not need to reapply for funding in future years (unless your needs increase and you require additional support). If you are allocated non-recurrent funding and, after using this funding you still require services, you may need to reapply.

Is an ISP means tested?

No, however the assessment panel will consider your current support and living circumstances in deciding priority for funding.

If I receive an ISP will it affect my disability pension?

Neither Individually Tied Funding nor Individualised Funding will affect your pension.

These funds are held in your agency's bank account and therefore will not affect Centrelink's Income Test for the Disability Support Pension.

Individual Grants however are allocated directly to you and are held in your bank account.

Disability ACT's provides Individual Grants specifically to meet your disability support needs, and not as income.

Where there is doubt over the status of this funding, you should seek a private ruling from the Australian Taxation Office.

Can I do anything now in preparing to apply for an ISP?

If you have not done so already, spend some time developing a plan for your future. Consider what you want to do in the next few years, what your goals are, and what you want to achieve.

Talk the plan over with other people. Work with them to identify what you can do already to work towards your goals, and where you need extra help.

Having a plan may assist you to identify some things you can start on already. It will also make completing the application forms easier, and will give the panel a clearer picture of your circumstances and what effect the funded support will have for you.

If you want more information on how to start planning contact Disability ACT's Information service on: disabilityACT@act.gov.au or on 6207 1086.

What is the difference between the 3 types of ISPs?

Individualised Funding

Individualised Funding is normally used where you want the *same type of service from the same agency ongoingly or for a fixed period.*

- You choose one or more disability support agencies to provide the services you want, and negotiate these services within the funds you have available.

- Disability ACT then provides the funds to the agency through a funding agreement, and the services can commence.
- The agency pools the funds to provide the service. The agency uses the funds as it sees best in order to provide you with your service. The agency does not separately account to you for how it uses these funds (but reports to Disability ACT on expenditure).
- At a later date you can negotiate a change in services, or extract the funds and negotiate new services with another provider. (Where your support involves shared resources, a certain amount of time must be allowed for the agency to adjust their support arrangements).

Individually Tied Funding

Individually Tied Funding is normally used where you require *support from a variety of services, and/or where those services may need to change, either regularly or over time.*

- Individually Tied Funding arrangements can be on an ongoing basis, or as a one-off payment
- You choose an agency to be your *auspicing agency*. The auspicing agency holds the funds you have been allocated and uses them to buy the services you want on your behalf (often the broker is not the agency that provides your services).
- The auspicing agency holds the funds you have been allocated separate from their other funds. They can only buy services up to the maximum amount of funding allocated to you.
- The auspicing agency will give you a regular account of how these funds have been used.
- The auspicing agency also meets Disability ACT contractual reporting requirements.
- You pay the auspicing agency a fee for this service, which is deducted from your Individually Tied Funding.

Individual Grants

Individual Grants are used when you have *a small one off support need that you don't expect to reoccur regularly.*

- Grants are small amounts of one-off (non recurrent) amounts of money.
- Grants are paid directly to you, and are kept in your bank account.
- You are responsible to buy the services/equipment you have been allocated funding for, to maintain receipts, and to acquit these funds with receipts to Disability ACT by the end of the funding period.

There is more information on in section 4 of *the ISP Policy and Procedures Manual* about each of these funding types. The manual is available at www.dhcs.act.gov.au/disabilityact

Can I have more than one type of ISP funding?

Yes, you can an Individualised Funding arrangement with one or more agencies, and have one (only) Individually Tied Funding arrangement. However, most people have only one of these arrangements.

In addition to either, or both of these funding types you may also have one or more Individual Grants.

How do I get help in finding and negotiating services?

If you are allocated an ISP for Individualised Funding or for Individually Tied Funding, Disability ACT will offer you the services of a Funded Support Facilitator.

The Facilitator will help you work out what services you need, identify agencies to provide those services, help you negotiate those services, and develop an agreement with the agency for those services (A Funded Support Plan)

If at a later stage you want to renegotiate those arrangements or change agencies a Facilitator can help you make the new arrangements.

Individual Grants will not be offered Funded Support Facilitation services.

I care for a person with a disability. Can I apply for an ISP on that person's behalf?

If a person is not able make an informed consent to the application, a parent or legal guardian may apply for funding on their behalf.

Advocates, other family members, or carers may assist in completing the application, but the person, their parent, or guardian must sign the application.

What happens if I have a recurrent (ongoing) ISP, but my needs change or fluctuate up or down over time?

Many people's support needs change over time. If you have Individualised Funding arrangement then your support agency will probably be able adjust some of your support arrangements to cope with your changing needs.

If you have Individually Tied Funding, you carry over up to 10% of your unspent funds in one year to allow for contingencies in the following year.

If your needs have substantially changed these measures may not be sufficient, and you or your agency may need to alert Disability ACT of your circumstances.

Does Disability ACT review ISPs?

Yes, Disability ACT will conduct a review of Individually Tied Funding Arrangements at a minimum of once every 5 years. Disability ACT will not review Individualised Funding or Individual Grants.

The main purpose of the review is to find out whether the ISP funds allocated to you continue to meet your support needs. However, a review is not a funding process. You will still need to apply for further ISP funding if the review finds that there is a gap between your support needs and what you can buy with the funds you have been allocated.

The report of the review will be submitted to the Executive Director of Disability ACT. A copy will also be forwarded to you, and to the agency managing your Individually Tied funding allocation.

You can download a copy of the Policy and Procedures manual at www.dhcs.act.gov.au/disabilityact

For more information about Individual Support Packages, or to request a copy be posted to you please contact Disability ACT's Information Service Disability ACT's Information service on: disabilityACT@act.gov.au or on 6207 1086.