



Fact sheet: Changes to assessments and allocations, and flexible funding

This information is for disabled people, whānau, family and carers who use Disability Support Services (DSS).

From 2026, there will be changes to DSS funded supports. These changes will make flexible funding easier to use. They follow on from very clear feedback received from the disability community earlier in the year.

The changes start from 1 February 2026 for people new to DSS. If you already get DSS funded supports, the changes start on 1 April 2026. Current arrangements remain in place until then.

Main changes

- You will get more choice and control in how you use your flexible funding.
- The purchasing guidelines will be removed.
- If you get flexible funding, you will be given a budget to manage within.
- You will get guidance to help manage your budget.
- All NASCs around the country will do their assessments the same way. This is so their decisions on support are fairer and more consistent.
- The needs of families, whānau and carers needs will also be considered in assessments.

Assessment and allocation changes

All NASCs and participating EGL sites will use the same assessment tool. This will ensure a fairer and more consistent approach.

Disability Support Services



Feedback from the consultation was that assessments can be stressful and confusing. So, you will get better information on the process and what you should expect.

Family, whānau and carers often play a critically important role in the support of disabled people.

Support for carers will be considered as part of the assessment process, where relevant to the needs of the disabled person.

Providing identifiable funding for this purpose will ensure relevant and helpful support for families and carers.

NASCs and EGL sites will develop a personal plan with you to:

- focus on your wants and needs
- address barriers linked to your disability
- be clear on the purpose of the funding.

Reassessments will be paused from February until October 2026, to give NASCs and EGL sites time to implement these changes.

You can request an urgent reassessment if your circumstances change.

Flexible funding changes

The changes are designed to make flexible funding easier to use.

- Purchasing guidelines, including the March 2024 changes, will be removed in 2026.
- You will be able to choose how you spend your flexible funding to address barriers linked to your disability.
- You cannot use flexible funding to buy items such as alcohol, tobacco and gambling.
- A very limited number of purchases will require pre-approval. This includes international travel and one-off purchases above a set value limit.

You will get a budget so you know how much you can spend. You:

- are expected to manage within this budget
- will get guidance to help manage their budget.

You should contact your NASC or EGL site if your needs change.



Setting flexible funding budgets

From 1 April 2026, the purchasing guidelines, including the March 2024 changes, will be removed.

If you are already using flexible funding, you will be allocated a budget. This budget will be in place until your next reassessment.

Flexible budgets will be reallocated based on how much the person has spent in the past (between June 2023 – June 2025).

It will take time for the new system to be set up. A transition period is needed so that disabled people can benefit from increased flexibility as quickly as possible.

Timeline for changes

From 1 February 2026

- People who are new to disability support services are assessed using the new system.
- Reassessments will be paused until October 2026, unless urgent.

From 1 April 2026

- If you are already using flexible funding, you will be allocated a budget. This will be informed by how much flexible funding you have used in the past.
- Purchasing guidelines, including the March 2024 changes, will be removed.
- DSS will work with NASCs, EGL sites and Hosts to introduce changes.

From 1 October 2026

- Regular reassessments, including the development of personal plans, gets underway.