



These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are about the change that has been made by the National Disability Agency (NDIA) to how Employment Supports are funded in NDIS Plans.

These FAQs talk about how Bedford have responded to the change. Bedford calls this the 'Transition to the New Employment Model'. Sometimes we might shorten this to the 'NEM' or 'New Employment Model'.

## **Who can support me if I need help or more information?**

If you have questions about how Bedford can help you with the NEM changes, please contact our Client Management team in person or via the phone number or email below:

Email: [clientmanagement@bedfordgroup.com.au](mailto:clientmanagement@bedfordgroup.com.au)

Phone: 8116 2162

## **Questions about the Transition to the New Employment Model**

### **What was the change made by the NDIA?**

Your NDIS plan has money (funding) to pay for your supports at work. Bedford uses this funding to help you do your job.

From 1 July 2020, the NDIA made changes to what budget employment funding goes into, the name of the funding and the prices for supports. Before this funding was in your 'Capacity Building' budget and was called 'Finding and Keeping a Job'. Now your employment funding should be in your 'Core' budget and is called 'Supports in Employment'.

Before, funding for 'Finding and Keeping a Job' was a set amount. This meant that it was the same amount for a person who worked one day or up to five days. Employment funding is now based on the days and hours you work, as well as the support you receive while at work.

You can read about the changes in the Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits document at the [NDIS website](#), and learn more about the rules for Supported Employment in the [Supports in Employment Provider Handbook](#).

### **When did it happen?**

The NDIA said all employment support providers (like Bedford) needed to move to the new funding model by January 2022. All Bedford NDIS-funded employees are now on the New Employment Model – for most employees, this was from the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 2022.

### **Why did the NDIA make the change?**

The NDIA have made this change so employment supports are personalised to the hours and days you work, as well as the individual supports you receive.

## ***What does the Transition to the New Employment Model mean for me?***

Under the New Employment Model, the NDIA have said they will ask you six questions about your employment during your NDIS Plan review meetings. These questions are:

- Where do you work?
- How many hours per week do you usually work?
- How many hours would you like to work per week?
- What help do you receive when you are at work?
- Are there new skills you'd like to learn at work?
- What other jobs would you like to try?

To help you with this new requirement, Bedford has provided you with a document, called the Summary of My Employment Supports, which includes information to help you answer the six questions.

You don't have to use the Summary of My Employment Supports. But if you didn't have this document from Bedford, you may have received less funding from the NDIS for Supports in Employment. If you make changes to your work, Bedford will provide you with an updated Summary document.

You may not have had this document if you have been on long-term leave, and we have not been able to work with you to answer these questions.

Please contact Bedford if you don't think you have been given your Summary of My Employment Supports, or you have not been at work to answer the six questions.

## ***Will the payment method for my Supports in Employment change?***

There will be no change to the payment method if your budget is still managed in the same way (plan-managed, self-managed or NDIA / Agency managed). Bedford will send your invoice to your Plan Manager if you are plan-managed. Bedford will send your invoice to you and / or your Plan Nominee if you are self-managed. Bedford will claim the funding from the NDIA portal if you are NDIA / Agency-managed. Please let us know if you have changed the way your budget is managed, so Bedford can change the payment method.

Under the New Employment Model (NEM) you will notice that invoices look slightly different as they will have the new NEM codes and prices.

## ***Do I have a choice in transitioning to the New Employment Model?***

The NDIA is making the change. It is compulsory – this means employers (like Bedford) and employees (like you) have **not** been given a choice about making the change.

The NDIA prepared your Plan for the change by moving your funding to your Core budget.

## ***How have Bedford helped with the transition?***

Bedford created a project team who worked together to understand the changes the NDIA made, and planned how Bedford would support clients through the changes. Bedford met with employees to help answer the NDIA's six questions.

Bedford has put all the information into a document called the Summary of My Employment Supports to answer the questions asked by the NDIA. If you gave us your consent, we have shared this document with the NDIA. You also can share it yourself. Please let us know if you can't find your copy or don't think you have seen this document before.

If you have questions about how Bedford can help you with the changes, please email or phone us.

## ***Will I be better off?***

The NDIA says the changes mean you now have more flexibility about how and where you use your funding for supports at work, including how you can achieve any new employment goals.

Now that all NDIS-funded Bedford employees have transitioned to the New Employment Model, we hope to introduce more tailored workplace supports to help you to achieve your employment goals. By learning more about the supports at work you have and your future workplace goals, we'll be able to plan better for the supports and services Bedford will provide in the future.

## ***What if my funding has changed to the New Employment Model and I feel that it doesn't support my needs, or support achieving my goals?***

Please contact your CSR or Regional PTO, who will be able to help you and discuss your options.

Bedford has already transitioned all NDIS-funded employees to the New Employment Model. We will be using the information you provided us in your Step Forward Survey to identify ways we can better support your employment goals. We have a transformation team working on these, however it will take a little time for Bedford to be able to offer all the different supports and opportunities that employees identified in the survey.

## ***Questions about Service Agreements and the Summary of My Employment Supports***

### ***Why might my Summary of My Employment Supports document change?***

The Summary of My Employment Supports (SOMES) is based on information provided and known when it was written, and may change as you, your goals, and the supports in the workplace change.

The SOMES will change:

- if you reduce or increase work hours
- if you move to another job within Bedford where different supports are needed
- if changing your employment goals changes the amount of support you need at work
- if your personal circumstances change and you need different supports to do your job
- if the NDIA change the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits
- if Bedford changes its pricing and support model

### ***Why might my current Summary of My Employment Supports (SOMES) document be different to a previously received SOMES?***

In October 2021 Bedford revised its pricing and support model to reflect the costs of the supports being provided more accurately. All employees were provided with a SOMES based on the current Bedford supports in employment model.

For employees working a full week, the updated SOMES has resulted in an increase. For employees working fewer hours it has resulted in a decrease.

These updates consist of four changes:

- non-face-to-face supports are now calculated on days worked, rather than a weekly average
- removal of a 2-hour weekly allocation for group training at a ratio of 1: 5
- supports are now calculated for the entire length of time that you are supported, rather than just working hours
- Centre Capital Costs are now calculated for the entire length of time that you are supported, rather than just working hours

## ***If the NDIS change the pricing for Supports in Employment, how will I be told this?***

When the NDIS makes a change to the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits that affects supports in employment, Bedford will also make the same change. Your Service Agreement with Bedford explains this.

If it is a pricing change, we will publish it on the [Bedford website](#).

We will tell you there has been a change through a Toolbox Talk at work and provide more information about the change through these FAQs.

The NDIS increased the maximum allowable hourly price for supports in employment from 1 July 2022 by \$5.83 for Port Lincoln and \$4.16 for all other Bedford sites, to help cover the increased cost of delivering supports. The NDIS also increased the price of Centre Capital Costs by 19 cents for Port Lincoln and 11 cents for all other Bedford sites. The NDIS have said they will index your plan to cover the cost of the increase - this means they will increase your supports in employment funding.

Bedford won't create a new Summary of My Employment Supports with the updated pricing unless you need it for a Plan review, or wish to make changes to your Program of Support for Supports in Employment.

## ***What does it mean when it's said that my Supports in Employment are delivered in a Program of Supports?***

Your employment supports at Bedford are planned and delivered as a Program of Supports, in blocks of no more than 12 weeks. Bedford will claim each week for these provided supports, based on your agreed Schedule of Support. The NDIS call this your 'Typical Pattern of Support'.

You will not be billed:

- for public holidays, unless you are rostered to work
- for approved leave for whole days, with a minimum of two weeks' notice
- for planned Bedford shutdown periods where services and supports are not provided
- if you end your Program of Supports, having given at least two weeks' notice

The following supports will be billed under a Program of Supports:

- On-the-job supervision and Workplace Training
- Non-face-to-face Support
- Centre Capital Costs

## ***What are Bedford's NEM Program of Support dates?***

### **2022**

<i>Start</i>	<i>Finish</i>	<i>Duration</i>
03/01/2022	27/03/2022	12 weeks
28/03/2022	19/06/2022	12 Weeks
20/06/2022	11/09/2022	12 Weeks
12/09/2022	04/12/2023	12 Weeks
05/12/2022	01/01/2023	4 Weeks

### **2023**

<i>Start</i>	<i>Finish</i>	<i>Duration</i>
02/01/2023	26/03/2023	12 weeks
27/03/2023	18/06/2023	12 weeks
19/06/2023	10/09/2023	12 weeks
11/09/2023	03/12/2023	12 weeks
04/12/2023	31/12/2023	12 weeks

Before the start of each Program of Support, Bedford will remind you via a group toolbox talk that a new one is starting and if you need to make any changes to your Summary of My Employment Supports (SOMES).

More information about your Program of Supports can be found in your Service Agreement Terms and Conditions.

Before the start of each Program of Support, Bedford will remind you via a group toolbox talk that a new one is starting and if you need to make any changes to your Summary of My Employment Supports (SOMES).

More information about your Program of Supports can be found in your Service Agreement Terms and Conditions.

### ***Do I have to pay for Supports in Employment if I am not at work, and I didn't tell you that two weeks ahead of time?***

The NDIS provides funding for Supports in Employment under a Program of Support to enable providers like Bedford to still claim for costs for unplanned absences where the cost of having those supports available occur regardless of if the person uses them. This means if you are unexpectedly sick or absent from work and you haven't completed an Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form two weeks prior, your NDIS plan will be charged.

The NDIS Program of Support rules also mean if you arrive late, leave work early or are absent for part of the day you will be invoiced as per your weekly agreed invoice amount.

If you know you will be away from work for the whole work day, and complete the Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form two weeks prior from the date you will be away, you will not be charged for Supports in Employment. Please see the FAQs below for more information about how and when to tell Bedford about a planned absence.

### ***When my Plan is due for review, what happens under the NEM?***

Please let Bedford know if your Plan is being reviewed by your LAC / NDIS so we can make sure you have a current *Summary of My Employment Supports* (SOMES) based on your work goals, and if you want to discuss changing your supports in employment.

If you sign a consent form, we can provide your SOMES directly to the LAC / NDIS to help make sure you get the correct funding for supports in employment.

### ***Why am I having to do another Service Agreement, didn't I just do a new Service Agreement with Bedford?***

All employees were recently provided with new Service Agreements to enable the transition to the NEM. As your current NDIS Plan ends you will need a new Service Agreement with Bedford that is for the dates of your new NDIS Plan.

Bedford has transitioned employees to the new employment pricing model via the provision of updated Service Agreements and Summary of My Employment Supports documents.

If you have any concerns about the updated Service Agreement, or have not received your updated Service Agreement, please contact Bedford.

## ***Questions about NDIS funding for workplace supports***

### ***Will the cost of my supports be higher or lower?***

Your employment support funding is decided by the NDIA and under the new funding model is based on the number of hours you work, the type of support and other circumstances, such as where you work (for example, if you are working in a remote location like Port Lincoln, in a regional location, or Adelaide).

Bedford has estimated the cost of providing you support based on the NDIS' new funding model. It is up to the NDIS to make the decision of the funding they will provide. Bedford's cost evaluation has been included in your Summary of My Employment Supports document.

The cost of providing you with workplace supports could be higher or lower – everyone will be different.

If the cost of your supports is higher, it is important the NDIA knows this so they can provide the funding required to keep your current work hours and employment supports.

If you work full time and have a complex job, your supports in employment will probably be higher under the new funding model. If you work only a few hours each week, and you don't require a lot of job customisation or work engagement skills, your support costs may be lower.

## ***How have my Supports in Employment changed?***

The NDIA have changed the way supported employment is funded.

The NDIA fund:

- direct support
- non-direct support

Bedford calls this:

- On-the-Job Supervision and Workplace Training
- Non-Face-to-Face Supports
- Centre Capital Costs

### **On the Job Supervision and Workplace Training**

Supports in employment may be provided one-to-one or within a group-based setting, assisting with expected employer supports, according to the intensity and frequency of supports delivered to achieve employment goals.

Supports can include:

- on-the-job assessments related to your work
- job customisation
- on-the-job training and intermittent support with daily work tasks
- direct supervision / group-based support to enable meaningful participation at work
- supports to manage disability-related behaviour or complex needs at work

### **Non-Face-to-Face Supports**

Bedford will claim for non-face-to-face supports from your NDIS plan to help cover the cost of the following supports:

- progress noting and progress reports
- case conferences and engagement with your supports
- assistance with job customisation
- development of resources for program activities

### **Centre Capital Costs**

If the support that you are receiving is being delivered in a centre, Bedford will claim Centre Capital Costs. These costs were introduced by the NDIA to help support the cost of running and maintaining service provider's facilities.

## Questions about my job

### **What if my Supports in Employment funding provided by the NDIS is less than the amount in the Summary of My Employment Supports?**

The NDIA have asked providers like Bedford to work with you to you ask for a Plan review as your current plan doesn't have enough funds. The NDIA have said to say the reason for the review request is 'Employment in Jeopardy'.

If your employment funding will run out within 100 days (about three months) of your Plan end date, the NDIA have let Bedford know that LACs can bring Plan reviews forward, so you have an early review. Bedford can work with you to ask the NDIA (or LAC) to do an early Plan Review.

If your employment funding will run out with more than three months of your Plan still to go, we can help you to request a Plan review due to a change in circumstances.

The NDIA have said they prefer if **you make the request** rather than Bedford. However, they have also said Bedford can do this on your behalf if you give Bedford permission to do this. We have a consent form you can sign so we can make the review request for you - please ask your PTO or CSR for the form.

If you run out of funding before a review is organised, please let Bedford know straight away so we can quickly help you organise a Plan review request for you.

If you have any questions about your NDIS Plan and funding, don't forget posters are up at your work site which talk about how Bedford can help. The Bedford Client Management team is also here to help:

Email: [clientmanagement@bedfordgroup.com.au](mailto:clientmanagement@bedfordgroup.com.au)

Phone: 8116 2162

### **Do I pay for Supports in Employment when I am on leave from work?**

You will **not** be charged if you provide **at least two weeks' notice** for approved leave.

Bedford has an Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form for you to use to let us know about planned leave, so you won't be charged for employment supports while you're away. We will have Toolbox Talks on how to use the form and there is help available to fill out the form.

If you are at home and not able to come to work, please call your PTO - you can ask them to complete the Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form for you if you will be away for more than two weeks. Your PTO can help you complete another leave form if you return earlier than expected, or if extra leave is needed.

You do not need to complete the form for unplanned leave if you will be away for less than two weeks.

### **I have to stay at home because of illness or because I am a close contact, do I still pay for Supports in Employment under the New Employment Model?**

For unplanned absences from Bedford your NDIS Plan will be charged, as Bedford still needs to cover the cost of having those supports. If you think you will be away for more than two weeks, please complete the Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form so you aren't charged for Supports in Employment after the first two weeks.

### ***I have been away on planned leave, and now I need to extend it, what should I do?***

Please contact Bedford two weeks before your expected return date to have a new Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form completed with an updated return date. If you do not let Bedford know two weeks before your return you will be charged as an unplanned absence under the Program of Support rules.

### ***What happens if I am away and don't tell Bedford and don't complete the notification form?***

If you are absent from work, your PTO or Supervisor will do a welfare check. If Bedford support staff are not able to learn the reason for you not attending work, from yourself or your chosen representative, Bedford will continue to claim for employment supports from your NDIS Plan until the end of the Program of Supports, or until Bedford Human Resources Department considers you have abandoned your job and ends your employment.

The Bedford Enterprise Agreement also explains if an employee is absent for three working days or more without contact and without Bedford's prior agreement, Bedford will attempt to contact the employee. If there is no following contact from the employee in the next fourteen days after the attempt at contact by Bedford, it will be considered that the employee has abandoned their job and will no longer be an employee of Bedford.

### ***Can I change my hours at work?***

Bedford will continue to be flexible and consider all requests for a change in hours. If you want to work more, or less, hours at Bedford, talk to your PTO or Supervisor and they will assist you with your request.

Under the New Employment Model, if you want to increase your work hours you will need to make sure you have funding from the NDIS that will cover the additional employment supports. Your Client Services Representative (CSR) can help you do this.

We will have Toolbox Talks and videos on how you can make a change to your employment supports - like how to ask for a change in working hours, a change to the days you work, or job type.

Bedford will prioritise employees needing to reduce work hours.

### ***How do I ask for a change of my hours at work?***

You must complete the updated Change to Base Hours Request Form to request a change. Your PTO will help you to complete the Form. Any request to change your work hours must first be approved by your Supervisor or Manager. You will be told of the decision within 21 days.

### ***Where do I get the form to request a change to my hours at work?***

The Change to Base Hours Request Form is a digital form – please ask your PTO for help and they will show you the form on tablet or a computer, and help you fill it in.

### ***How much notice do I need to give Bedford to change my hours at work?***

If the change is approved, the start date for your new hours will be at least four to six weeks, depending on if the hours are increasing or decreasing.

### ***In the past I could change my hours easily and quickly, why do I have to wait now under the New Employment Model?***

Any change to your work arrangements – like changing the hours you work, which days you work, or which department you work in - requires a review of your Supports in Employment to ensure they will continue to meet your needs after your change in employment.

A new Summary of My Employment Supports will be provided to you, so you will know the cost for your Supports in Employment and can tell the NDIS.

You will need to sign a new Schedule of Support to confirm with Bedford the new Supports in Employment services you will be charged for.

All these things take time, and it is important that we allow enough time for all these additional processes and changes that need to happen. Using the Change in Base Hours Request Form will tell everyone who needs to know about your work changes, like Admin, Payroll and your PTO.

### ***What happens if I need to change my hours straight away?***

If you need to reduce your work hours, you can complete the Employee Leave and Absence Notification Form, making very clear which whole days you won't be working.

Bedford may make flexible working arrangements for short-term (less than four weeks) situations, where you might work the same number of hours in a week but on different days, if your Manager or Supervisor approves. You must speak with your Manager or Supervisor and get their approval first – they will then make sure that Payroll and NDIS Billing are aware of the change to your work hours.

### ***What if I change my mind about a request, I have made to change my work hours?***

If it is within two weeks of submitting the form, notify your PTO who will be able to cancel the change.

If it is **more than two weeks**, you will need to submit a new Change in Base Hours Request Form, changing your hours back. This means you will have to do the new hours you requested until the change is approved and the commencement wait time has finished.

### ***Can I work different hours in one week compared to another, ie, a fortnightly roster?***

No. Bedford needs employees who work the same hours each week to be able to get all the work done. Only people who are already on a fortnightly roster are allowed, and they will be encouraged to move to weekly rosters if possible.

### ***I want to temporarily increase my work hours within the next four weeks, can I?***

No. An increase in work hours requires six weeks' notice. This amount of time is required so Bedford can make sure it has the available staff to provide the right Supports in Employment.

### ***What happens if I just start working different hours?***

If you work different times you may not be paid correctly. Your PTO or supervisor will ask why you are working different hours. You will need to submit a request to change your hours, if it is refused and you continue to work different hours you will be in breach of your employment contract. This may result in disciplinary action for employees, such as suspension or even termination.

### ***Why are there set start and end times for my work hours?***

For Bedford to run an good operation, we need set start and finish times to plan the output of our workers. The clock-in and clock-out system is only set for 15 minute intervals. and therefore you can only have start and end times on the whole or half hour. If you work different times you may not be paid correctly.

To provide your Supports in Employment, Bedford needs to be able to roster staff. Having set work start and end times allows Bedford to better roster staff to provide those supports.

### ***If I change my hours or job, do I need to tell the NDIS?***

If your Supports in Employment costs increase, you need to tell the NDIS to make sure that you have the right funding to support your employment.

### ***Will my pay change?***

Your hourly rates and take-home pay will not be affected by the New Employment Model. Your wage will continue to increase at set times, as set out in the Bedford Employee Enterprise Agreement.

You will continue to have a wage assessment each year and set new goals in your Individual Training Plan (ITP). A higher wage is based on your skills and ability to do more complicated work.

### ***Why is there a difference between my wage and what Bedford gets paid from my NDIS Plan?***

The money in your NDIS Plan is not used to pay your weekly wages from Bedford. The employment supports money in your Plan is to pay for the supports Bedford provides to you at work.