

What does mandatory worker vaccination mean for people with disability?

This fact sheet has information for people with disability and their families about mandatory worker vaccination.

Mandatory worker vaccination means the government has brought in a rule that all disability support workers **must** be fully vaccinated by **15 December 2021**. Mandatory worker vaccination is also called a Government Health Direction or Direction. You can see the full direction [here](#).

Being fully vaccinated means that disability support workers **must** have two injections to protect themselves from COVID-19 by **15 December 2021**.

Disability support workers who do not do this by **15 December 2021** are **not** able to provide disability support services after this date. This is to make sure that people with disability are as safe as possible, and can be confident there is a reduced risk of workers passing on COVID-19.

Disability support workers who are not fully vaccinated **cannot** keep providing disability support services from **16 December 2021** onwards.



Do all disability support workers have to be vaccinated or only those delivering through the NDIS?

Disability support workers include people providing face to face services to people with disability. The funding for the worker and the service can be through any government funding program, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme or Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS) or My Aged Care.

Disability support workers include:

- people who provide you with assistance with daily life tasks
- people who volunteer or work unpaid for you
- students on placement as part of a university or TAFE course

- self-employed workers or sole traders – people who work under an ABN (Australian Business Number) to provide you with assistance with daily life tasks, such as:
 - people who help you to get dressed
 - shower
 - eat and/or prepare food
 - go out shopping
 - assist to pay your bills
 - assist you to visit your family or friends or
 - go to a café or the movies.
- people who provide other services, for example:
 - people who mow your lawn
 - people who clean your house
 - people who provide other services like podiatry and physiotherapy.

If a worker refuses to provide proof of vaccination, you can choose not to be supported by them.

If you receive a service that is not face to face, such as online or on Zoom, the worker does not have to be vaccinated.



What if I self-manage or plan manage my NDIS funding?

It is a disability support workers' responsibility to be vaccinated, and you need to ask people that you employ directly to show you proof of their COVID-19 vaccination.

This could be:

- a COVID-19 digital certificate (available on MyGov Medicare account)
- digital vaccination certificate added on the Qld Check In app
- copy of Australian Immunisation Register certificate
- international COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

You need to keep a record of what type of proof they showed you and the date, but you do not need to keep a copy of it.

This rule needs to be followed the same way as you need to follow the laws about paying tax, superannuation and workplace health and safety.

People who self-manage their NDIS plans can find more information about your responsibilities as an employer [here](#). Unless you are directly employing disability workers, you are not legally responsible for ensuring people who support you are vaccinated.



What if my plan is managed by the NDIS?

If the NDIS manages your plan for you, there will be NDIS registered providers delivering your supports. The managers of those services need to make sure their workers have been vaccinated. You can ask your service provider about this if you want to check.

If your current worker chooses not to be vaccinated, your provider or support coordinator may need to find you a new one.

You can contact the Disability Gateway on 1800 643 787 or [here](#) or the Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 or [here](#) for more information on COVID-19 and vaccinations, and they may also be able to talk to you about options and supports.



Do I have to be vaccinated?

People with disability, including NDIS participants, can choose whether to be vaccinated themselves, the same as anyone else. You cannot be refused disability services and support because you are not COVID-19 vaccinated. However, you may not be able to attend some activities, such as going to cafes, restaurants, movies, sporting events etc.

If you are an NDIS participant, workers and service providers need to follow the rules to provide services in a way that is safe for you. If your disability service or support worker does not want to continue supporting you because:

- you have or have not had the COVID-19 vaccine
- you want your worker to be vaccinated but they do not want to

you can contact the Quality and Safeguards Commission on 1800 035 544 or click [here](#) for information.



What if I only want unvaccinated workers?

This would be a breach of the Direction and is not allowed. Both service providers and workers can be fined by Queensland Health under the direction – most importantly though it is a risk to both your health and your worker.



What does mandatory COVID-19 vaccination mean for my support workers?

Mandatory vaccination means disability support workers have to be vaccinated to keep working in that role – it is not a choice.

You have a right to ask questions and make choices about your services and workers.

If you are an NDIS participant, workers and disability services need to follow the rules to provide services in a way that is safe for you. If you have an issue with the way your services or worker is following the vaccination rule, you can contact the Quality and Safeguards Commission on 1800 035 544 or click [here](#) for information.

If you get supports through QCSS you can contact the service provider who organises your support workers. It is their responsibility to make sure their staff are vaccinated. You can also call Smart Services on 137 468 if you have any issues.

If you have any issues about My Aged Care, you can call 1800 200 422.

Checklist

Check that your worker has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (two injections) by 15 December 2021



If YES – if you employ them yourself, you need to:

- see proof of their vaccination and
- make a record of the date and the type of proof they showed you.
You don't need to keep a copy.

If they are employed through a disability service, you can check with the provider that they have seen it.

If they are sole traders (people who are self-employed and have an ABN) you can ask them to show proof of vaccination.

Support Co-ordinators and Plan Managers **DO NOT** need to see a copy of the worker's vaccination or keep a copy of it.



If NO - make sure the worker does not work or provide services after 15 December 2021 **OR**

Check if they have a medical exemption from their doctor. This means they can't get vaccinated.

If they have a medical exemption and the decision has been made by the employer they can keep working, they need to:

- wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves
- get a COVID-19 PCR test each day they work and stop work immediately if they receive a positive test result.

If you have a situation with losing a support worker because they are not vaccinated and will be left without essential support, this is called a critical workforce shortage. If your care and support will be significantly impacted, the employer can assess the risk and allow someone to continue to work for a limited time (up to three months) as long as they:

- wear Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gloves
- get a COVID-19 PCR test each day they work and stop work immediately if they receive a positive test result.

This is a temporary situation to allow longer term support to be arranged.



In summary

- You have the right to ask for information and make informed decisions and choices about who comes into your home to support you
- You can ask for proof of vaccination from disability support workers
- You can refuse entry to your home if disability support workers are unvaccinated, or do not want to tell you their vaccination status
- If a worker is providing services to a person with disability, they fall under the provisions of the Government Health Direction and need to follow the rules.

The Government Health Direction or rule is called **Workers in a healthcare setting (COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements) Direction** and you can see it [here](#)