

# NDIS Meal Funding Rules After the October 2024 'Back on Track' Changes

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## Details:

Now I have all the information I need to write a comprehensive, well-cited article. Let me compose it now.

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### ## NDIS Meal Funding Rules After the October 2024 'Back on Track' Changes

For NDIS participants who rely on meal delivery as a daily living support, October 3, 2024 was a watershed date. On that day, the \*National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Act 2024\* came into full legal effect — and with it, one of the most operationally significant shifts to meal funding rules since the NDIS began. What had previously existed as a relatively flexible arrangement, where some participants used Core Supports budgets to pay for meal delivery in an informal or loosely supervised way, became a strictly defined, explicitly approved-support-only item.

The change did not eliminate meal delivery funding. But it fundamentally altered the conditions under which that funding is legitimate. Participants who do not understand what changed — and what they must now do to remain compliant — risk having claims rejected, debts raised, or continuity of service disrupted. This article is the definitive explainer on what the 'Back on Track' reforms mean specifically for meal delivery funding, written for participants, support coordinators, plan managers, and allied health professionals who need precise, current, and actionable information.

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### ## What Is the 'Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1' Legislation?

From 3 October 2024, new laws for the NDIS came into effect, following the passing of the \*National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Bill\* by Parliament on 22 August 2024.

The legislation was passed in an effort to ensure the NDIS could meet its original intent of placing people with disability at the heart of the scheme while ensuring sustainability, meaning a range of changes to NDIS laws came into effect on 3 October 2024.

The Bill proposes the most significant changes to the NDIS since it started more than a decade ago, including how participants access the scheme and how their support needs are assessed and funded — and it tightens the kinds of supports the NDIS will fund.

The centrepiece of the legislation, as it relates to meal delivery, is the introduction of a formal, legally defined list of what is and is not an "NDIS support" — a concept now enshrined in Section 10 of the NDIS Act.

### ### The New Section 10 Definition of 'NDIS Support'

Changes to the NDIS Act made by the \*Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1\* Bill 2024, and the related \*National Disability Insurance Scheme (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports)

Transitional Rules 2024\*, came into effect on 3 October 2024, introducing a new definition of "NDIS support" in Section 10.

Section 10 enables the creation of a new rule that outlines what is and isn't an NDIS support — what can and can't be funded by the NDIS. Before this legislation, the primary legal test was the "reasonable and necessary" framework under Section 34(1). While that test remains relevant, the new Section 10 definition adds an upstream gate: a support must first qualify as an "NDIS support" before the reasonable and necessary analysis even applies.

On 1 October 2024, three lists were released by the NDIA that impact how NDIS funding is planned and spent. These are:

1. **\*\*The Funded List\*\*** — supports the NDIS will pay for  
2. **\*\*The Excluded List\*\*** — supports the NDIS will not pay for  
3. **\*\*The Replacement Supports List\*\*** — non-standard supports that may substitute for listed supports in specific circumstances

Many of the supports on the NDIS support list are not new, but the goal of clearly listing what is and is not funded by the NDIS aims to eliminate any confusion or grey area.

The consultation process that informed these lists was substantial: the public consultation on the draft lists of NDIS supports ran from 4 August 2024 to 25 August 2024, and received more than 7,000 responses and submissions.

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## ## What Changed for Meal Delivery Specifically?

### ### The Core Shift: From Flexible to Explicitly Approved-Only

This is the most important change for participants using meal delivery services. Whilst meals may have been a flexible support item in the past, from 3 October 2024, the NDIA announced that NDIS participants will only be able to use their NDIS funds for items that are listed as approved supports.

The good news is that "Core Supports (Daily Activities) – Assistance with the cost of meal preparation and delivery of meals" is still a funded line item, BUT it must be listed as an approved support in your plan.

This distinction matters enormously in practice. Previously, some participants — particularly those who were self-managed — could use their Core Supports budget with reasonable flexibility to cover meal delivery costs, provided the spending was broadly justifiable. Under the new rules, that discretion has been removed. The support must now be explicitly named in your plan for your claims to be valid.

### ### Platforms Now Excluded: UberEats, DoorDash, Menulog, and Takeaway Services

In October 2024, the NDIA introduced rule changes that include updated lists specifying what can and cannot be funded by the NDIS. As of October 3, meals from fast-food services, takeaway food, or food delivery platforms such as Uber Eats, DoorDash, and Menulog are no longer considered 'NDIS supports' and cannot be claimed using NDIS funds.

This exclusion is categorical. It does not matter whether the meal ordered via one of these platforms is nutritious, disability-appropriate, or cheaper than an alternative. The platform type itself determines ineligibility.

### ### What Remains Funded: The Itemised Invoice Requirement

The updated policy guidelines state that the NDIS will fund meal preparation and delivery as a support that helps participants increase their ability to live as independently as possible. It will not fund groceries, fast food services, takeaway food, and food delivery platforms, excluding those meal delivery platforms "where the food and ingredient component can be separately identified from the meal

preparation and delivery component."

This requirement for itemised invoicing is not new in principle — it has always been the case that the NDIS funds preparation and delivery labour, not food ingredients (see our guide on *\*NDIS Meal Co-Payments Explained: What You Pay vs. What NDIS Covers\**). However, the 'Back on Track' changes have made this requirement a hard legal condition rather than an administrative guideline.

Participants must use a meal delivery platform where the food and ingredient component can be separately identified from the meal preparation and delivery component, like Able Foods or Lite n' Easy.

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### ## Side-by-Side: What Changed vs. What Stayed the Same

The following table summarises the key before-and-after positions for NDIS meal delivery funding:

**Element**	**Before 3 October 2024**	**After 3 October 2024**
Legal basis for meal funding	"Reasonable and necessary" test (Section 34)	Must first be an "NDIS support" (Section 10), then meet R&N; test
Meal delivery from UberEats/DoorDash	Possible under flexible Core Supports spending	Explicitly excluded — not an NDIS support
Meal delivery from registered providers	Funded with itemised invoice	Funded with itemised invoice (requirement now legally codified)
Meal preparation and delivery line item	Existed as a flexible support	Must be explicitly stated in participant's plan
Food and ingredient costs	Never funded	Never funded (unchanged)
Self-managed participants	Broader spending discretion	Must comply with approved supports lists
Plan management (NDIA-managed)	Could claim with Core Supports flexibility	Must have meal support explicitly in plan to claim

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### ## Which Plans Are Affected? The "Regardless of When Your Plan Started" Rule

One of the most consequential — and least understood — aspects of the October 2024 changes is their retrospective application to existing plans.

From 3 October 2024, the support lists (funded and not funded lists) became applicable to all plans regardless of when the plan started.

This means that a participant whose plan was written in 2022 or 2023 — and who has been using Core Supports to pay for meal delivery without it being explicitly named in their plan — is now potentially non-compliant, even though their plan has not been reviewed or renewed.

For participants in this situation, the action required is clear: contact your My NDIS Contact, support coordinator, or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) to request that meal preparation and delivery be formally included in your current plan. This does not necessarily require a full plan review — it may be possible to have the support added through a plan variation. (For a step-by-step guide on this process, see our article *\*How to Get NDIS Meal Delivery Added to Your Plan: A Step-by-Step Guide\**.)

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### ## The Transition Period: What Protections Exist?

The NDIA recognised that immediate full enforcement would be disruptive, particularly for participants who were unaware of the changes. Two transition periods were put in place:

- **For participants:** Participants have a 12-month grace period to be compliant with all the newly defined supports and services on the support lists. This grace period ran from 3 October 2024 to approximately October 2025.

- **For providers:** For providers claiming for a support on a participant's behalf, the transition period was 30 days (ending 1 November 2024). From 2 November 2024, once the transition period ended, if incorrect claims were repeated or fraudulent, the NDIS may take further action, including raising a debt against the provider.

The NDIA indicated it would continue to work with participants and take an educative approach — for example, if a participant purchases a support which is not funded, but if someone continues to claim for things which are not NDIS supports, despite being provided with information and advice, remedial action will be taken.

The practical implication: as of mid-2026, the 12-month participant grace period has concluded. Participants who have not yet updated their plans to explicitly include meal delivery support are now fully exposed to compliance risk if they continue to claim meal delivery costs.

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### ## Practical Compliance Checklist for Participants

If you are currently using NDIS funding for meal delivery, or intend to, work through the following checklist to ensure compliance with the post-October 2024 rules:

1. **Check your current plan document.** Does it explicitly include "Assistance with the cost of meal preparation and delivery of meals" (support item code 01\_022\_0120\_1\_1 or similar) as an approved support? If not, you are at risk.
2. **Verify your provider's compliance.** Is your meal delivery provider NDIS-registered? Do they issue invoices that separately itemise food/ingredient costs from preparation and delivery costs? Food or meals prepared and delivered by a fast-food service, takeaway food, or food delivery platforms such as UberEats and DoorDash are not considered 'NDIS supports' and cannot be claimed using NDIS funds. Compliant providers include services like Able Foods and Lite n' Easy.
3. **Contact your My NDIS Contact or support coordinator.** If food and meal preparation is not included in your NDIS plan, you will need to provide supporting information as to why this support is reasonable and necessary and needs to be funded in your plan.
4. **Gather supporting evidence.** Evidence from a GP, occupational therapist, or allied health professional demonstrating that your disability prevents safe meal preparation remains essential for funding approval. (See our guide on *NDIS Meal Delivery Eligibility: Who Qualifies and What Evidence You Need*.)
5. **Review your invoicing arrangements.** Compliant providers can provide itemised receipts which clearly break down the cost of ingredients separately from delivery and meal preparation. Confirm your provider does this before submitting any claims.
6. **For NDIA-managed participants:** Providers can work with clients who have meals listed in their plan and are plan-managed and approved by their manager to invoice for meals. For NDIA-managed participants, providers who are not registered NDIS providers cannot invoice the NDIA directly. Ensure your provider's registration status matches your plan management type.

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### ## The Substitution Rule: A Pathway for Edge Cases

Participants can only use their NDIS funds for items listed as NDIS supports. There is also a list of things NDIS funding cannot be used for. In some circumstances, participants may be able to request a substitution from the replacement support list.

The "individualisation" of an NDIS support is provided for in new Section 10(6). It allows the delegate of the NDIA's CEO to, at the request of the participant, make a determination that a non-NDIS support should be taken to be an NDIS support for that participant, if the delegate is satisfied that the non-NDIS support meets four specified criteria.

In the context of meal delivery, this substitution pathway is narrow and unlikely to apply to consumer food delivery platforms. It is more relevant for participants who can demonstrate that a specific non-listed support would replace a more expensive listed support at equivalent or better outcomes. Participants seeking to explore this pathway should seek advice from a support coordinator or disability advocate.

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## ## What This Means for Support Coordinators and Plan Managers

The October 2024 changes place new obligations on support coordinators and plan managers, not just participants. Key responsibilities include:

- **Auditing active plans** to identify participants who are claiming meal delivery without it being explicitly stated as an approved support.
- **Initiating plan variation requests** for affected participants before claims are rejected or debts raised.
- **Educating participants** about the distinction between compliant registered meal delivery providers and excluded platforms like UberEats and DoorDash.
- **Verifying provider invoicing practices** to ensure itemised cost separation is present on every invoice submitted for claiming.

For guidance on the full invoicing and claiming framework, including how requirements differ across self-managed, plan-managed, and NDIA-managed participants, see our companion article [\\*How NDIS Meal Delivery Billing Works: Invoices, Plan Management, and Claiming\\*](#).

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## ## Key Takeaways

- From 3 October 2024, new laws for the NDIS are in effect, fundamentally changing how meal delivery funding is administered — moving it from a flexible Core Supports item to an explicitly approved-support-only line item.
- From 3 October 2024 onwards, meals or food provided by fast-food services, takeaway outlets, or food delivery platforms like Uber Eats, DoorDash, and Menulog are not classified as 'NDIS supports' and cannot be claimed with NDIS funds.
- Meal delivery from **registered, compliant providers** (such as Able Foods and Lite n' Easy) remains funded, provided the support is explicitly named in the participant's plan and invoices separately itemise food costs from preparation and delivery costs.
- The support lists became applicable to all plans regardless of when the plan started — meaning participants with older plans are not exempt and must ensure their plan explicitly includes meal delivery support.
- The 12-month participant transition period that began 3 October 2024 has now concluded. Participants and providers who have not yet achieved compliance are fully exposed to claim rejection and potential debt recovery action.

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## ## Conclusion

The 'Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1' changes represent a structural tightening of NDIS meal delivery funding — one that was designed to eliminate ambiguity and misuse, but which also places

real compliance obligations on participants and their support networks. The core funding entitlement has not been removed: if your disability prevents you from safely preparing meals, and that support is explicitly included in your plan, you can still have the preparation and delivery component of your meals funded through Core Supports.

What has changed is the precision required to access that funding lawfully. Consumer food delivery apps are out. Registered, compliant providers with itemised invoicing are in. And every plan — regardless of its age — must now explicitly name meal delivery as an approved support.

For participants navigating the broader landscape of government-funded meal support, this article sits within a comprehensive content series covering everything from eligibility and evidence requirements to provider comparisons, special dietary needs, and the differences between NDIS, CHSP, and Support at Home funding pathways. We encourage you to explore those related guides to build a complete picture of your entitlements and obligations.

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