

Types of misinformation and reported barriers around including sex services in an NDIS plan

To get clarification on the information being provided by the NDIS Call Centre staff, on the 10th August 2023 and 27th September 2023 a Touching Base Committee member rang the NDIS 1800 generic number as an NDIS participant.

They were provided the following responses to the question: *“I want to know if I can use my core supports to pay for a sex worker?”*

10th August 2023

- **Call centre operator:** Not something we fund - you can't use your core to pay for that.

Yes it is. Where are you getting that info from?

- **Call centre operator:** “From our website” They then listed the funded supports from the website and it was not listed.

27th Sept 2023

- **Call centre operator:** It wasn't listed on the website in the price guide or catalogue. So the answer would be No.

Requested to speak to someone with more authority.

- **Call Centre Team Leader:** If not in your plan you can't use it. You can put it in your plan using an S48 [S48 is a Plan reassessment request]. Then it will be automatically rejected. Then you can go to the AAT for a review

Other examples of denial to include sex services in a plan

We refer Committee Members to other examples of denial to include sex services in a plan which were included in **Touching Base submission number 123 (pages 10,11)**.

All my NDIS plan managers ... have only displayed their small-minded, sexist and ageist attitudes and denied sex services in my plan.

[NDIS participant Dec 2022]

When I've enquired about getting people with disability access to sexual services a lot of support staff are uneasy about this. I totally understand this from a personal point of view, but there appears to be a culture in disability care of putting staff fears or reluctance to deal with sexual supports above a client's rights and needs.

I have been challenged by Plan Managers as to the validity of the service also.

[Sex worker and advocate Dec 2022]

Mostly I hear how requests to include sexual services in an NDIS plan are immediately refused. Beyond this is also a person with disability feeling uncomfortable with having to share intimate details with a plan manager etc, or where this information could be found by family.

[Metropolitan sex worker and advocate Dec 2022]

Clients have been told by plan managers and at their reviews that 'you have arms so you don't need to see a sex worker'. Clients have also told me that at the reviews they have had people tell them access to sex workers is a luxury and if they want it they will have to pay for it themselves.

[Sex worker providing services to clients with disability Dec 2022]

Many of my clients are unsure as to how to approach their plan managers, and are nervous about whether NDIS will fund their sexual support.

[Sex worker providing services to clients with disability Dec 2022]

This is a taboo subject - even though it's totally natural. Planners /LAC's don't wish to request the support.

[Regional Person with disability, working as NDIS support coordinator for a Disability Service Provider Organisation Dec 2022]