

I am an autistic NDIS participant and I support a family member who is also autistic to manage their NDIS package. We are both plan managed. A major factor in choosing not to self-manage in my second plan is that I do not understand the portal and it is unreliable and difficult to use. I find the MyPlace portal difficult to use and I have also found that it often does not meet my needs. For example

- I cannot see previous plans or budgets.
- I have noticed glitches and issues, such as only sometimes being able to download my plan as a PDF.
- The portal is often down, including without planning or notice, which means it is not a resource I can rely on.
- Even when the information I need is available, I do not know how to navigate to find it.

My family member did not access the portal for their first 12 months as an NDIS participant. To initially access the portal, they needed to phone myGov for technical assistance. Needing to do this by phone presented a significant challenge and hindered their independence because, due to their disability, they have difficulties talking on the phone. I helped them to find information they needed from the portal. They found the process frustrating and distressing. I felt unhappy that I had to keep telling them what to do because I want them to be able to navigate the NDIS independently and to be empowered by being an NDIS process. They are highly competent in navigating websites and for them to struggle with that task is something we both found frustrating.

There are a number of features of the MyPlace portal that I think are important for myself and other NDIS participants to be able to understand and use. However, I believe at the moment these are not functioning well and therefore participants are replicating these features for ourselves. I keep track of my NDIS budget, my appointments and bookings, my important documents and contracts, and I use local networks to find out about services I use my NDIS funding for. While it's not a bad thing to have the independent ability to do all of these things, I see a non-functioning version of them in the portal and I feel frustrated because I think it is a system that could be far better serving NDIS participants. I am well-networked and have strong skills in research and advocacy, and I believe that people who do not have these strengths are far more disadvantaged than me when it comes to issues with the MyPlace portal.