

Questions and Answers
on the new
Disability Support Program



*A person-centred approach
to meeting individual needs*

The Disability Support Program

The new Disability Support Program has three components:

- ***Child Disability Supports*** to assist families with extraordinary child-rearing needs directly related to their disability.
- ***Adult Disability Supports*** to help people with qualifying disabilities achieve their desired level of independence.
- ***Employment and Vocational Supports*** such as counselling, assessment, training, skills development and pre-employment through individually-focussed programs to help the individual gain competitive, long-term employment, or supported employment.

Why was the new Disability Support Program introduced?

In the past, Islanders received disability supports through several programs. The level of support was sometimes different from program to program, or region to region. People who received support through the Welfare Assistance Program could receive less support if they became employed. And often, there was not enough flexibility in the programs to respond to a person's individual needs and help them reach their full potential.

How is the new Disability Support Program different?

The new program is *person-centred* to meet the unique needs of each individual or family. Together with their disability support worker, they develop a *case plan* which identifies needs, resources, goals and actions to help the individual become as independent as possible.

The new Disability Support Program is a social program with a financial component. It offers equal access to disability supports to all Islanders, no matter what their disability or where they live. It encourages economic independence by removing disincentives to work and earn income. It also enables people to receive supports who could not do so in the past because they weren't eligible for welfare assistance.

When did the program begin?

Although applications are now being accepted, it will take several months to make the full transition to the new program.

People who now receive supports through the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities, Welfare Assistance, and Family Support programs will be contacted by these offices over the next several months to arrange for an assessment and case plan.

Who can receive support under the new program?

Support is offered to people up to age 64 who have an ongoing functional limitation as a result of a disability which substantially limits their ability to carry out activities necessary for independence and well-being.

The specific disability must be able to be described as a physical, neurological or intellectual disability (excluding mental illness). The impairment must be continuous or recurrent and likely to continue for at least one year.

If a person with a disability turns 65 when they are actively receiving supports, this support will continue.

Conditions specifically excluded from coverage for this program include, but are not limited to: medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, or asthma; addiction to or dependency on alcohol, or any other substance; learning disabilities; seasonal allergic rhinitis; and behaviour disorders, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

How are people's needs determined?

An individual's needs are determined using a variety of assessment tools.

A review of existing and potential family and community supports is completed.

A needs assessment and screening are also done to identify the services and supports necessary to help the person live as independently as possible.

The assessment process is a critical part of the Disability Support Program, as the program is based on the unique needs of the individual and family.

How is the case plan developed?

The case plan is developed in partnership with the disability support worker, individual and family. Others may also participate if requested by the applicant.

The case plan identifies:

- Issues and Needs
- Goals
- Strengths and resources
- Action steps to achieve goals
- Follow-up

Once the case plan is complete and the disability-specific supports identified, an *Individual Support Agreement* is signed by the individual or co-signed by someone empowered to act on their behalf.

What do individuals or families contribute?

Individuals and families share a reasonable portion of the cost of the services and supports, based on their ability to contribute.

The cost of supports is determined during the assessment, as well as the portion of these costs that families are required to contribute. These contributions are outlined in a *Client Contribution Schedule*.

For example, if the monthly costs are determined to be \$1,500 and the client contribution is determined to be \$200, the family would receive a monthly cheque for the difference - in this case \$1,300.

A family with a net annual income of \$25,000 would be required to contribute \$68 a month. For a family with a net annual income of \$45,000, the client contribution would be \$216 a month. The minimum contribution is \$2 per month.

The schedule also sets a percentage of contribution for technical aids and assistive devices.

The client contribution is reviewed each year. However, a more frequent review may be requested if there is a change in the household.

What other supports are included?

Various technical aids and assistive devices may be cost-shared with individuals and families, with the recommendation of a health care practitioner such as an occupational therapist or audiologist.

These include: bathroom aids; bedroom aids; ostomy supplies; communication devices; feeding equipment supplies; hearing aids; orthotic devices; prosthetic devices; visual aids; wheelchair, positioning and ambulation aids; and applied behaviour analysis materials.

Respite care, an important support for many families, is being enhanced under the Disability Support Program. The unique needs of each individual case will be discussed during case planning to determine the appropriate level of respite required.

Who delivers the program?

Disability Support Units are now in place in each health region. Disability Support Workers are specifically trained to work with persons with a disability and their families. They have training in many areas such as orientation to disabilities, case-planning, and empowering individuals and families. They work as partners with the individual and family to deliver person-centred case plans.

For more information

Contact the Disability Support Unit in your area:

West Prince Health	859 8862
East Prince Health	432 2740
Queens Region Health	368 5996
Southern Kings Health	838 0703
Eastern Kings Health	687 7016