

We can't fund an assistance animal if it's likely to harm you or be a risk to others. This includes people you live and work with or see regularly. Risks can include things like dog bites or aggressive behaviour.

We won't fund an assistance animal if its purpose is to act as a [mechanical restraint](#) . Mechanical restraint means the assistance animal acts to stop or limit your movement to control your behaviour. For example, this could be the assistance animal lying on you to stop your behaviours getting worse. We won't fund an assistance animal that will act as a mechanical restraint because this could be a risk to you.

We need to know who will control, care for, and look after the health of the assistance animal. We call this person the primary handler. Usually this is an adult or a person who can have full control of the animal. The primary handler of an assistance animal for a child might be a parent.

We need to know:

- who will be the primary handler
- the assistance animal won't cause any risks to you or others
- neither you or the animal will be harmed in stressful situations, such as when you get upset or angry.

If a child needs the assistance animal at school, we also need to know:

- if the school will allow the assistance animal to be there. This is a decision for the school, not us
- who the primary handler will be at school and if they're trained to handle an assistance animal
- if the assistance animal will be around other students. If it will be, that, it's trained for this situation
- if the assistance animal poses any health risks to other students and people at the school
- whether the school is physically set up to manage the feeding and toileting requirements of the assistance animal

What if you already have an assistance animal before your plan is approved?

You must have funding in your plan for an assistance animal before you buy or enter into a service agreement for one.

We can't include funding for an assistance animal if you have already bought it.

For example, you might already have an assistance animal before you joined the NDIS. Or, you may have bought an assistance animal before your plan was approved.

If you already have an assistance animal, we might be able to fund its [ongoing maintenance costs](#).

But first we'll need to decide if your assistance animal meets the [NDIS funding criteria](#) to fund the ongoing maintenance costs.

We'll also need to check that it meets our [definition of an assistance animal](#).

If we decide the assistance animal doesn't meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#), then we can't fund its ongoing maintenance costs. You also can't use other funding in your plan for the maintenance costs of your animal.

This is because you must spend your funds according to the NDIS supports described in your plan.

Learn more about using your plan in [Our Guideline – Your plan](#).