

Portability and 'nominal' Support at Home approvals

Online workshop: Navigating the aged care reforms

11 March 2026



NINTONELIMITED



Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of our land and its waters. Ninti One and CDCS wish to pay respects to Elders, past and present, and to the youth, for the future. We extend this to all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people joining us online today.

The terms 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander', 'Aboriginal', 'Indigenous' and 'First Nations' may be used interchangeably. Through the use of these terminologies, we seek to acknowledge and honour diversity, shared knowledge and experiences as well as the right of stakeholders to define their own identities.

What are we covering today

Dual approval NATSIFACP and Support at Home for new NATSIFACP clients

- What has changed
- What this means for care recipients
- How the changes support more choice for care recipients.



Why this matters

- Many NATSIFACP providers operate in remote and very remote regions / communities
- People may move temporarily or permanently for various reasons
- Historically this mean 'starting again' for someone leaving a NATSIFACP service as they weren't formally approved in the 'system'
- The new system is designed so approvals sit with the person.

How the system used to work

Under the previous NATSIFACP arrangements:

- Older people were assessed internally by the NATSIFACP provider
- The provider determined:
 - Whether the person met eligibility for aged care services
 - The level of support they could receive
- The amount of service could depend on:
 - The funding available to the provider
 - How many people the organisation supported through NATSIFACP funding
 - What types of services the organisation could deliver

This system worked well within the community, but had limitations when people moved.

The biggest problem

Because the approval sat within the provider's program

- Many NATSIFACP care recipients were not recorded in My Aged Care
 - If they were it was for CHSP level support only (*historical assessment*)
- There was no national record of their care needs

If a person moved away from their community:

- Other aged care providers could not recognise their approval as it wasn't in My Aged Care
- The person couldn't immediately access necessary services.

What happened if someone moved away from a NATSIFACP service

If the care recipient left their community, they often had to:

1. Contact My Aged Care
2. Go through a new aged care assessment
3. Be approved for a program such as the previous Home Care Package program

After approval they would often be placed on the wait list for a package and often had to wait for 12 months+

This created a difficult situation for older people who needed to relocate for a variety of reasons – family, medical, housing etc.

What the change is aiming to address

Under the new system new NATSIFACP care recipients will also receive a **Support at Home approval** during the assessment process.

If they choose NATSIFACP:

- The Support at Home approval remains on record
- It is not activated
- It does not draw down funding

This is often referred to as a 'nominal approval'.



Why this matters

Because the approval and record of assessment now sits within the national aged care system

- The person's needs are recorded
- Their approval travels with them
- They do not need to start the process again*

If they leave their community the care activate their Support at Home approval through My Aged Care.

**Approval for services will be based on their assessed needs at the time of their initial assessment*

What happens when they choose to activate their approval?

When a person activates their Support at Home approval:

- They can begin accessing services from a Support at Home provider
 - *once their funds are released, note, they may initially only receive part-funding*
- They do not need to undergo a new assessment first
 - *Although they may need to be reassessed if their care needs have increased beyond their initial assessment*
- Their place in the system reflects how long they have been approved
 - *In some cases this means they may move ahead of others on the queue.*

Scenario – David moves from NPY Lands to Adelaide

David receives services through the local NATSIFACP service

David's health deteriorates and he moves to **Adelaide to live with family.**

Under the previous system

- David's support was linked to his **community provider**
- once he left the community he had **no recognised approval in the national system**
- he would need to start the aged care process again.

This meant:

- a new assessment
- joining a waiting list and possible long delays before services started.

Under the new system

- Because David was **pre-approved for Support at Home:**
- his approval already exists in the system and can be **activated when he relocates**
- he may receive services sooner because the system recognises **how long he has already been approved.**

George returns to community

George receives NATSIFACP services in a remote community.

- After a fall he moves to **Alice Springs** for several months while he recovers.
- He activates his **Support at Home approval** and receives services in town.

Later he decides to **return to his community**.

In this situation:

- he may transition back to **NATSIFACP services**
- If his provider is registered to provide Support at Home services he has a choice of what program to get his services through
- the key point is that his **approval stays with him**, not the provider.

Nominal approvals also support choice

The nominal Support at Home approval does more than support portability.

It also gives the care recipient **choice about how they receive services.**

When a person is approved for both programs they can:

- choose to receive services through **NATSIFACP**
- choose to receive services through **Support at Home**
- move between programs if their circumstances change.

This means the individual is **not limited to a single service model.**

What choice might look like in practice

A care recipient may choose Support at Home if:

- a NATSIFACP provider **does not have capacity to take new clients**
- the provider has **limited NATSIFACP funding** available
- a specific service type is **not available locally**
- They want to get their services through a **Support at Home provider**
- the person **relocates to an area without a NATSIFACP provider**

In some cases a provider may also deliver **both programs**, allowing the person to receive services under either model.

Example: choosing Support at Home

Ruth lives in a remote community she is assessed and approved for:

- NATSIFACP services
- Support at Home services (nominal approval).

Ruth approaches the local NATSIFACP provider.

However:

- the service currently has **limited funding**
- they are **unable to take new NATSIFACP clients immediately.**

Because Ruth already holds a Support at Home approval:

- she can choose to **activate that approval**
- she may begin receiving services through a **Support at Home provider** instead.

Example: accessing a service not available through NATSIFACP

Tom receives services through a NATSIFACP provider. He develops a medical condition and now requires regular nursing support.

The NATSIFACP provider:

- does not currently have nursing staff available or scope on their registration.

Tom's assessment shows that **nursing support is included in his Support at Home approval.**

Tom may choose to:

- activate his Support at Home approval for that service
- receive nursing support from a Support at Home provider.

This type of arrangement **may occur occasionally**, but it is not expected to be common and does not duplicate services.

Can a person access the same service from two different providers because of their approval?

The system does not allow this.

This is because:

- funding is released through **My Aged Care**
- services must align with the **person's approved care plan**
- the system tracks **what services are being delivered and funded.**

A person cannot receive **the same service twice through different programs.**

Portability is about protecting the individual

Portability and dual approval means:

- The person's approval is recorded in the national system
- their care needs are recognised wherever they go
- they have choice over who will provide their services in some situations
- they are not disadvantaged if they need to relocate.

What you should look out for over the next months

This will be a new concept for many care recipients and families so be prepared to answer questions about this.

- watch for **approval letters issued to care recipients**
- identify where individuals have **both NATSIFACP and Support at Home approvals** (add information to your CIMS)
- understand that the Support at Home approval may be **nominal until activated**.

Be ready to answer questions from care recipients

Care recipients may ask:

- “Do I now have two packages?”
- “Do I have to move to Support at Home?”

Providers should be prepared to explain:

- the Support at Home approval may be **inactive**
- it only becomes active if the person **chooses to activate it through My Aged Care**
- help families understand differences in fees and charges between the two programs where relevant.

Prepare your staff

Managers should:

- discuss portability and nominal approvals with **care coordinators and case managers**
- ensure staff understand **how the two programs interact**
- prepare staff to explain the concept clearly to care recipients

This will help reduce confusion when letters begin arriving.

Questions?



Thank you!

This presentation was created by Carrie Akhurst for the NATSIFAC Program Regulation Support Hub

