

# Information for the person with spinal cord injury and their family about the *Guidance on the support needs of adults with spinal cord injury*

## What is the guidance?

This guidance is a tool with information to assist you, your family and other people involved in making decisions. There is useful information to consider as a starting point such as tables describing support for each level of spinal cord injury, assistive technology options, practical information like preparing for an emergency and overnight assistance.

## Making decisions about your support needs?

There are many factors to take into account when deciding on your need for assistance from support workers. For example, why assistance is needed, whether the supports match your needs and practical matters all need to be considered.

## How much assistance from a support worker do people in my situation usually have?

There is no standard level of support. It's not just about the level of the spinal cord injury nor who lives with you and how they assist you. Each person has different life activities, goals, home and local communities which can affect their need for support.

## What is a support worker?

A support worker is someone who is paid by a funding organisation like icare (Insurance & Care NSW), to assist you with daily tasks and enables you to be involved in social, family and community activities. Usually support workers are employed by an organisation (called a service provider) to work with you, but you are involved in decisions about when, how and who assists you. Some funding organisations offer different levels of self-management which allows you to have more control and responsibility over how the services are organised.

## What do I need to consider when I engage a support worker for the first time?

Having a support worker involved with you for the first time can be overwhelming. Think about questions that you can ask the service provider and other people involved such as:

- Are support workers available in my area or will they have to travel long distances? (Long distances can be a problem e.g. in an emergency or if there is traffic congestion and you need their assistance to get to work on time). What sort of assistance can a support worker provide for me? Who coordinates the support workers?
- Is there someone I can contact on a weekend if I unexpectedly need to make changes about my supports?
- Is there a service agreement?
- What is the policy on training support workers to meet my specific needs?
- What if I have a complaint?

Download the **Guidance on the support needs of adults with spinal cord injury** from the website [www.icare.nsw.gov.au/treatment-and-care/what-we-do/guidelines-and-policies](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au/treatment-and-care/what-we-do/guidelines-and-policies)