



Next Gen Youth Employment School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) Guide

Empowering your transition from school to work with Next Gen Youth Employment.

Leaving school and choosing a career path can feel overwhelming and uncertain, especially for young people with disabilities. School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) is a vital stepping stone in this journey – it's an NDIS-funded program that helps you build skills, gain confidence, and smoothly transition from the classroom to the workplace.

We're excited to introduce you to Next Gen Youth Employment's SLES guide. In this friendly, easy-to-read guide, you'll learn what **SLES** is, **who can access it**, **how to get started**, and **how Next Gen's tailored SLES services work**.

Let's unlock your potential and get you ready for the next stage of your life!

What is SLES?

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) is a support program funded by the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** to help young people with disability transition from school to employment. In simple terms, SLES provides you with the **tools, resources, and guidance** needed to bridge the gap between finishing school and starting a meaningful career. It's designed to build your practical skills, boost your confidence, and increase your employability so that you can find and keep a job you enjoy. SLES gives you real-world experiences and one-on-one support during this transition, making the move from school to work much easier.

Why is SLES important?

SLES provides young people with the practical skills, knowledge, and support they need to navigate the leap from school to work. It's a **vital step** toward securing long-term employment and achieving your career goals. Think of it as a safety net that helps you land on your feet after school, with professionals guiding you as you take your first steps into the working world.

Key benefits of SLES include:



Building Job Skills

Through training and hands-on practice, SLES helps you develop essential workplace skills like communication, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving. These skills prepare you for the demands of the workforce.



Boosting Confidence

By engaging in work-like activities and achieving small goals, you'll see your self-esteem grow. SLES is designed to **boost your confidence** and help overcome anxiety or fear of failure by providing a supportive environment.



Real-World Experience

SLES gives you opportunities for real workplace experience, such as internships, work trials or volunteer placements. This hands-on experience helps you understand workplace expectations and lets you try different roles to discover what you like.



Increasing Employability

All the skills, experience and growth you gain through SLES ultimately make you more employable. You'll finish the program with a stronger resume, interview practice, professional networks, and a clearer career direction – in other words, you'll be job-ready!

And remember: if further education or training is part of your career plan, SLES can support that too, by building the foundation skills and confidence you need to pursue higher studies or vocational courses.

Who is eligible?

SLES is intended for school leavers with a disability who need support to become job-ready. To access SLES under the NDIS, you generally need to meet a few criteria:

1. School Leaver Age

You should be in your final year of school or have recently left school. SLES typically supports young people roughly between 16 and 25 years old.

2. NDIS Participant

You must be eligible for the NDIS and have an active NDIS plan. SLES is an NDIS-funded support, so you need to be accepted into NDIS to use SLES. This also means having a permanent (or significant) disability that impacts your ability to find work.

3. SLES Funding in Plan

Your NDIS plan should include funding for “Finding and Keeping a Job” – this is where SLES funding comes from. In practice, that means you have an employment goal in your NDIS plan and SLES supports have been approved as part of your plan. If you don't yet have SLES in your plan, you can request it during your plan review (more on how to do this in the Quick Start section).



If you're unsure about your eligibility, don't worry – Next Gen Youth Employment provides a quick online eligibility checker (asking about your age, school status, NDIS status, etc.) to help determine if you might qualify. Our team can then advise you on the next steps to get SLES funding if you meet the criteria.



How is SLES funded?

One of the great things about SLES is that it is **fully funded by the NDIS** for those who are eligible. This means there is **no direct cost to you or your family** to participate in a SLES program – it's completely free for eligible young people, thanks to government support. SLES funding comes out of your NDIS plan under a category called **“Capacity Building – Finding and Keeping a Job”** (sometimes referred to as NDIS support category 10). Essentially, the government has set aside funding to help school leavers build their capacity for work, which covers things like job training, work experience support, career counselling, and other pre-employment activities.

How it works

If you have SLES included in your NDIS plan, the NDIS will pay your SLES provider (like Next Gen Youth Employment) for the supports and services you receive. You won't have to pay out-of-pocket for standard SLES support – it's all taken care of through your NDIS plan.

Tip

In your NDIS plan, SLES funding is typically listed under **“Finding and Keeping a Job”**. If you're looking at your plan paperwork, check for that wording to see if SLES is included. If not, you may need to request it – we'll guide you how in the next section.

Quick Start: How to Begin

So, you're interested in SLES – what are the first steps? The process is straightforward. Here's a quick guide to starting your SLES journey with Next Gen Youth Employment:

☐ If SLES is already in your NDIS plan:

Great! This means you have funding ready to go. Your next step is to **contact Next Gen Youth Employment** to let us know you'd like to begin SLES with us. You can call us, send an enquiry, or even fill out the **"Check Your Eligibility"** form on our website to get the ball rolling. Our team will arrange an initial meeting with you (and your family or support network) to talk about your goals and start planning your individual SLES program.

☐ If SLES is not in your NDIS plan (but you think you need it:

No worries – you can get it added at your next NDIS plan review. To do this, **tell your NDIS planner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC)** that you have an employment goal and you'd like School Leaver Employment Supports included in your plan. It helps to explain why SLES would be beneficial (for example, "I want to get a job after school, but I need help with skills and experience").

Next Gen Youth Employment can support you through this process – we can provide guidance or letters outlining how our SLES program will help you achieve your goals. Don't hesitate to reach out to us for assistance in advocating for SLES in your plan. Once the NDIS approves SLES funding, you can then enrol with Next Gen and start receiving supports.

☐ If you don't have an NDIS plan yet:

You will need to apply to the NDIS before accessing SLES. SLES is an NDIS-funded service, so an NDIS plan is a must-have. You can begin by contacting the NDIS (call **1800 800 110** or visit the NDIS website) to request access. This involves filling out some forms and providing evidence of your disability. Next Gen's team is happy to guide you through this if you're unsure where to start. Once you have an NDIS plan set up, you can request SLES funding in that plan (as described above). After SLES is included in your plan, you're ready to start the program with us.

Remember

You're not alone in this process. Our friendly team at Next Gen will **answer any questions and guide you every step of the way**. If you're unsure about forms or how to talk to your planner, we can help. We even offer free information sessions for interested students and families – just ask! Taking that first step can be scary, but we're here to make it easy. **Reach out, and we'll help you get started on your journey toward employment.**

Let's do this together!





Overview of Next Gen's SLES Services

Next Gen Youth Employment's SLES program is all **about YOU** – your goals, your interests, and your success. We focus solely on SLES (that's our specialty!), which means we put all our energy into delivering a comprehensive program that gets results. Here's an overview of what our SLES services include and how we support you:

□ Individualised Plans & Coaching

We don't believe in one-size-fits-all. Every participant works with a **dedicated Youth Coach** who takes the time to understand your unique strengths, interests, and challenges. Together, we create an **individualised SLES plan** just for you. This plan outlines your goals (like improving social skills or getting a retail job) and the steps and supports to get you there. Your Youth Coach provides **flexible one-on-one support** – acting as a mentor, motivator, and guide as you progress toward employment.

□ Skills Training & Themed Workshops

Building skills is a big part of SLES. Next Gen offers a variety of **training workshops and learning blocks** led by industry experts and guest speakers. Each workshop has a theme – for example, we might run a “Customer Service Week” or a “Job Readiness Bootcamp.” Through these engaging sessions, you'll develop practical skills that every worker needs. Participants improve their **communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving ability, time management, and organizational skills** in a fun, supportive setting. We also offer short courses (free to you through NDIS) if you need specific qualifications or certificates for your chosen field.

By the end of the program, you'll have not only learned these skills but also had a chance to practice them in real scenarios.



□ Real Industry Work Placements

Next Gen Youth Employment strongly believes in learning by doing. We arrange **real-world work experience** opportunities for our SLES participants across various industries. Thanks to our partnerships with local businesses, we can set up **work placements, internships, or paid work trials** in areas like retail, hospitality, trades, logistics, administration, customer service, and more. We match you to roles based on your interests and strengths – so if you love cooking, we might find you a hospitality placement; if you're into cars, maybe a work trial in an auto workshop! During these placements, you'll gain hands-on experience and see what a day on the job is really like. This not only builds your resume, but also helps you discover what type of work you enjoy. Our team and your coach will **coach you through the process**, checking in with you and the employer to ensure you're supported and learning from the experience.

By the end, you'll have real work examples to be proud of (and perhaps even a reference or job offer!).



Job-Readiness Support

Getting a job involves more than just skills – you also need to navigate the job market. Don't worry, we've got you covered here too. Next Gen provides comprehensive **job-search and employment preparation** support. This includes helping you **write a great resume and cover letter**, practicing for interviews, and coaching you on how to conduct a job search. We'll teach you things like where to find job listings, how to fill out job applications, and tips for talking to employers about your strengths. If you're nervous about interviews, we can do mock interviews to build your confidence.

Our goal is to ensure that by the time you finish SLES, you feel ready to go out and ace that job application process. We even cover workplace etiquette and what to expect in your first week of work. All of this boosts your **job-readiness** – so when an opportunity comes, you can seize it!

Ongoing Mentoring & Check-Ins

In SLES with Next Gen, you're never left to struggle on your own. **Ongoing support** is a cornerstone of our program. Your Youth Coach will provide **regular check-ins** (often weekly) to see how you're going, tackle any issues, and keep you motivated. We believe in open communication and teamwork – we'll also liaise with your family or other support people (with your permission) to make sure everyone's on the same page. Together, we continually **track your progress toward your goals**. If something isn't working for you, we adjust the plan. If you achieve a milestone, we celebrate that win! This continuous loop of feedback and encouragement helps you stay on track and builds your confidence over time. Our one-on-one mentoring and **goal-setting support** keep you focused and accountable. By breaking the journey into small, manageable steps and supporting you every step of the way, we make it easier to move from where you are now to where you want to be in the future.

Pathway to Employment

Everything we do in SLES is aimed at the ultimate goal – helping you secure a job or meaningful next step after the program. Next Gen works with you on **career planning**, so you have a clear pathway. Many of our participants transition into open employment, apprenticeships, or further training upon completing SLES. We'll help you with that transition too! For example, as you near the end of your SLES journey, we can assist with setting up any workplace supports you might need, or connect you with Disability Employment Services (DES) for ongoing job support if appropriate. Our measure of success is **when you achieve your goal** – be it landing a job you love, starting a traineeship, or enrolling in a course that furthers your career. And even after you finish with us, we love to keep in touch and hear about your successes. At Next Gen, your victory is our victory!

About Next Gen Youth Employment

Next Gen Youth Employment is not your average service provider – we are a dedicated team on a mission to empower young people with disabilities to achieve their career dreams. We were founded with one goal: to be the **bridge between school and a successful career** for youth with disabilities. Unlike many organizations that juggle multiple programs, Next Gen specialises in **School Leaver Employment Supports** – it's our cornerstone service and passion. In fact, we are one of the few nationally recognised NDIS providers that focus **solely on SLES** as our core service. This means all our effort and expertise is cantered on helping school leavers find and keep jobs.

At Next Gen, we pride ourselves on a **personalised, comprehensive approach**. Our philosophy is that every young person deserves the chance to succeed, and we tailor our support to make that happen. When you join Next Gen, you're paired with **experienced Youth Coaches** who truly care – they become your mentors and biggest champions. Our coaches bring a wealth of experience and **dedication** to guiding and inspiring you at each step. We also have **strong partnerships with local employers** across various industries (retail, hospitality, manufacturing, operations, and more). These connections allow us to create real opportunities for you, such as work trials and traineeships, and give you a foot in the door when you're ready for employment.

Next Gen Youth Employment is more than a service – we like to think of it as a **movement** for the next generation. We're working to break down barriers and change perceptions, so that our participants are not just included in the workforce, but can eventually become leaders in their own right. Our track record speaks for itself: we have helped numerous young people build confidence, gain new skills, and successfully step into jobs they love. We measure success in the smiles on our clients' faces (and their families'), and the stories of personal growth and achievement. When you're with Next Gen, you become part of our family – we believe in your potential, and we're committed to helping you shine.



Our Process: Creating a SLES Plan

Starting SLES with Next Gen Youth Employment involves a collaborative planning process. We want to make sure your SLES experience is tailored to your goals and needs. Here's how we create a SLES plan with you, step by step:



Understanding You – Initial Meeting & Pairing

Once you sign up with Next Gen, we'll schedule an initial meeting to get to know you (and your parents or caregivers, if you'd like them involved). In this meeting, we **pair you with a dedicated Youth Coach** – this coach will be your main support person throughout SLES. We spend time understanding your goals, interests, strengths, and any areas where you feel you need extra help. Do you dream of working with animals? Are you nervous about using public transport? Do you love art, or hate math? We want to hear it all. This stage is all about you telling us what you want to achieve and us listening. By the end of this step, your coach will have a good picture of who you are and where you want to go.



Goal Setting & Planning

After understanding your starting point, we work together to **set clear goals** for your SLES journey. These will include your long-term goal (for example, “get a job in IT support”) and the short-term goals that will lead there (like “complete a computer course” or “practice interview skills”). We'll also identify any specific challenges or support needs – maybe you need help with social skills, or you lack work experience, etc. All these details go into your personalised **SLES plan**. The plan is like a roadmap that outlines the steps and supports needed to reach your employment goal.

We make sure the goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) so we can track progress. Importantly, you have a say in every goal and activity on your plan – it's a collaboration. Nothing is set in stone; if your interests change or a goal feels wrong, we can adjust it. By breaking your big goals into smaller, achievable tasks, we set you up for consistent wins and momentum.



Skills Development Activities

With a plan in place, we dive into the fun part – activities and learning! Depending on your plan, you'll participate in various **skills development activities**. This often includes attending our themed **workshops and training sessions** to build up your employability skills (like the workshops we described in the “Overview” section). For example, you might join a weekly life skills group to practice communication and teamwork, or take a short course (such as a Barista course if you're interested in hospitality). We also might do community activities to build independence – like travel training (learning to use public transport to get to work) or money handling exercises. Throughout this stage, your coach is by your side, giving feedback and guidance. These activities are designed to be interactive and practical, so you can learn by doing.

Confidence-building is a big focus here – as you gain new skills, you'll start to feel more confident in your abilities. We keep track of the skills you acquire and continuously relate them back to your goals (“See, you completed that presentation skills workshop – this will help you in an office job!”). This stage is all about preparing you for the workplace by leveling up your skills and independence step by step.



Real Work Experience Placement

A cornerstone of Next Gen's SLES process is getting you **real work experience** when you're ready. Based on your interests and readiness, we arrange a work placement or trial in an industry of your choice. This could be a short-term placement (like one day a week for a few weeks) or a block of work experience during school holidays, for example. Before you start, we'll help you prepare (know the dress code, practice the commute, etc.). During the placement, you'll get to experience the workplace environment, perform tasks under supervision, and essentially test-drive a job role. Your coach will often accompany you on the first day or check in with you and your supervisor regularly to ensure things are going well. We treat it as a learning experience – we'll debrief with you about what you did, what you enjoyed, and what was challenging. Sometimes, participants do multiple placements in different fields to explore which path fits them best. Through these placements, you gain **practical skills** and a better understanding of work expectations, and you might even make connections with employers.

Many of our participants have impressed their work experience hosts so much that they've been offered casual jobs or traineeships afterwards! But even if that doesn't happen, the experience itself is valuable. We update your plan with any new insights (maybe you discovered you actually love customer service, or that you need to work on stamina for full-day shifts). Work experience is like the capstone of your SLES training – it ties together all the skills you've learned in a real-world setting.



Review, Feedback & Transition

SLES isn't a set-and-forget program – we continuously **review your progress**. At regular intervals (often every week or two), you and your coach will sit down for a **check-in** to talk about how things are going. We celebrate your achievements (you finished that course! you attended your work placement all week!) – celebration is important because you've worked hard and deserve recognition. If there were any hurdles or if you're struggling with something, we tackle it together by adjusting your supports. Throughout the program, we maintain **open communication** with your family and any other support networks (with your consent) so everyone can cheer you on and help out where needed. As you approach the end of your SLES funding (SLES can typically be funded for up to two years, depending on your needs), we start focusing on **transition planning**. This means preparing for life after SLES. If you're lining up a job, we help with that transition (maybe setting up on-the-job support or linking you to a DES provider for continued help). If you plan to do further study or training, we assist with those applications or arrangements. We make sure you know what the next steps are so that finishing SLES feels like a **launchpad** rather than a cliff.

By the end of your time with Next Gen, you'll have a clear pathway and the confidence to step into your future. And even after you exit the program, remember – **we're always rooting for you**. You can update us on your successes anytime, and we'll be here to celebrate with you!

In short, our process is all about understand – plan – do – review – and succeed!

It's a cycle of support that adapts to your journey.

Because we assist you every step of the way and break the process down into small, manageable chunks, it's easier to move from where you are to where you want to be.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is SLES?

SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports) is a support program funded by the NDIS to help young people transition from school to employment. It's designed to build skills, boost confidence, and increase employability. In other words, SLES prepares you for work after school by providing training, work experience, and support suited to your needs.

Why is SLES important?

SLES provides young people with the practical skills, knowledge, and support they need to navigate the transition from school to work. It's a vital step towards securing long-term employment and achieving career goals. Without a program like SLES, many school leavers with disabilities might feel lost or struggle to find a job. SLES bridges that gap by equipping you with what you need to succeed in the workplace.

How do I get SLES in my NDIS plan?

To access SLES, you'll need to have it included in your NDIS plan. This can be done by **discussing your goals with your NDIS planner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC)** during a planning meeting or plan review. Let them know you're interested in SLES and explain how it would help you (for example, "I want to work after I finish school, but I need support to learn job skills"). If you're not sure how to approach this, Next Gen Youth Employment can support you with the process – we can provide advice or even talk to your coordinator to help get SLES approved. The key is to have an employment goal in your plan and request SLES as the support to achieve it. Once it's in your plan, you can choose a provider (like Next Gen) and start your SLES journey!

What's the difference between SLES and DES?

Great question! **SLES** is specifically for school leavers with disabilities. It's meant to be an early intervention in that critical period right after high school, focusing on building capacity, skills, and confidence so you can enter the workforce. **DES** stands for Disability Employment Services, which is a program available to people with disabilities of any age who are looking for a job. The main differences are timing and approach: SLES is **only for young people exiting school** (typically under 22 or so) and is more about preparation and training (it's longer term, up to 2 years of support). **DES** can help any adult with a disability to find a job or support them in a job, and it usually kicks in when someone is ready to job seek relatively soon. Think of SLES as pre-employment building and DES as job search and post-placement support. In fact, after SLES, many participants eventually move on to a DES provider if they still need support finding or keeping a job. Both are funded by the government, but **SLES is time-limited for school leavers**, whereas DES is ongoing support for jobseekers with disabilities.





Anything else you want to know?

If you have more questions, feel free to reach out to us at Next Gen Youth Employment. We're always happy to explain how SLES works, what you can expect, and how we can help you specifically.

Remember, there's no such thing as a silly question – we're here to support you and make things clear!

We hope this guide has given you a clear picture of School Leaver Employment Supports and how Next Gen Youth Employment can help you on your journey from school to a rewarding job.

Transitioning to the adult world of work is a big step, but with the right support, **it's absolutely achievable.** Next Gen believes in the power and potential of young people – including you! As our motto says, **"We believe in you!"**

Let's work together to unlock your potential and set you on the path to career success and independence.



Ready to take the next step?

Give us a call or fill out our enquiry form to get started.

Your future awaits – and we're excited to be a part of it!



Call 0399 683 021 Email info@nextgenye.com.au

Address 36A Fordson RD, Campbellfield, Vic, 3061 Website nextgenye.com.au