1. **Do you talk to people about how you would like to live?**

In our experience yes, the people we support do like to talk to others about where they live and who they live with. They want to be able to choose where they live, who they live with and what supports they might need. People like to be in control of their lives. We have always listened, encouraged and supported people to make informed decisions about how they want to live.

Individuals contact My Place as we are one the leading providers of individualised services in Perth. People know they can openly talk to us about what how they would like to live and have an opportunity to be creative and flexible with their supports. People express they would like to live not only an ordinary life but a good life.

In my role as meet and greet co-ordinator with My Place I frequently have people contacting me, wishing to discuss how they want to live. A majority of individuals/families already have some great ideas about what they want in the future and how they want to live their lives. They are often at a point in time when they are trying to find a service provider to support them with their future plans. Their well-planned out future plans are often at the mercy of the NDIS, and people are anxious and express concern about frequent changes to NDIS policy and guidelines and how this will impact them when they go to their NDIS /review.

People genuinely feel they cannot plan or live in the long-term and have very little security and stability. How they live, who they live with and where they live can all change if the NDIS decide to change their individual funding. Understandably this process causes people extreme anxiety, and uncertainty and makes it very difficult to make any long-term future plans. NDIS reviews often result in frequent periods of high stress for people who already have daily stress and difficulties to deal with.

One recent example of an individuals review and significant reduction in funding, has left this individual at risk of homelessness. He can no longer fund the model of support Homesharer/Host Arrangement which he had been receiving for several years. He has established a home in this environment and built relationships with his support network. He is unable to live on his own, has no home of his own and without NDIS support is at great risk.

One of the most frustrating concerns we hear from people is that the NDIS don’t seem to listen or take into account what their individual needs are. This impacts significantly on people’s health and wellbeing.

For example, a LAC or NDIS planner may be supportive of an Individuals choice about their living arrangements and the planning meeting may feel like a very positive experience for the individual. However, several weeks later they will receive their new plan. This new NDIS plan is very different from what the planner had discussed and supported at the planning/review meeting. In most cases the individual/family have had no contact from the NDIS to explain why their plan has not be supported. This communication breakdown between the NDIS and individuals leaves individuals and their support networks highly stressed and anxious. They now have the additional task to having to contact the NDIS and appeal their plan. Not everyone has the capacity or the time to take this on. Many feel humiliated and defeated and like giving up. Some speak of suicide as the result of a planner or delegates decision, due to the massive impact these decisions have on their lives and wellbeing. They simply have no more fight left in them.

1. **If not, why not?**

In our experience people feel most comfortable talking to people they know and trust and can build a relationship with about these big life decisions.

Some people are losing trust in the NDIS and not comfortable talking about and expressing how they really want to live their lives as they fear it will impact on their funding. As stated above at times the communication between individuals and the NDIS is often confusing, misleading or non-existent which impacts on people’s willingness to openly discuss their lifestyle options.

People in WA have had the option of having highly individualised supports for many years and been able to live good lives, with stability, security and safety. This has changed for some people are they are no longer feeling confident or comfortable talking to some people about how they wish to live their lives.

Other people we support, can struggle to communicate with people they don’t know. They may need someone they know and trust to assist them with expressing their choices and exploring their options.

We’ve received some initial feedback from individuals and families regarding the New Request for Home and Living Form. Which is now part of the submission process of lodging an ILO. This new form is also not very personalised and feels like individuals have to ‘fit within’ the boxes. This form is mostly a tick box form, and our experience has been that individuals/families don’t like this. Existing ILO participants are unsure why they need to complete this form, as it is mostly directed at new people exploring housing options. A majority of existing consumers already have stable housing options and feel this is just another NDIS form to complete, which adds to the stress of the planning/review process.

1. **What kinds of things do you talk about / would want to talk about?**

People want to be able to talk openly and honestly about who, where and how they want to live their lives. They want to feel heard, valued and respected.

They may wish to share stories of good times/achievements/memories and possibly not so positive past experiences.

People want to share their ideas of how individualised supports might work for them.

In our past experience the old Individualised Living Quote template allowed people to tell their story. Including noting positive achievements and capacity building potential. It allowed the individual to share their personal info and paint a picture of their current living arrangement. This information greatly helped at planning meetings as the planners usually have access to this detailed background information prior to the planning meeting which greatly assisted the conversation/planning process.

The new ILO template unfortunately doesn’t allow as many opportunities to share this level of detail. It has now been condensed and no longer allows the individual the opportunity to give as much background information about themselves.

1. **Where would you like to get information to think about where and how you live?**

From people I know and trust, my friends and family. Sometimes people see information from their peer support networks, service providers and support co-ordinators.

In my experience in the meet and greet role, there seems to be a lack of information given to people about individualised options and potential service providers who can support them to further explore where and how they wish to live.

If My Place are unable to assist people with individualised support, they are often request information about what other similar providers and services are available. They don’t seem to be able to contact their LAC or NDIS planners for this info. It seems to be a big gap in communication/information and is a constant topic and request from individuals and families.

As a provider even if we can’t assist with supporting the individual we will often meet with individuals and families and offer them support and advice about what to do once they receive their plan and how to start to action their plan and what services are out there which may work well with them.

People would like to be able to speak openly to their LAC or NDIS planners about this and like to receive clear and accurate information about what their options are.

Some LAC’s/Planners have more knowledge than others, so the information and advice shared is often highly varied depending on who they talk to.

1. **What information, learning and resources could we create to help you choose your home and living supports?**

Up to date current information about Housing and living options from LAC and NDIS planners.

More education and information for LAC’s and NDIS Planners about which providers provide different types of home and living support options and who their local Individualised providers are. More information about ILO’s and all the options that come within the ILO, such as living with a Homesharer (Host Arrangement), Living with a co-resident (housemate) and Living alone with daily supports. A recent a LAC recently asked us as provider if a group of three individuals with a disability could live in a home together and access ILO funding. There still seems to be a lot of confusion about what an ILO is. This information could be shared with Individuals, LAC’s, NDIS planners, Support Co-ordinators and Service Providers.

More clarity and information around Specialist Disability Housing and eligibility requirements. More guidance and support given to Individuals about who to speak with to further discuss/explore this option. Currently funding is usually just put in the plan under Support Co-ordinator however little advice or information is shared about who to contact and what to do next.

More flexibility around the new Operational Guidelines and ILO funding support levels. Recent feedback from Individuals and there supports has been that people feel they are no longer getting Individualised supports in the new ILO submission process. Their individual support needs are now having to fit into the support levels $105,000, $150,000 or $230,000. In reality everyone’s individual support needs are unique, and, in the past, this has been reflected and acknowledged and the ILO quoting process allowed for personalised supports. Now people are feeling like they have to fit ‘within’ the system, and it no longer is personalised or flexible.

Accurate information about the cost of individualised supports vs group (SIL) accommodation. Often the feedback is that people think individualised supports are more expensive. In our experience as an individualised service provider in WA, this is not the case.

1. **How helpful is the NDIS website to find information on home and living supports?**

A majority of the people we support and who contact us don’t access the NDIS website very often. They may come to use for information and then we can send them direct links or resources to the info they are looking for. People are often already time limited and under stress and are looking for information and help and prefer to have someone to talk with, rather than accessing a website.

Others are probably unaware there is information on home and living supports as this information has not been shared with them at their planning meetings or reviews.

Some people are overwhelmed by all of the information provided to them and only able to filter small amounts of relevant information at a time.

People often go to peers and trusted support networks for initial information and advice about where they want to live and how they wish to live. This is a highly individualised process for people.

A majority of people who contact us either individuals, informal supports or support co-ordinators were unaware of the new changes to the ILO submission process and the introduction of the Home and Living request.

It may be helpful if this information could be communicated via LAC’s to individuals and their support networks prior to their reviews. People may not actively seek out this information on the NDIS website if they are unaware there has been any changes.

1. **Would it be helpful if your informal supports (e.g., friends, family and carers) knew more about how and where you want to live?**

In our experience most people have already discussed their individual lifestyle options with their close informal supports.

1. How can we work better with your informal supports to help them know more?

LAC’s and planners could provide more accurate up to date information at planning meetings.

LAC’s and planners to engage with informal supports after the planning meetings, at plan implementation and offer support, guidance and advice to individuals.

Support co-ordination to be included in peoples plans. Information/recommendations shared to informal supports about who may be best to approach for SC support and specialise in exploring home and living options.

1. **If your NDIS funding was more flexible, would you purchase different support/s for your home life than what you have now?**

Yes, most people would like to have the option to have personalised individualised supports again. People express to us they would like to have the flexibility to live the lives they chose with the reasonably and necessary supports they need to support them to do this.

Individuals have been supported by the NDIS over the past few years to have highly Individualised, flexible supports however they are now feeling disheartened and like the NDIS is letting them down. It’s been difficult for individuals/families to understand why the previous ILO model of support is not being supported and encouraged. The previous ILO model has proven to enrich people’s lives and wellbeing, provide security and stability and be a cost-effective alternative to funding supports at the NDIS line-item level.

1. **Who helps you to organise your NDIS supports?**

In our experience as a provider depending on the model of support chosen, self-manage/plan managed/agency managed and the service providers people engage with this answer can significantly vary.

In my experience in the meet and greet role. When people contact My Place with a new plan they often are quite confused by their plans and feel they have had little or no follow up support or information from their LAC’s or NDIS Planners. I often recommend they contact them for advise however they usually decline to do this as they have tried and haven’t received any follow up contact or the information they receive is not helpful.

Some individuals or their informal supports may have some prior knowledge of the NDIS and local providers and they may be able to organise some of their supports. In our experience as a provider we’ve seen individuals with years of life and work experience in the disability sector struggle to implement their NDIS plans without some level of support.

We also recommend people contact Support Co-ordinators (if this is in their plan) for support with implementing their plans.

As a service provider we often are requested by individuals and their support networks to assist with their plan implementation and organising their NDIS supports.

* + 1. **How helpful is this support?**

General feedback has been that there is a lack of support from LAC’s and the NDIS in this process. They don’t seem to have the time to assist individuals with this step.

Depending on the level of knowledge from Support Coordinator (and if funded in their plan) this can be helpful or if the SC is not very skilled this can be unsettling and time consuming for individuals.

Informal supports and peer supports are usually helpful, if they understand the NDIS and have knowledge of local providers.

1. **Have you ever used peer support networks or a mentor to find / access NDIS supports?**

In our experience yes people do use peer support networks and mentors to assist them to access NDIS supports. Individuals and informal supports may already have some close contacts who are familiar with the NDIS who they go to for advice and support.

Most of our referrals come from individuals who have our shared contact from peer support groups.

1. **Who would you be most likely to use to help you implement your plan?**

Depending on the complexity of the plan, a majority of people may need to access support from several sources to implement their plan.

The LAC’s/Planners would be the initial contact and people would greatly appreciate this support being aligned with the delivery and start date of the plan or if possible, prior to the plan commencing. General feedback is this rarely occurs, and when it does it feels rushed and the LAC’s/ Planners use (NDIS) ‘language’ and information that individuals find difficult to understand. Little information is shared about what to do next.

Support Coordinators would also be helpful in the plan implementation process; however, individuals firstly need to have this support funded in their plans and then know where to go to receive this support.

Informal supports and peer support groups are often used after this point.

As a service provider, people often contact us for information and advice about what to do next and we support them through this process.

1. **How would you like to encourage providers to offer new and innovative service options?**

We think sharing positive stories from individuals about new, creative and innovative service options is a good starting place.

Providers probably need some peer support and networking some other providers who are doing this already about how it works for them.

Offering information about the cost of providing individualised services and supports. There may be myths out there that this option is more costly.

General education of the sector nationwide to move away from congregate group living models of support

1. **Appendix D lists options for actions we could take to improve home and living in the NDIS. What other ideas would you add to Appendix D?**

Flexibility and true individualised supports based on the individuals supports needs to return in ILO’s.

Education around personalised and individualised supports to the Home and Living Team. How can a service be individualised and then have set support costs? People are feeling like they have to fit into the system, and no longer are being funded based on what their actual support needs are.

Further exploration and explanation of the new ILO OG Support level funding structure. The outlined hours of support and delegated funding amounts are almost impossible for service providers to deliver and are significantly different from the NDIS line-item costs. This change will most likely see service providers not be able to deliver ILO supports as a viable option for people as they won’t be able to afford to cover the costs of providing suitably qualified staff.

More training and education for LAC’s and Planners on Individualised living options.

Increased communication to individuals from LAC’, NDIS Planners regarding outcomes of plans and plan implementation. Currently very little feedback is provided about this decision-making process around funding in plans especially to individuals and families.

Less tick box forms, for example the new Request for Home and Living Form. This form is also very impersonalised and feels like individuals have to ‘fit within’ the boxes

Increased options given to people on where to go for ILO exploration and design.

More education and consultancy for service providers on Home and Living/ILO options. Some providers are registered for this support however have little knowledge and experience in Individualised support.

More opportunities for individuals living in group homes to explore Individualised living.

Greater individualised SDA housing options for individuals

Less formal annual NDIS reviews for individuals with stable living arrangements. The review process causes a significant amount of stress and anxiety in people’s lives.

More consultation with individuals and their support networks around changes to the Operational Guidelines and ILO Policy changes. The recent changes were introduced with no communication to individuals, many who have actually been receiving this model of support for several years.

1. **Do you identify as:** 
   1. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander**
   2. **LGBTIQA+**
   3. **Are you from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background**
   4. **Do you have a psychosocial disability**

As a provider we support people who identify from all above-mentioned descriptions.

1. **Is there something you would like to see in a home and living policy specific to your response in Question 12?**
2. **Is there anything else you would like to add?**