**Submission in Response to the Consultation Paper**

**“An Ordinary Life at Home”**

**Preamble**

This submission is about a moderate functioning adult with disabilities who is in a 1:3 SIL co-tenancy arrangement and has the potential to lead a more independent life.

This person does not want to co-tenant with others, largely due to their disability, and would choose to live in a self-contained one person unit/apartment with drop-in support, while maintaining the current plan managed core supports for daily activities and therapies.

**Key Issues**

There are four key issues for a person currently in a SIL arrangement and being close to being able to move towards living more independently without the need for direct overnight support.

1. Economic viability.
2. Availability of suitable accommodation in a suitable location.
3. A willingness to make the move away from SIL to more independent living, while maintaining the required core supports in her NDIS Plan.
4. Trust in the NDIA to fairly reviewing the clients current NDIS Plan.

**KEY Factors**

These issues need to be adequately addressed for this person to be able to take a major step forward on their road to becoming more independent.

1. **Economic viability**

There needs to be an availability of suitable rental accommodation at an affordable price.

The type of accommodation preferred, in this instance, would be a self-contained 1 bedroom unit or studio apartment. Currently, within the required area, private sector rentals are totally unaffordable.

We understand that our local authority city plan does not permit studio apartments to be constructed of the type required. However, Brisbane City Council area does allow such accommodation to be constructed.

These have up to five self-contained apartments in a single house-type building and provide necessary options for day drop-in supports and community access. They are generally close to public transport.

For an example see website: <https://www.housinghub.org.au/property-details/1927>

Although such a move to this type of supported accommodation, in our case, would cost approximately $5,000 more a year (due to higher rent cost) than the current 1:3 SIL arrangement in a community home, they are very fit for the purpose, and with parental support, affordable.

1. **Availability of suitable accommodation in a suitable location.**

Availability of a suitable accommodation option is a key factor to being able to make a transition to living more independently. Shared accommodation is not an option for due to compatibility issues. From past experience with other families who have adult sons or daughters with disabilities, these arrangements proved short-lived. This has included live–in couples & sharing with other adults who are not disabled.

Currently, despite wide searches, there is absolutely no availability of suitable and affordable rental options in the open market within a 5+km radius of the individual’s current SIL home.

However, there are quite a number of vacant affordable one person studio apartment rentals advertised in our locality for those with SDA funding. Can these be made available to non-SDA funded clients?

Even if suitable accommodation was available, maintaining current day-time supports and programs (centre-based activities, therapy, and community access), and having some flexibility with this, is critical to avoid anxiety or depression due to too much change for the individual.

There clearly is a demand for more affordable housing options that provides for (in this case) studio type self-contained apartments in a complex managed by a registered service provider.

1. **A willingness to make the move to a situation of being more independent.**

After being in a SIL arrangement for nine years in the same home with the same co-tenant, it is a huge step for the individual to make the move to a more independent living option.

What is required in our particular situation is a self-contained studio type apartment (or 1 bedroom unit) with adequate drop in support while initially maintaining the client’s current community access, therapies, and centre-based programs

The client will be more prepared, knowing that they will be in a familiar location and maintaining their current routine, to at least undertake a short trial period to assess suitability. They require a stable longer term accommodation arrangement that will provide stability and maintain important routine for them.

For the person to have a willingness to make such a move may require short term psychological support, and importantly, trust in the NDIS system and others who will support the person’s move.

1. **Trust in the NDIA to fairly reviewing the client’s current NDIS Plan.**

Regrettably many clients and their families no longer trust the NDIA. NDIA’s performance in communicating, assessing professional reports, acting in the interests of the client, regard for the provisions of the NDIS act, and adhering to their own Participant Service Charter, has been in our case, abysmal, causing unnecessary stress to us as parents and to the client.

Families and clients are frustrated in dealing with the NDIA as it has just become an uncontactable, bureaucratic monolith.

In so far as a client with disability having the right to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals is concerned - it just does not happen under with the NDIA. It refuses to consult with those affected by their decisions (even though this is a requirement under their own policies and guidelines).

NDIA has also chosen to ignore the requirement of the NDIS Act to acknowledge and respect the role of families in the lives of people with disability.

It is lamentable that there is now very little trust in the NDIA to act in a reasonable way with any positive proposal, as the expected likely outcome will be perceived as having negative outcomes relating to their current supports. This is despite the proposal have the potential to significantly reducing costs over the long term to the NDIS.

This lack of trust, along with affordable suitable accommodation options, are major impediments in approaching NDIA with a proposal to review the current NDIS Plan for an individual who may be willing to look at a more independent life.

1. **Other Matters**

You do need to be complimented on the consultation paper “An Ordinary Live at Home”. It is very well written, extensively covering a whole range of issues relating to possible future options for those in the NDIS scheme.

As a parent I am fully supportive of the intent of the paper, but I am not confident that the process will be fair and reasonable in response to needs.

To bring this to a sense of reality for clients will necessitate a honest and open approach by all parties, without the fear of negative outcomes being imposed. Such an approach, I believe, is beyond the capability of the NDIA in its current mode.

As a parent I do appreciate the opportunity to express my views in response to the consultation paper.

I have reluctantly chosen to criticised the NDIA in such a public forum and would be happy to show actual evidence to support these claims so long as this was to a trusted independent 3rd party. You have my email address.

27 August 2021