

# Supported independent living

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## Background on home and living supports

There are several different types of supports we might include in your plan when you need home and living support. These include:

- [supported independent living](#)
- [individualised living options](#)
- [specialist disability accommodation](#)
- [medium term accommodation](#)
- [short term accommodation](#)
- [home modifications](#)

Different types of home and living supports will suit different people. Supported independent living is only one of many support options. There may be other [home and living options](#) that better suit your needs and preferences.

We want to provide the best option for support in your home, now and in the longer term. We can help explain the different home and living supports and work with you to find the best mix of supports that will help you live as independently as possible. [Contact us](#) if you want more information on the different kinds of home and living supports that might suit you.

If you have a goal about home and living in your plan, we may be able to fund home and living supports. We will need to get information about your current and future needs. This helps us work out what home and living supports we can fund.

Remember there are [principles we must follow when we create your plan](#). Each support must meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#), as well as your total package of supports.

Find out more about [home and living supports](#).

**Quick Summary:** Supported independent living is one type of support to help you live in your home. It includes help or supervision with daily tasks, like personal care or cooking meals. It helps you live as independently as possible, while building your skills. Supported independent living is for people with higher support needs, who need some level of help at home all the time.

## What's on this page?

This page covers:

- [What is supported independent living?](#)

- [What does supported independent living include and not include?](#)
- [Is supported independent living suitable for you?](#)
- [How do we decide how much supported independent living you get?](#)
- [How do you get supported independent living in your plan?](#)
- [What happens once supported independent living support is in your plan?](#)

You might also be interested in:

- [individualised living options](#)
- [assistive technology](#)

## What is supported independent living?

Supported independent living is paid personal support. It includes things like having someone to help with personal care or cooking meals. It is one type of help or supervision with daily tasks to help you live as independently as possible and build your skills.

Supported independent living is best suited to people with a disability who have higher support needs. This means you need a significant amount of help throughout the day, 7 days a week. This includes overnight support.

You can get supported independent living if you live with other NDIS participants or if you live on your own. Remember, supported independent living is only one of the many support options. There might be other [home and living supports](#) that suit you better.

If you need support to live with people who are not participants we will look at other home and living supports, such as personal care supports or [individualised living options](#).

### Supported independent living in shared housing

It is your choice who you want to live with, and who you want to share your supports with. You might want to live with and share your supports with other participants you know. Or, you might want to move into share housing specially designed for people with a disability.

If you need supported independent living, we'll work out the reasonable and necessary supports you need each day. Once it's in your plan, you can choose which provider you want to deliver your support and decide with them how they will provide the support.

### Supported independent living when you live alone, or when you don't share your support with other people

We fund a range of home and living supports, such as personal care or individualised living options. These may be better options if you need help to live alone or with people who are not participants. Learn more about other [home and living supports](#).

For some people, we may be able to fund supported independent living if you live alone. It can help you live as independently as you can and build your skills.

We'll work out the reasonable and necessary supports you need each day. Once it's in your plan, you can choose which provider you want to deliver your support and decide with them how they will provide the support.

## What does supported independent living include and not include?

### What does supported independent living include?

As long as it meets the [NDIS funding criteria](#), supported independent living may include:

- help with personal care tasks
- help to build your skills in things like meal preparation and cooking, cleaning, and developing a routine
- help to action any behaviour support plans you have
- help to develop your social skills
- support with supervision, personal safety and security
- support to give you your medication
- support for medical appointments
- community access that is not routine or regular, for example, support to complete personal tasks
- support to get to and from community access activities, where this is your preference. For example, support to attend hydrotherapy sessions, or to visit family or friends outside of the home.

## What does supported independent living not include?

Supported independent living does not include day-to-day living costs not related to your disability support needs such as:

- the cost of groceries
- rent, board or lodging costs
- utilities such as gas, electricity, water, telephone, or internet bills
- vehicle costs.

Supported independent living does not include supports not related to your disability such as:

- household budgeting or bill paying activities
- expenses related to holidays, including travel costs.

Supported independent living does not include supports that are more appropriately funded or provided by another service system including:

- paid personal supports while you're admitted to hospital. The health system is responsible for this support – learn more about [mainstream supports](#)
- paid personal supports if you're in custody or to implement community supervision orders. The justice system is responsible for these supports – learn more about the [justice system](#)
- nursing, medical, palliative care and other health related supports.

## How do other NDIS supports work with supported independent living?

Supported independent living is different from other supports the NDIS funds. If you need another type of support, it is important to think about the guidelines that apply to that support including:

- items covered by other supports this includes transport, [assistive technology](#), personal care while in the workplace, plan management, financial intermediary supports or allied health services
- [specialist disability accommodation](#) related costs such as property maintenance costs, repairs and vacancy costs
- regular community access for example [social and recreation support](#), or [work and study support](#)
- support to create a behaviour support plan.

## What about my provider's costs?

Some additional provider costs are already built into the hourly rate they charge you for providing supported independent living. This includes your provider's costs for:

- management
- training of staff
- shadow shifts – where a new worker works alongside another worker to help learn the job.

## Is supported independent living suitable for you?

Supported independent living is usually funded when you live with other participants and share supports with them.

If you are not sharing your supports with other participants, supported independent living is only one of many support options that may suit you. There may be other [home and living options](#) that better suit your needs and preferences.

If you are not sure what home and living support is best for you [individualised living options](#) can be a good place to start.

If you need support because of your disability to live in your home, you can [contact us](#) and we will help you explore and work out which options suit your needs. You may also want to explore [assistive technology](#), [home modifications](#), [individualised living options](#) or other personal care supports. Find out more about other [home and living supports](#).

Supported independent living may be the best option for you if you need significant person-to-person support provided by a disability support worker, including overnight support.

To work out if we can fund supported independent living we'll need to get information from you about your current and future home and living goals, as well as your support needs.<sup>1</sup> This will help us decide what home and living support we can fund.

When deciding if we can fund supported independent living, we think about:

- if it meets the [NDIS funding criteria](#)
- [how old you are](#)
- [how much support you need in your home every day](#)

We'll also look at whether you can share this support or need support to live alone.

## Does supported independent living meet the NDIS funding criteria?

Like all supports we fund, supported independent living must meet all the [NDIS funding criteria](#). We also think about what other supports you need in your home, and how these supports will all work together.

For example, we need to know supported independent living is value for money compared to the cost and benefits of other supports.<sup>2</sup> There might be other home and living supports that help you live the way you want to, and offer better value for money than supported independent living.

We also need to know your home and living supports are most appropriately funded by us.<sup>3</sup> We can't fund supports that are more appropriately funded by another government or community service.

For example, we can't fund housing, except for [specialist disability accommodation](#). When we say housing, we mean the building itself, like a house or apartment. Many people buy or rent their own housing. State and territory governments are responsible for helping people with housing. This includes making sure all Australians, including people with disability, have access to accessible, affordable and appropriate housing.

Supported independent living, or other types of home and living support, might be suitable for you once you find housing that suits you. Learn more about [mainstream and community supports](#).

Some of the things we consider when deciding if we can fund supported independent living include:

- your current situation, goals and aspirations
- where you live now and future home and living goals
- your independent living skills and potential to build on these
- supports you need to achieve your home and living goals
- information about your day-to-day support needs
- reports or occupational therapy assessments
- other helpful information about your support needs
- any alternative home and living options.

We will use the information you, family members, or carers give us to understand your needs. We'll also look at any relevant information you gave us when you applied to the NDIS, including medical or allied health reports.

If you have any other information or reports that you think will help us understand your needs, let us know.

## How old are you?

Supported independent living is generally only considered to meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#) for people aged 18 or older.

This is because we would usually expect parents to provide the support a child needs to live in the family home. Where a child needs much more support because of their disability than children of the same age, we may be able to fund personal care or other supports. Check out [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary supports](#) for more information.

State and territory governments are responsible for children who can't live in their family home.

If you're 17, and your goal is to move out of home, we may be able to fund support to explore your home and living options. It's never too early to start thinking about what this might look like for you in the future.

If so, talk to us about the home and living goals you want to pursue. We can start helping you work out the best option for you, and we may fund support to help you explore your options. Talk to your My NDIS Contact or support coordinator if you would like more information.

## How much support do you need in your home every day?

Supported independent living may be suitable for you if you need both:

- active disability support for more than 8 hours per day to complete daily activities
- some level of support for the other hours – that is, you need support for 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, including overnight support.

When we say active disability support, we mean support in your home to help you do daily activities. For example, you may need help with personal care, getting ready, cooking, eating and drinking, cleaning and doing chores.

Active disability support includes direct support, where a support worker helps you do something or does something for you. It might also include monitoring support, where a support worker supervises you doing things yourself and can help you if you need it.

Active disability support refers to support provided during the day. We work out [overnight support](#) separately, depending on whether you need someone to be awake at night to support you. For more information, see [roster of care](#) section below.

It also doesn't include support workers doing other work that isn't related to supporting you, such as record keeping or filing.

In most situations supported independent living covers support for the time you are in your home. You may be able to choose to use some of your supported independent living funding to help you go to activities or complete some personal tasks outside your home. This



includes things like going to and from the shops or your activities in the community. You should talk to your provider about how you want to use your supported independent living funding and make sure this is included in your [service agreement](#) with them.

You may spend time outside your home doing other activities. This might include work, study, going to a group activity or spending time with friends and family. Support for activities outside your home can be funded separately in your plan. For example, you might also get funding for day activities, employment or recreation supports separately to your supported independent living funding.

We will work with you and your providers to make sure all your funding works together as a package of reasonable and necessary supports that works for you, both in your home and the community.

## What information do we look at when we decide if we'll fund supported independent living?

We use information, like discussions with you, family members, guardians or carers to understand your disability support needs. We'll look at information you gave us when you applied to the NDIS, such as medical or allied health reports, if they are still relevant.

If you have any other information or reports you think will help us understand your needs, let us know.

We need to know:

- your current situation, goals and aspirations
- where you live now and the future home and living goals you want to pursue
- what supports you get now, and what supports you might need in the future
- what home and living supports you have looked at before
- your independent living skills, and how you might build on these
- information about your day-to-day support needs
- assessments or reports from a qualified and registered allied health professional or behavioural support practitioner that tell us about your functional capacity
- other helpful information about your support needs
- if supported independent living is value for money compared to other home and living supports
- if other home and living options better suit your needs.



If you're new to supported independent living or we don't have enough information, we may ask you to get an assessment.<sup>4</sup> For example, we may fund an assessment by a qualified and registered allied health professional to help us understand what support you need.

## How do we decide how much supported independent living support you get?

If supported independent living is the right option for you, we'll work out how much funding to include in your plan. We'll use all available information, like your [roster of care](#), if you have one, assessments and reports to work this out.

We also use other sources of information, like discussions with you, family members, or carers to understand your needs. We'll look at any information you gave us when you applied to the NDIS, including medical or allied health reports, if they are still relevant.

If you have any other information or reports that you think will help us understand your needs, let us know.

### Your roster of care

A roster of care does not decide the amount or type of support you will get in your plan. A roster of care only describes the types of supports you are able to get from your supported independent living provider and may help us to decide how much supported independent living funding to include in your plan. You can ask your supported independent living provider for your roster of care at any time.

Your roster of care includes:

- [the hours of support you need to do day-to-day activities in your home in an ordinary week](#)
- [the ratio of support you need](#)
- [the price level, for example standard or high intensity, of the supported independent living you need](#)
- [the type of support you need overnight](#)
- [the amount of irregular support you need.](#)

You will usually only need to give us one roster of care. If you had supported independent living approved in your plan before, and your support needs stay the same, we'll continue the same support in your next plan.

We'll discuss your supported independent living funding and any changes to supports when we [create your plan](#). Your plan will show the approved supported independent living funding.

Funding in your plan for supported independent living must be used for that purpose. However, you can use this funding flexibly. For example, you can talk to your provider about what mix of services they will deliver within your supported independent living funding. Remember, your provider can only charge for services they have provided, and you have agreed with them in your service agreement. Learn more about [service agreements](#).

If you have a [service agreement](#) with your provider, it will show what support they will provide and how they will provide it. You can work with your provider to decide how to spend your funding. It is important that your service agreement tells your service provider what you want them to provide and what their responsibilities are.

If things change, or we decide to reassess your plan, we might need a new roster of care. You can always talk to us if you're not happy with a decision we have made about your supported independent living funding. Learn more about when your plan can be [reassessed](#), or asking for a [review of a decision](#) we have made.

### **What hours of support do you need in your home?**

To help us work out how many hours of support you need, we look at evidence of your day-to-day support needs. For example, we look at any new assessments or reports about your disability support needs that describe how often and when you need support. We will use this information to work out what days of the week, and times of the day, you need support in an ordinary week. We'll also look at any information you give us from your provider and allied health professionals.

We also look at what activities you do outside home. We will note times you don't need supports to be provided in your home. For example, you might work, study, go to a group activity, do things in the community, or spend time with friends or family.

Your supported independent living funding also includes funding for an average of 12 public holidays per year. So you can access supported independent living on public holidays if you want to. This may vary slightly for each state and territory.

If you don't need some level of support all of the time when you are at home, supported independent living probably isn't suitable for you. We will talk to you about other options. For example, we may fund personal care supports based on your individual support needs instead of supported independent living.

### **What ratio of support do you need?**

Once we work out what hours of support you need in an ordinary week, we then need to work out your ratio of support for these hours. A ratio of support means how many disability support workers will provide your support, and how many participants you'll share this support with.

We'll consider what ratio of support meets your disability support needs and meets our [NDIS funding criteria](#), including value for money. This covers all your shared support needs, including the times you need more support, and the times you need less support.

## What intensity of supported independent living do you need?

There are 2 sets of hourly prices we use to work out the funding for your supported independent living needs:

- standard
- high intensity.

We'll consider what intensity of support meets your disability support needs and meets our [NDIS funding criteria](#).

Most people will need standard intensity support. However, you may need high intensity support if you need support workers with extra qualifications and experience to meet your disability support needs.

We usually fund the high intensity prices when:

- you need help at least once per shift to manage challenging behaviours that need intensive positive behaviour support, or
- you need continual active support due to high support needs, such as unstable seizure activity or respiratory support.

## What type of support do you need overnight?

Supported independent living is suitable for people who need some level of overnight support. Your support worker might need to be awake during normal sleeping hours, to support you because of your disability needs. Or you might only need their support only at some times during the night. For example, help to go to the bathroom if you wake up at night.

If you need up to 2 hours of awake support overnight, we will fund sleepover support.

If you need more than this every now and again, your provider can claim for:

- overnight support on weekends or public holidays – extra support hours at the daytime rate for weekends and public holidays
- overnight support on weeknights – extra support hours at the Saturday rate.

You will need to agree with your provider before they can claim these extra support hours.

If you need more than 2 hours of awake support overnight, we fund active overnight support. Active overnights are where your support worker is awake during normal sleeping hours to support you because of your disability.

If your needs change and your support worker has to be awake for more than 2 hours at night, talk to us about whether you need to change the amount of supported independent living in your plan.

## How much irregular support do you need?

Irregular supports are the supports you need for unexpected or unplanned situations. For example, you may get sick and need to stay home for a few days.

We'll work out how much irregular support you need based on what daily tasks you need support for.

We generally fund an initial maximum of:

- 10 irregular support days per year for participants with standard support needs
- 15 irregular support days per year for participants with high intensity support needs.

Most people will need standard intensity support. However, you may need high intensity support if you need support workers with extra qualifications and experience to meet your disability support needs.

If you need more irregular supports because unexpected things happen let us know. Learn more about asking for a [reassessment of your plan](#).

## How do you get supported independent living in your plan?

Supported independent living is only one type of home and living support. If you have a goal to explore home and living supports, we'll start by getting some information from you. This will help us work with you to explore which home and living supports best suit your needs.

We'll look at:

- any assessments of your disability support and housing needs
- allied health professional reports
- reports about your daily support needs.

This helps us understand your current circumstances, strengths, barriers and daily support needs. Don't worry if you don't know all of this straight away. We'll help you work it out.

We may also ask for other assessments if we need more information to make a decision. We'll include funding in your plan for an assessment of your home and living needs if we need more information.

We want to fund the right home and living support option for you - one that will work for you now and in the long-term. And we want to make sure your supports work together to meet

your disability support needs. When we assess what to fund we think about whether the supports will help you to:

- pursue your goals
- improve or maintain your ability to do things with less support
- reduce or maintain your need for person-to-person supports
- create better connections with your family, community, health services, education and employment.

We'll use this information to work out whether we can fund supported independent living or other home and living supports that will meet the NDIS funding criteria.

## What if you don't agree with our decision?

If supported independent living doesn't meet our [NDIS funding criteria](#), we can't include the support in your plan.

There are lots of ways we might be able to help though, so talk to us if you're in this situation. For example, we may include other home and living supports that meet your needs.

We can also give you written reasons on why we made the decision. [Contact us](#) if you'd like reasons for our decision.

If you don't agree with the decision we've made, you can ask for an internal review of our decision.<sup>5</sup> You'll need to ask for an internal review within 3 months of getting your plan.<sup>6</sup> Learn more about [reviewing our decisions](#).

## What happens once supported independent living is in your plan?

You will get a copy of your plan once it is approved. It will explain how much funding you have for supported independent living. We'll also explain the hours and ratios of support funded in your plan.

You can then choose which provider you want to use for your supports. You can talk to your support coordinator, My NDIS Contact, or your informal supports such as friends or family to help find a provider. If you want to use a registered provider, you can search for providers on the [my NDIS portal](#) or on [our website](#). Where supports or services are likely to include the use of regulated restrictive practice, you will need to use a registered provider. Restrictive practice is any practice that limits the rights or freedom of movement of a person with a disability, to protect them or others from harm. The [NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework](#)<sup>7</sup> sets out how and when providers can use restrictive practice.

You may want to speak with different providers to choose the best one that will help you work towards your goals. After you choose your provider, you'll need to agree on how they will deliver your supported independent living supports. You should tell the provider your goals for your home and living arrangements, and the support you need for daily tasks to help you live as independently as possible.

Your provider will need to deliver your supported independent living supports within your approved funding. We don't fund providers' costs directly to work out your day-to-day supported independent living needs.

You can also talk to your support coordinator, My NDIS Contact, or provider if you need help to find somewhere to live where you can use your supported independent living supports.

### **How many people can you share your support with?**

Supported independent living is suitable for people who share some of their supports with other participants. It's your choice how many people you share your home with.

If you live with more than 2 other participants, there may also be times where you share more than one support worker.

For example, one disability support worker might support 2 participants, including you. Or 2 disability support workers might support 4 participants, including you.

### **How do you agree with a provider about what supports you need?**

We recommend you make a [service agreement](#) with your provider for your supported independent living. A service agreement is an agreement between you and your provider. It sets out what supports you have agreed to buy from your service provider and how those supports will be provided. It should include the details of how your provider will deliver your supported independent living support.

When you make a service agreement for supported independent living, you should discuss:

- the ratio, amount and intensity of your supports
- the price of your supports
- your responsibilities
- your provider's responsibilities
- how long the agreement goes for and how it can be changed
- how you and your provider will solve any disputes
- how you'll use your supports if you go on holiday
- what supports you'll get if there's a [vacancy](#) – that is, if someone moves out of the home you share and you aren't sharing supports with as many people permanently or for a long time.



Once you have a service agreement, ask your provider how you start getting supported independent living.

Learn more about making [service agreements](#).

## How much funding can you or your provider claim for supported independent living?

You should use your supported independent living funding to purchase the home and living supports described in your plan.<sup>8</sup> You should agree with your provider about how they will deliver your supports and make claims.

Supported independent living is flexible. It allows for minor changes in your daily or weekly routine. You can use more funding at times when you need more support and less when you need less support. But all support provided must fit within the available funding.

You can also make minor changes to your roster of care that fit within the funding available. You should discuss minor changes with your supported independent living provider. You may choose to work with your provider to create a new schedule to describe any changes. However, we don't need to see this.

Your supported independent living will generally continue each year, unless your situation, disability support needs or home and living goals change. We will update your funding if there are changes to the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits.

## What if there's a significant change to your support needs?

Your supported independent living support might need to change if there's a significant change to your situation or disability support needs.

If this happens, you can ask us to reassess your plan. We can also decide to reassess your plan without a request from you.<sup>9</sup>

When we reassess your plan, we will decide what supports we can fund using the NDIS funding criteria. We'll need current information about your situation and disability support needs. We may need a new assessment from your treating medical professional or an appropriately qualified and registered allied health professional to help us work out what supports meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#). Learn more about when we can do a [plan reassessment](#).

You need to tell us about events and changes in your life, or changes likely to happen, that affect, or might affect, your plan.<sup>10</sup> You need to tell us about the event or change in your situation as soon as you become aware of it.<sup>11</sup> For example, you may increase your hours at work or participation or other programs in the community; this may affect how much supported independent living you need.

If your home and living goals change and you ask for a [change to your plan](#), we'll use all information available to work out which other home and living support may suit you.



## What if there is a vacancy in your shared living arrangement?

A vacancy is where another participant stops sharing support permanently or for a long time. This means you don't share your support with as many people.

We don't fund vacancies in your shared living support arrangement. We fund supported independent living based on your support needs, not based on the arrangements of the other people who share your support.

A supported independent living provider shouldn't increase the price of supported independent living or claim extra funds from your plan to cover vacancy periods.

You should talk with your supported independent living provider about how they will manage vacancies. Your service agreement should include how your provider will manage vacancies in your shared housing.

## Reference list

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- <sup>1</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(a).
- <sup>2</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(c).
- <sup>3</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(f).
- <sup>4</sup> NDIS Act s 36(2)(b).
- <sup>5</sup> NDIS Act s 99(1), Items 4 and 100.
- <sup>6</sup> NDIS Act s 100(2)
- <sup>7</sup> NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework ss 4.1.1 and 4.2.1
- <sup>8</sup> NDIS Act s 46(1).
- <sup>9</sup> NDIS Act s 48(4).
- <sup>10</sup> NDIS Act s 51(1).
- <sup>11</sup> NDIS Act s 51(2).