

# Guide to Reasonable and Necessary (R & N) decisions

## Home automation

### Case

Ramesh is 38 and has a spinal cord injury. His disability makes it hard for him to grip and lift things with his hands. Ramesh asks the NDIS to fund an automated door to the front entrance of his home, and automated lighting inside his home.

### Would we typically fund this?

Yes, we can fund home automation supports that meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

This includes that the supports must be:

- related to your disability
- value for money compared with alternatives
- effective and beneficial for you.

Home automation supports are a type of [home modification](#). We can fund these NDIS supports as part of your Capital budget in your plan. You can't spend your NDIS funding on home automation supports unless they are stated in your NDIS plan.

### Why would we fund this?

To work out whether a support is reasonable and necessary for you, we look at the information you give us against the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

You'll need to give us evidence, like a report from an occupational therapist, that shows the home automation supports:

- are needed because of your disability
- are value for money compared with other supports that would achieve the same outcome, like assistive technology
- will help you to pursue goals in your plan
- are effective and beneficial for you, having regard to current good practice. This means thinking about what's recommended, or has been found to work well for other people in similar situations
- is an NDIS support for you.

## What else do we think about?

We'll think about if low or mid cost assistive technology could achieve the same outcome as your requested home automation supports would. You should explore assistive technology options first with your occupational therapist.

We'll also think about what parts of your home it would be reasonable to fund home automation supports in. We would only fund home automation supports in the parts of your home that you need to access regularly. We would talk to you about how you live in your home to work out what is reasonable and necessary.

We would not fund home automation to parts of your home you don't regularly use, like the bedrooms of other adults.

Home automation supports need to be related to your disability and installed in parts of your home you regularly use. If they aren't, you can choose to pay for them with your own money.

## Case example 1

Joanne is 52 and has multiple sclerosis. She lives in her own home with her 2 teenage children. Joanne's disability impacts her arm, hand, and fine motor skills.

Joanne has a goal to be more independent at home. She talks to her occupational therapist about low cost assistive technology that could potentially help her achieve this. After looking into some assistive technology options, Joanne's occupational therapist does an assessment. She determines simple home adaptations or low cost assistive technology won't address her disability support needs. Joanne needs more specialised home automation supports in her home.

Based on her occupational therapist's recommendations, Joanne asks the NDIS to fund automated lighting in her home.

Joanne gives her planner the assessment from her occupational therapist, which describes:

- why Joanne needs these home automation supports to address her disability support needs
- why other supports, like assistive technology, will not be effective or beneficial at enabling Joanne to control the lights in her home.

Using this evidence, the planner decides the automated lighting meets the [NDIS funding criteria](#) because:

- it relates to Joanne's disability
- it is value for money compared with other options that could achieve the same outcome
- it will enable Joanne to be more independent in the long term if her disability progresses, or if her children move out of home in the next few years.

The planner approves funding for automated lighting in her bedroom, living area, kitchen and bathroom. The planner does not fund automated lighting and air conditioning to other rooms in the house, like her children's bedrooms.

## **Case example 2**

Erik is 53 and has motor neurone disease. He uses an attendant-propelled power wheelchair to move around and uses assistive technology to help him communicate.

Erik lives by himself and has NDIS-funded support workers who help him with personal care and daily activities during the day and at night.

Because of the impact of his disability, Erik is unable to operate switches and remotes in his home.

After talking about potential home modifications that could benefit him with his occupational therapist, Erik requests the NDIS funds a front door voice automation system and a video security system.

Erik's planner looks at the evidence from the occupational therapist which shows the requested home automation supports:

- would help Erik operate his front door more independently
- would provide additional features to Erik's home security.

But the evidence from the occupational therapist doesn't show the home automation supports would reduce his need for current supports.

The planner determines Erik's requested home automation supports don't meet all of the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

The front door voice automation system is not value for money compared to other supports that achieve the same outcome, such as Erik's support workers. Erik will continue to need help driving his powered wheelchair from his support workers, who will be with him to open the door whenever he enters and leaves his home.

The video security system isn't an NDIS support and isn't related to Erik's disability. Everyone needs to consider home security, whether or not they have a disability.

The planner is not able to fund these requested home modification supports in Erik's plan.

For more information, refer to [Our Guideline – Home modifications](#).