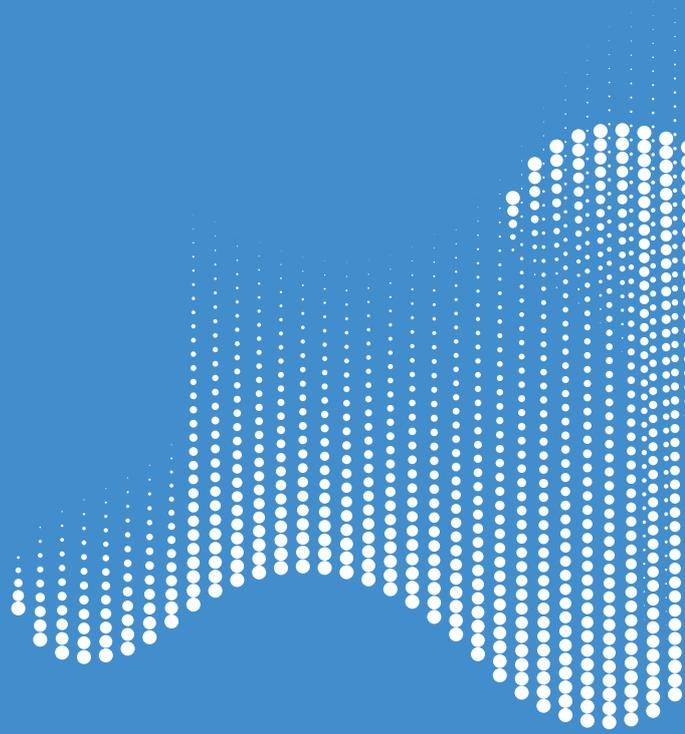


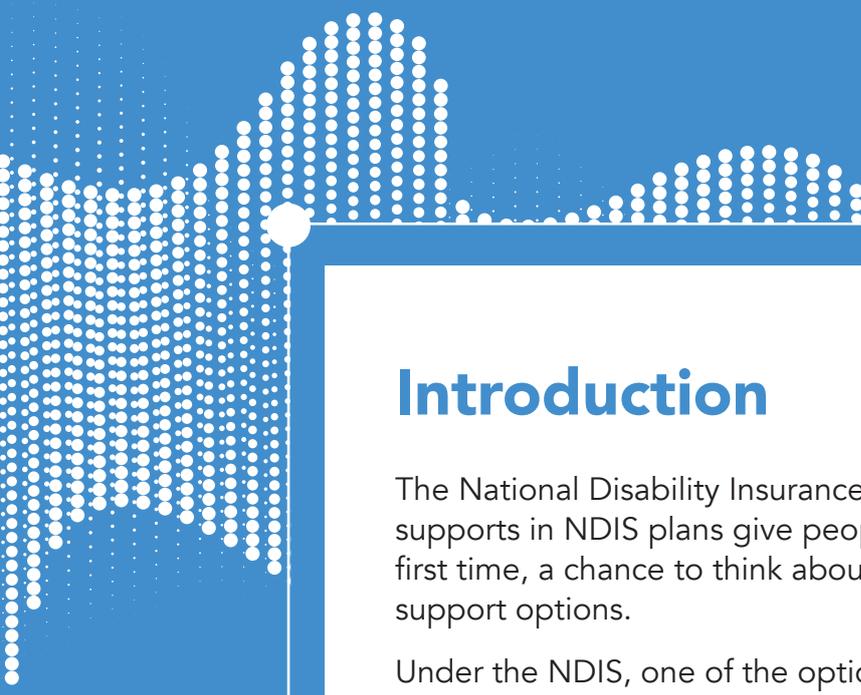


Understanding Supported Independent Living

May 2020







Introduction

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the funded supports in NDIS plans give people with disability, some for the first time, a chance to think about their goals, their housing and support options.

Under the NDIS, one of the options for accommodation support is a Supported Independent Living (SIL) arrangement. Often the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) encourages people into SIL arrangements, even where it may not be what the person or their family wants.

This booklet provides information about SIL for people with disability, their families and supporters and includes:

- What is SIL?
- What is and isn't included in SIL arrangements?
- How is SIL funding determined?
- How does SIL operate?
- Useful tips to consider
- Living with others
- Housing and SIL
- Other NDIS funded accommodation support options
- Resources



What is Supported Independent Living?

Under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Supported Independent Living (SIL) is a combination of individual and shared Core Supports funding.

The SIL model is generally built upon participants receiving supports within a shared accommodation living arrangement. This is usually for up to seven people. Often the SIL service provider owns the house they are providing the service in. Conflicts of interest arise when a participant wants to raise issues regarding the house or the service they are receiving.

Each participant will have an NDIS plan reflecting their individual support needs, goals, and the outcomes they are seeking. These goals and outcomes should inform the development of the SIL quote, which is submitted to the NDIS by the service provider.

A SIL quote detailing each person's individual and shared supports is typically developed by the NDIS registered service provider, prior to a participant's Plan Review.

SIL can provide a combination of planned individual (1:1) supports and shared supports, and irregular, or unplanned supports. Often people requiring 24/7 support receive SIL funding.



What is included in SIL?

- Personal care, such as showering and dressing
- Assistance with regular household activities like meal preparation, cleaning, gardening, and doing laundry
- Activities relating to running a house, including grocery shopping and paying bills
- Assistance with taking medication
- Irregular supports such as holidays, medical appointments, unplanned awake shifts
- Development of social and communication skills
- Using transport but not transport itself
- Assistance with recreational activities you might do in your home, such as using technology or doing craft



What is not included in SIL?

- Rent, board or lodging, and home maintenance costs
- Everyday living expenses such as groceries, entertainment or activities
- Personal care when participants are hospitalised or at work
- Items covered under other areas of NDIS funding, such as:
 - assistive technology
 - transport costs
 - therapy
 - support for attendance at day services or activities
 - support to accompany participants on home visits, or community events such as social or sporting clubs.



How does SIL work?

SIL is funded in your NDIS plan Core Supports, under the heading 'Assistance in Shared Living Arrangements – Supported Independent Living'.

SIL funding is managed by the NDIA, who pay the funding directly to your SIL service provider, which means the SIL part of your NDIS plan cannot be self-managed or plan managed.

SIL supports are included in your plan. You can receive SIL Supports in:

- public or private rental accommodation
- your own home
- an arrangement with others or alone
- a house owned and operated by a SIL service provider
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA).

The NDIA asks service providers to develop a quote for your SIL supports. This usually happens about three months before your NDIS Planning Meeting. The service provider should talk with you to develop the quote and your NDIS planner should have your SIL quote at your NDIS Planning or review meeting.

You should ask to see the quote and if the service provider of the NDIA refuse to provide it, contact an Advocate.



What are the different levels of SIL funded supports?

There are three levels of support that can be costed in a SIL arrangement - lower, standard or higher needs. By determining which level of support is required, the quote process identifies a price for the NDIA funded supports to be delivered in your plan.

Lower needs provide participants with regular supervision of living arrangements including occasional to intermittent prompting to undertake household tasks and/or self-care activities.

Standard needs provide participants with 24/7 support which includes active assistance or supervision of most daily tasks, sleep overs, an ability to spend some time with family without paid support. If occasional challenging behaviours are exhibited, there is a positive behaviour support plan in place which has been demonstrated to effectively support the resident within the available support.

Higher needs provide participants with 24/7 active and continual assistance with all daily tasks, active overnight support, frequent assistance, managing challenging behaviours that require intensive positive behaviour support, and active management of complex medical needs such as ventilation or seizure activity.



How is a SIL Quote Developed?

The NDIA provide a quoting tool for service providers to complete. This tool assists them to detail your individual supports and those you share with your co-residents. In order to complete the quote your service provider needs to meet with you so that the quote is appropriate to your needs and so you both understand what is included in the SIL quote.

The SIL quoting tool includes:

- **Participant profile** – including participant details, goals, needs, and the supports required to live as independently as possible
- **Property profile** – describes the property the participant will be living in, including people they will be sharing with
- **Participant outcomes** – outlining the desired outcomes for the participant, and the outcomes achieved in the previous year
- **Quote** – details the proposed quote and the weekly household support cost. This includes an hourly roster of care for the household, providing a picture of each participant's day to day needs in their proposed living arrangement over the course of a week, for example:
 - the number of participants sharing support, and details of staff ratios at different times over a 24-hour period, such as sleep overs
 - allowance for both regular and irregular or unplanned supports, such as holidays, illness or hospitalisation.

As an NDIS participant you and your supporters should be actively involved in planning and reviewing your SIL supports with your service provider to make sure the supports reflect your needs, requirements, preferences, strengths and goals. You should see the final SIL quote and sign off on it.

If the SIL quote has not been discussed with you or you do not agree with it, you should contact an Advocate.



Some tips

The following checklist provides some things to think about in talking with your service provider about SIL supports and in meeting with the NDIA Planner at your NDIS planning meeting.

The tips cover participants who are already in a SIL arrangement OR who are wanting to move to a shared household and want a SIL arrangement.



If you are already in a SIL arrangement

Things to think about when discussing your SIL supports with your provider – approximately four months before your NDIS planning meeting

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- Have I let my service provider know I want to be involved in planning for my SIL quote?

 - Would I like someone to attend any or all of the meetings with me? This could be a family member, a friend or an advocate who is independent from the service provider

 - Does my current living and support arrangements meet my needs and preferences, and help me achieve the goals in my NDIS plan? Have I talked to my service provider about the things I'm happy with as well as any I'm not happy with?

 - Have I talked to the people I live with about our mutual SIL supports and the way they are delivered? Does anything need to be changed?

 - Have I asked for information from my provider about:
 - how my overall support has been costed and at what level (lower, standard or higher) to ensure it is meeting my needs
 - what supports are shared with the other people I live with
 - what supports are individually funded for my support
 - how my individual supports build my capacity and maximise my independence in day to day life
 - what irregular supports have been included in my SIL quote. Irregular supports are the ones you may need occasionally for things like holidays, illness, etc. Check that there is flexibility to go on a holiday, or if you are home sick and can't use your community access supports.

 - Have I asked about getting reports or letters from medical or allied health professionals about my needs to support the information in the SIL quote?

Now you have your NDIS Plan: Different Agreements related to your accommodation and supports

There are different agreements that you will be asked to sign with your service providers.

These include:

- SIL agreements
- Agreement for other NDIS supports
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Agreement

If you are a tenant, you have the same legal rights and responsibilities as all tenants under Queensland tenancy laws. You will need to sign a tenancy agreement with the landlord that covers rent, repairs, maintenance, and utilities as a tenant of the property. Please see Residential Tenancies Authority for further information. If the service provider owns the house, you will not be asked to sign a tenancy agreement and will not have the same level of protections as other people in the community. This is important and the service provider can require you to leave the house.



The SIL Quoting and Planning Process

Meet with your provider (and supporters) to discuss your supports for the SIL quote (about 4 months before your NDIS Planning Meeting)

Your provider will use the NDIA SIL quoting tool to develop your quote

NDIA asks providers for a SIL quote (usually 3 months before your plan or plan review)

You can ask your provider for a copy of your SIL quote to review to ensure that it meets your needs and sign off on it

Provider submits quote to NDIA

Make sure you understand what the supports will look like on a day-to-day basis, including what are the individual and shared supports

NDIS planner meets with you to talk about your goals, and support needs

Take a copy of your SIL quote to your NDIS Planning Meeting

At your NDIS planning meeting, your planner will talk with you about your goals, support needs and what is in your SIL quote

SIL quote accepted by NDIA

Make sure your SIL quote meets your plan and goals

NDIS plan approved

NDIA pay your provider directly for your SIL supports



Service Agreements

Some service providers have their own standard agreements. However, you can require that the following be included:

- a discussion about the SIL quote prior to the service provider giving it to NDIA
- that the service provider will not provide information to NDIA regarding planning, including the SIL quote, until you have approved for them to do it in writing
- details about your supports including what is individual and what is shared
- your involvement in recruiting and training support staff, and the process for managing any staffing issues
- your involvement in the ongoing management of the household and rosters
- reporting on the use of funds and how any surplus can be spent on other activities
- flexibility for holidays and support during illness
- how to have input to changes in living arrangements, for example, if someone leaves and the process for having a say over who moves in.



What about other NDIS supports?

Your SIL arrangement forms part of your NDIS plan, you can request a range of other supports to help you achieve your goals. Depending on your goals the NDIA may be able to provide funding to assist you with areas such as community access and participation as well as a range of Capacity Building Supports. If these types of supports would assist you in meeting your plan goals, at your planning meeting, you should request that they be included in your plan.

You can use a different service provider(s) to provide your non-SIL supports, for example, social, community access and participation activities. You can also choose to self-manage or plan-manage these other supports. If you don't want the SIL service provider to provide these services, you need to make sure you are not locked into a service agreement with them regarding these services.



Case study

Georgie lives with three other people with disability. Her mother, Joan, is her plan nominee. She has a SIL arrangement that provides much of her daily support including shopping, meal preparation, and help with medication. Georgie also goes to group activities with her co-residents, but she doesn't really enjoy them.

During her SIL planning discussions, Georgie was asked her preferences. She indicated she wanted to do different activities, independent of the other people in the house. She wanted to go to the theatre and become involved in activities at her local community centre and amateur theatre group. She and her mother decided to choose another service provider to deliver her community access supports. This new provider supports her go to her chosen activities by herself.

Wanting to make changes to your living situation

If your living situation or support needs have or are likely to change significantly, you can request an NDIS plan review or tell the NDIA if there has been a change of circumstance. If you do, consider the following:

- engage an independent Support Coordinator - with expertise in housing options if you would like to transition to different accommodation arrangements. Please note, it is difficult to transfer out of SIL and from one house to another, unless the service provider is the same for both houses
- make it clear what has changed and why, or what needs to change in the plan
- involve an Advocate.

Thinking about other funded support options

When considering your current and future accommodation arrangements an important principal is to make sure you consider what option would work best for you. This could include:

Individual Living Options (ILO) focus on working with participants and their families to evaluate their needs, preferences and goals, and develop a flexible support package. These supports are often implemented in stages and are monitored and adjusted once established.

There are a range of living options under ILO:

- Co-resident live in Support Worker/s – a participant lives in their own home with a person who agrees to provide either full time or part time level of support
- Host Families or Individuals - living with a non-related supportive family or person, sharing their lives and receiving some support
- Living Together - a participant lives in their own home with a person (or more than one person) who they have chosen via their existing relationships (intimate, family or friendship)
- Living Alone - a participant lives in their own home, with support provided in various ways.



Additional Information

More information about Supported Independent Living is available on the NDIS website at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services/housing/supported-independent-living>

Information about Independent Living Options is available at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services/housing/individual-living-options>

Information about types of support budgets is available at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/creating-your-plan/plan-budget-and-rules>

The following resources and organisations may assist you when considering your housing and support options:

QDN A Place to Call Home

<https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/A-Place-to-Call-Home-issues-paper.pdf>

Department of Housing Resources

<https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/public-community-housing/eligibility-applying-for-housing/housing-for-people-with-disability>

Residential Tenancies Authority

<https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/>

Tenants Queensland

<https://tenantsqld.org.au>

Valid document re SIL and SDA

<https://www.valid.org.au/top-10-things-know-about-ndis-sda>

Summer Foundation

<https://www.summerfoundation.org.au/documents-category/housing/>

<https://www.summerfoundation.org.au/are-you-thinking-about-living-independently/>

Speaking Up for You (SUFY)

<http://www.sufy.org.au/>

NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/qld>

