

Introduction:

Journey Support Services was founded in March 2021 and one of the key organisational objectives was to provide specialist coordination and planning services for scheme participants in target cohorts. Our business plan outlined four key areas of service in which JSS would provide a tailored response to scheme participants through coordination services and take value in the development of innovative supports and services that responded to thin markets or create new markets of support entirely.

JSS is commencing the development of bespoke coordination services through the following service branches,



These specialist branches are designed to allow participants to be funded towards a certain outcome drawing away from a generalist approach to Support Coordination services. In context of this response paper, JSS was able to successfully implement our Home & Living branch upon launch and wishes to provide consultation back to the sector & scheme on what could be a pathway forward for a rich service market in the Home & Living space.

JSS set out upon its Home & Living development journey in response to the high level of scheme participants living in boarding houses & hostels. It developed the following objectives for its Home & Living branch,

Hostel to Home Initiative – KPI to house 100 NDIS Participants living in boarding houses into more appropriate living arrangements by 2025

Positive Living Options Forum – Free support provided by JSS to support NDIS providers to adopt ILOs and Tenancy Support teams.

Safe at Home Framework – Development of a safeguarding and suitability framework to guide the practices of host families or co-residents in Individual Living Options.

Market Insights:

Through the Positive Living Options Forum JSS has been privileged enough to meet with over 15 service providers around Southeast Queensland to discuss market adoption of Individualised Living Options and discuss provider capacity to deliver these innovative supports. JSS continues to hold this forum to ensure that their Home & Living policy is meeting the needs of the sector and to continue to gather feedback on what is preventing service providers from entering the ILO marketplace.

Qualitative data from the forum has included,

- Current workshops run by the NDIA on ILOs focus too much on concept rather than the raw policy and guidelines that will underpin an ILO. It was evident that community service organisations were seeking more guidance from the NDIA on how their internal systems should run to support an ILO rather than what an ILO will look like.
- A lack of robust advice about the utilisation of restrictive practices in host or co-residency arrangements with some providers advising they would not deliver such supports until these policy expectations were clarified.
- A suitability framework for host families and coresidents and how the Q&SC will regulate these supports who work in partnership with a registered provider rather than being an extension of a registered provider.

In focus of this qualitative data and discussion around host & co-residency arrangements, if these areas of concern are not address by the NDIA it is likely there will be poor adoption of these support types within the sector. Additionally, if the Q&SC view these arrangements as out of jurisdiction than a significant cohort of participants are likely to miss out on alternative living options that may yield a far greater benefit than a group home.

JSS in 2022 will be commencing Phase 2 of the Positive Living Options forum to involve other government agencies and NDIS participants in the co-design and finalisation of a Home & Living framework that responds to market concerns around the proposed models of supports. Phase 2 is also a time to discuss Individual Living Options more broadly as a realistic option within a participants plan. Due to the initial groundwork delivered in Phase 1 of the forum there are now several NDIS providers willing to implement ILO supports in Southeast Queensland in which interested participants can be referred.

JSS outlines its draft portfolio of innovative Home & Living supports to enhance Agency policy and ensure there is a rich service market available to any NDIS participant looking for somewhere to call home. The draft portfolio includes the following,

- Safe at Home Framework
- Stepping Stone Arrangements
- Microboard led SIL/ILO
- Tenancy Support Framework
- Capacity Building & Information Linkages (Hostels & Boarding Houses)



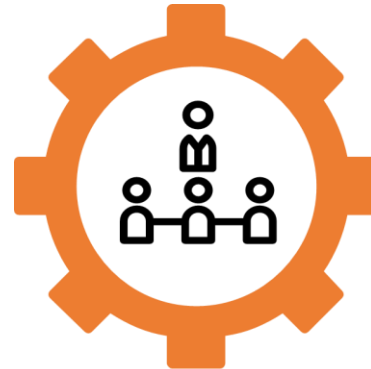
Safe at Home Framework



Safe Skills

Host Families are skilled in responding to the needs of people with disability.

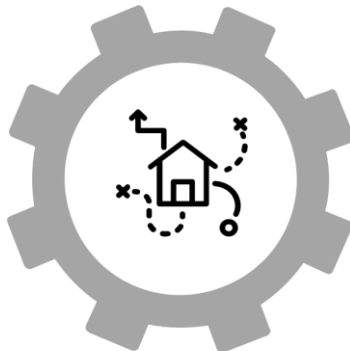
- 1 Undergoes frequent training & holds basic qualification.
- 2 Works in partnership with Registered Provider to remain suitable to provide disability supports.



Safe Practices

Restrictive practices are only used in line with behavior support plans.

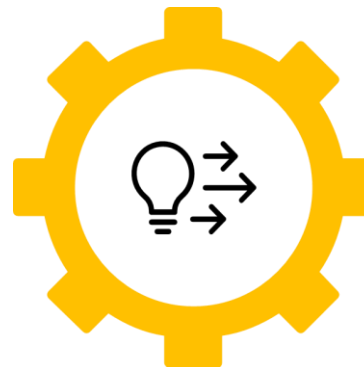
- 1 Hosts work with a Registered Providers to ensure behaviours are managed safely.
- 2 Receives training & support to understand restrictive practices and the behavior support model.



Safe Environment

Host families provide a dignified home for people with a disability.

- 1 Homes are risk assessed to determine suitability to meet participant needs
- 2 Host families are given support ongoing to provide a safe living environment to people with a disability.



Safe Approach

Hosts are provided a Home & Living Coordinator.

- 1 This unique support provides mentorship & stewardship to ensure the success of the arrangement.
- 2 Supplied by a Registered provider to ensure suitability.

Safe at Home Framework (Continued)

There exists several barriers to the implementation of such a framework. The framework assumes participants requiring behaviour support plan and restrictive practice will be able to access host arrangement supports. This draft framework would allow Registered Providers to respond to reporting requirements and authorisation processes as a caretaker for such arrangements. However, the Quality and Safeguards Commission is yet to assume a market position on such a model of support, and it could be deemed that this is not a model of support the Q&SC wishes to endorse. What is also clear is the instrument of legislation that governs restrictive practices was not designed to provide regulation to community-based arrangements such as the ones outlined in ILOs.

If the Q&SC fails to provide a market position on such arrangements this will cause significant stagnation of the marketplace and a lack of adoption from service providers and other stakeholders such as the Office of the Public Guardian who may raise concern about a lack of framework or guidance whether such arrangements would be regulated in relation to use of restrictive practices.

JSS hopes to continue its co-design process with the sector and scheme participants, however a formal position from the Q&SC will be imperative in the finalisation of host family framework that is fit for purpose and strengthens confidence in this innovative scheme support.

Stepping Stone Arrangements

In response to rapid changes in participants day-to-day life and the need for a quicker response to a participant's needs JSS has developed the concept of Stepping Stone Arrangements. Stepping Stone Arrangements are safe places for participants to land and provide a stable environment in which to explore long term housing arrangements.



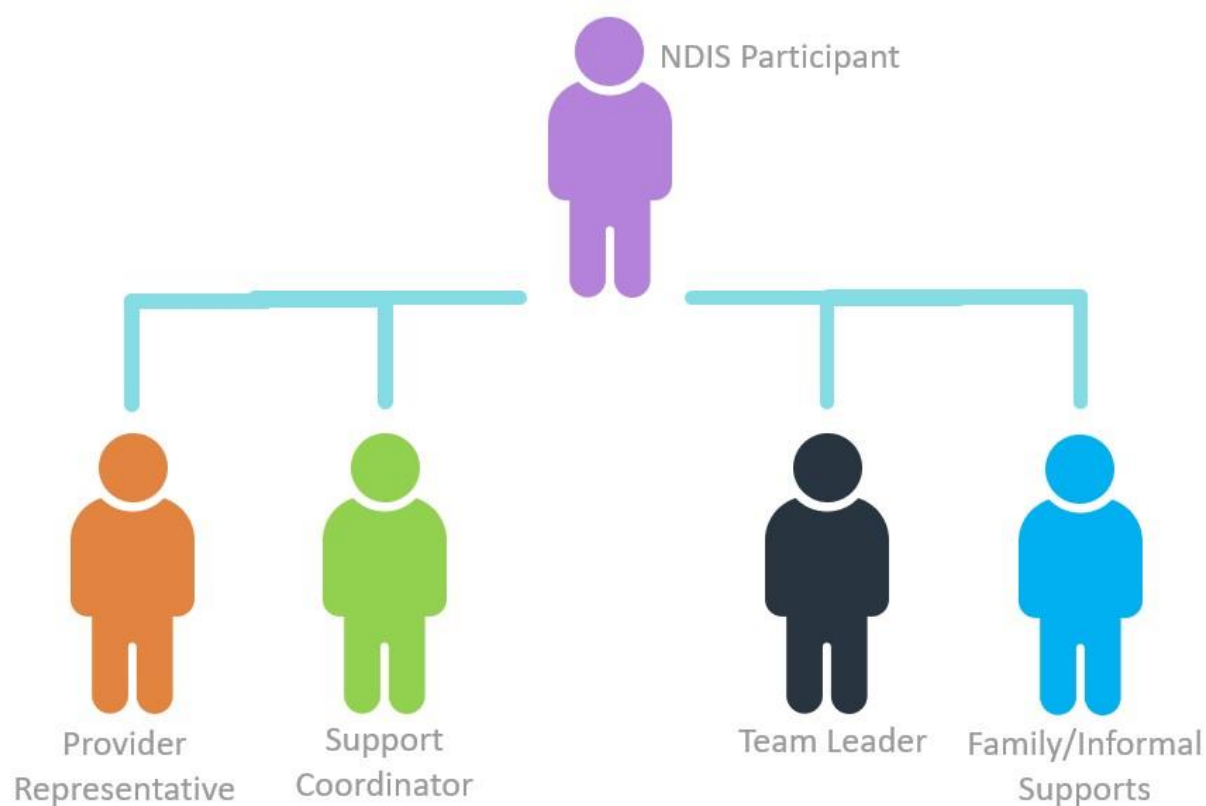
These arrangements are usually facilitated under a host model of support which provides transitional care while a participant explores their long term housing options. This model of support would be suitable for NDIS participants exiting corrections, child safety or boarding houses. Stepping Stone Arrangements could be utilised to support a foster family to continue supporting a young person aging out of the child safety system, allowing valuable time for the young person to explore an ordinary life. More advanced arrangements could support participants out of custodial settings allowing reintegration back into the community. These supports have potential to provide more targeted transitional approaches to marginalised groups such as woman, first nations and LGBTQI communities.

They would also provide a more recovery-oriented model of care to NDIS participants who have experienced institutional trauma and allow for the exploration of housing with safety and dignity.

In these arrangements participants would still pay a reasonable rent contribution and cover their own daily living costs. In terms of other crisis responses such as MTA, STA or short term SIL, these arrangements could be delivered at much lower cost percentage to the scheme while delivering a far greater person-centred outcome in the long term.

Microboards

The concept of a Microboard is in response to participant feedback around the corporatisation of the NDIS and takes lead to empower participants and their families to influence policy and design of how a participant's home should be run in a SIL or ILO setting. Microboards can shape how much support workers are paid, support worker recruitment and what objectives the supports are working towards. They are usually made up of the participant or their representative, a delegate from the registered service provider, a team leader and a support coordinator.



Team Leader: Usually recruited by the participant or their representative to oversee day to day supports but is employed by the service provider.

Support Coordinator: An independent stakeholder and provider that can balance the interests of the board and mediate between the provider and the participant when developing participants supports.

Provider Representative: Delegate from the provider to ensure supports being requested are appropriate, compliant with safeguards and sustainable.

Family/Informal Support: A community delegate may be appointed by the participant to represent their views on the board and provide a voice to a participant who struggles to communicate their needs, desires and wants.

Microboards (Continued)

The concept of Microboards for providers willing to adopt them could represent a revolution in the home and living space. Microboard led SILs or ILOs would be highly competitive and force the adaption of more corporatised providers in the implementation of more participant focused group homes. Overall, their implementation would benefit the entire sector and support participants to achieve real outcomes in their living arrangements.

JSS will be piloting their first Microboard led SIL in 2022 and will provide an overview of its success in their 2023 Corporate Plan. The overview will include framework guidance for other providers wishing to implement similar concepts as part of their service delivery.

Tenancy Support Framework

Focusing on NDIS participants not suitable to ILO or SIL this framework utilises existing pricing arrangements for tenancy support and provides an overview of what this support can look like in practice to encourage market adoption.

The tenancy support model delivers the following for scheme participants,

1. The NDIS Provider headleases for a period of 12 months to ensure stability of NDIS participant's lease.
2. The NDIS Provider works with household to develop a household budget and a relationship with the real estate agent with an objective to support the participant to take over their lease after the tenancy support period ends.
3. The NDIS provider facilitates capacity building and information linkages to the real estate agent and other relevant mainstream supports about housing and the barriers people with disability face in the rental market. The NDIS provider should empower the housing provider on how to continue to work with the NDIS participant after their tenancy support period ends.
4. The NDIS provider should provide capacity building and information linkages to the participants long term NDIS stakeholder group on how to continue to support the participants housing needs and how to reengage a tenancy support provider if necessary.

Tenancy Support is most suitable for participants residing in boarding houses or hostels who have capacity to reside with others, but it has been a considerable amount of time since they have had to navigate the private rental market and manage themselves independently in a community setting.

JSS intends to release a formal Tenancy Support framework mid-2022 and commence offering it as a service around the same time period.

Capacity Building & Information Linkages (Hostels & Boarding Houses)

The subject of Level 2 & Level 3 accommodation is a continuous issue regionally in QLD. The NDIS marketplace continues to have significant concerns regarding the Agency's ability to safeguard the vulnerable adults that reside at these sites. The following key issues have been identified,

A) Despite numerous complaints from NDIS Service Providers and the OPG regarding unauthorised use of restrictive practices within these sites, it has been identified that Commission has no jurisdiction to intervene in the operation of these sites as they are accommodation providers, not registered NDIS providers. It is also identified that there is no operational obligation for these sites to report or respond to allegations of abuse or neglect of an NDIS participant, despite the majority of their residency being scheme participants.

B) The NDIS provides specialist planning and provision to target cohorts such as young people in aged care (YIPRAC) or children in voluntary out of home care (VOOHC). However, despite being an at-risk cohort the NDIS has no provisions or specialist planning pathway to transition these scheme participants into more appropriate living arrangements.

C) These sites represent the ultimate model of a closed system of support for the scheme participant. Often accommodation, CORE supports, and Support Coordination are provided by the same entity with little ability for NDIS participants to mobilise to other providers or living arrangements.

The implementation of Individual Living Options should represent a market revolution for this cohort but a lack of stewardship from the NDIA has resulted in a lack of outcome for the participants who wish to imagine a life outside an institution.

In shaping Agency policy, the NDIS will need to provide targeted capacity building and information linkages to sector stakeholders who act as agents of change within this space. Sector stakeholders such as the community visitor who have unrestricted access to these sites could be empowered with education and training to have a dialogue with a scheme participant about what living in the community looks like and how they can start this journey. A specialist hostel taskforce would provide a dual function in providing information & linkages and coordination of cases to relevant specialist providers in the NDIS marketplace. Such a taskforce could be internal within the Agency or a partner in the community like the ECSNP.

JSS shares the vision of the NDIS to imagine an Australia where people with disability live ordinary lives in ordinary homes and are included in their communities. An Australia where disability doesn't limit where, how, or who you live with.

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