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Specialist disability accommodation

Background on home and living supports

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

- supported independent living
- individualised living options
- medium term accommodation
- personal care supports
- home modifications

Different types of home and living supports will suit different people. Specialist disability accommodation is only one of many NDIS support options. There may be other home and living options that better suit your disability support needs and preferences.

We want to give you 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 option for you to 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 home and living goal in your plan, we may be able to fund home and living supports. We'll need to get information about your current and future needs. This helps us work out what home and living supports we can fund.

Remember, we have principles we must follow when we create your plan. All NDIS supports must meet the NDIS funding criteria, as well as your total package of supports.

Find out more about home and living supports.

Quick summary

Some people living with disability have very high support needs. This could mean they need to live in a specially designed home. We call this specialist disability accommodation.

Most participants don't need to live in specialist disability accommodation, and there may be other home and living supports that are more suitable.

If you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we'll work out your specialist disability accommodation budget.

What's in this guideline?

This guideline covers:

- What is specialist disability accommodation?
- Are you eligible for specialist disability accommodation?
- What kind of specialist disability accommodation will we fund?
- How do you get specialist disability accommodation in your plan?
- How do you find the right specialist disability accommodation for you?
- How do you make an agreement with a specialist disability accommodation provider?
- How can providers apply to enrol dwellings as specialist disability accommodation?

You may also be interested in:

- Home modifications
- Assistive technology

What is specialist disability accommodation?

Specialist disability accommodation is a range of housing designed for people with extreme functional impairment or very high disability-related support needs.

Specialist disability accommodation is designed to be more accessible for you based on your disability support needs. It helps you live more independently in your home and allows your other supports to be delivered better or more safely. For example, you might need a home with reinforced ceilings so you can get a ceiling hoist installed.

Specialist disability accommodation doesn't include the services or NDIS supports you might get in your home that relate to your disability support needs. For example, personal care supports, supported independent living, individualised living options

and some assistive technology are other types of home and living NDIS supports we may fund.

Specialist disability accommodation may involve a shared home with a small number of other people where you have your own private bedroom. You can choose to share your bedroom with other people, like a partner, if you want to.

You might be able to live in specialist disability accommodation by yourself, if that option best meets your disability support needs and situation.

Providers need to be registered to offer specialist disability accommodation. Providers have to apply to enrol homes with us that meet the standards and requirements for specialist disability accommodation. When the application is approved, we call these homes specialist disability accommodation dwellings.

You'll need to pay rent and other day-to-day living costs, such as bills, when you live in specialist disability accommodation.

Other than specialist disability accommodation, we don't fund housing. Most participants will access housing in the private market by owning or renting, or through social housing. If you need affordable housing or are at risk of homelessness, there are state or territory government programs that can help you. Your local area coordinator or support coordinator can help you apply for state or territory housing or homelessness services. Learn more about housing options and the NDIS.

Are you eligible for specialist disability accommodation?

Specialist disability accommodation is designed to work together with a number of different NDIS supports. When we work out if you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we think about what other NDIS supports you need and how they'll work together.

If you have a home and living goal, we'll help you explore what options are right for you.

This helps us understand your daily disability support needs. Then we can talk about the home and living supports that best meet your needs.

To work out if you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we ask:

- Do you have an extreme functional impairment or very high support needs?
- Do you have a specialist disability accommodation needs requirement?
- Does specialist disability accommodation meet the NDIS funding criteria for you?

If we need to, we might ask for other evidence about your disability support needs, such as a report from an allied health professional. We use all the evidence you give us to work out if you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation.

If you were living in specialist disability accommodation when you became a participant, you'll still be eligible. We'll work with you to check what kind of specialist disability accommodation we can fund if you want to move to a different home.

Most participants don't need to live in a specialised home. If you don't need specialist disability accommodation, we'll talk to you at your plan meeting about other home and living NDIS supports that better suit your needs. For example, we may talk to you about whether assistive technology or home modifications could work for you instead. Find out more about other home and living supports.

Do you have an extreme functional impairment or very high support needs?

We fund the specialist disability accommodation you need for your disability support needs. Specialist disability accommodation is designed for people with an extreme functional impairment, or very high support needs.

Do you have an extreme functional impairment?

This means you have a lot of difficulty doing daily tasks on your own, or sometimes may not be able to do them at all.

We'll confirm you have an extreme functional impairment if you need lots of support from someone else to complete daily tasks. This is on top of any assistive technology or other home modifications you have. These daily tasks include:

- **Mobility** – such as walking, climbing stairs, getting in and out of a bed or a chair, carrying or moving items, and getting out of the house.
- **Personal care** – such as washing yourself, going to the toilet, getting dressed, eating, drinking, talking and taking medication.
- **Self-management** – such as housework, following routines, making friends and relationships and managing your behaviour.

Do you have very high support needs?

This means you need a lot of person-to-person support for a significant part of the day. You need this support with you, or you need to be able to get this support straight away. We also need to know that either:

- Your family or friends can't give you this support or maintain the level of support you need. For example, you might not have enough informal supports, or your usual informal support network can't support you anymore.
- Specialist disability accommodation will help reduce any safety risks to you or to others around you. For example, if you need help right away to leave your accommodation in an emergency. If you have behaviours of concern that are a safety risk to you or others around you, you'll need to give us a current behaviour support plan or a restrictive practice plan.

You may also have very high support needs if you have lived in a place like specialist disability accommodation for a long time. This may mean it's hard to move to other housing options.

How do we work out if you have an extreme functional impairment or very high support needs?

We review lots of different information to confirm if you have an extreme functional impairment or very high support needs.

This helps us understand your current situation, 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, such as:

- allied health professional reports
- reports about your daily support and housing needs.

We can include funding in your plan to assess your home and living needs if we need more information.

Do you have a specialist disability accommodation needs requirement?

We need to confirm specialist disability accommodation combined with your other supports will lead to better outcomes. For example, we look at if it will:

- improve, maintain or prevent your functional capacity from getting worse
- reduce your future support needs
- create better connections with your family, community, health services, education, and employment.

We need to make sure all NDIS supports we fund also meet the NDIS funding criteria. This includes things like making sure the support helps you pursue your goals and is value for money.

When we assess the NDIS funding criteria for specialist disability accommodation, we also have to look at how it compares to other options. We need to make sure that

specialist disability accommodation, in combination with your other NDIS supports, is better than other options on their own. We describe the details for meeting these criteria for specialist disability accommodation in the does specialist disability accommodation meet the NDIS funding criteria for you section of this guideline.

Depending on your disability support needs, other kinds of NDIS supports could be a better option for you. This might mean you can keep living in your current home.

How does specialist disability accommodation work with your other disability-related supports?

We look at all the information we have when we decide what other NDIS supports you need. We fund these NDIS supports in other parts of your plan.

For example, you may share some of your NDIS supports with other participants. This might affect what kind of specialist disability accommodation is most appropriate for you for example, how many bedrooms are in the home.

Or there may be other types of NDIS supports that suit you, like personal care supports or individualised living options. We need to know how these NDIS supports would work in specialist disability accommodation.

You might need person-to-person support immediately available in your home. Or there may be times you can be alone safely, so you may be able to have support close by, and available when you need it.

We also need to know how any equipment like assistive technology could support you in specialist disability accommodation.

Does specialist disability accommodation meet the NDIS funding criteria for you?

Like all supports, the laws for the NDIS tell us what we can fund in your plan. We'll only fund specialist disability accommodation if it meets all the criteria set out in these laws. We call these the NDIS funding criteria.

We also need to make sure that NDIS funding for specialist disability accommodation and other supports meets the funding criteria.

In particular, we need to know that specialist disability accommodation:

- helps you pursue your goals
- is effective and beneficial for you
- is value for money
- is an NDIS support for you
- won't likely cause harm to you or other people.

Does specialist disability accommodation help you pursue your goals?

To help us decide if you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we'll think about:

- whether it will help you pursue your goals
- how it will work with the other NDIS supports in your plan
- if it will help you do more daily tasks yourself when compared to other supports
- if different supports could help you pursue your goals or might even help you more.

For example, we'll look at what is stopping you from living in a standard home that isn't specialist disability accommodation. We'll think about other NDIS supports we could fund to make that possible for you, such as home modifications.

Specialist disability accommodation might reduce your need for other NDIS supports compared to where you live now. Or it could help you pursue other goals in your plan.

Is specialist disability accommodation effective and beneficial for you?

We need to know that specialist disability accommodation will help you with your disability support needs more than other NDIS supports. To work this out, we think about whether specialist disability accommodation will be better than other NDIS supports, where possible to help you:

- reduce the impact your disability has on your daily life
- improve functional capacity – the things you can and can't do due to your disability – or stop your functional capacity from getting worse
- learn new skills over the medium to long term
- maintain your supports, such as your informal supports
- reduce the amount of other NDIS supports you need. For example, you might need less support if you're living in the right type of home
- pursue goals for major life events. For example, you might want to move out of home or move in with a partner.

Is specialist disability accommodation value for money?

We have to make sure that specialist disability accommodation is value for money, compared to the cost of other supports.

Over time, specialist disability accommodation may help reduce the costs of other NDIS supports you need.

We think about whether specialist disability accommodation:

- means you don't need as many NDIS supports in other parts of your plan
- will reduce the cost of other NDIS supports you need
- can help you be more independent for longer
- will help keep your supports and relationships

- would work well with other NDIS supports in your plan
- will affect the total cost of all NDIS supports in your plan.

We'll also think about if you can share NDIS supports with others, or if you get informal supports from family and friends.

Is your housing an NDIS support for you?

When we decide if specialist disability accommodation meets the NDIS funding criteria for you, we look at why you need the home and living support. We need to make sure your housing is most appropriately funded by us, rather than other government and community services.

We fund specialist disability accommodation if it relates to your disability. This means there must be a direct link between your disability support needs and the specialist housing we fund. Specialist disability accommodation must also be an NDIS support for you.

Other government and community services are responsible for providing housing and accommodation if you don't need specialist disability accommodation for your disability support needs. They need to make sure you have access to accessible, affordable and appropriate housing, including social housing.

For example, if you can't afford private rental accommodation, you can apply for social and community housing. Also, state and territory governments are generally responsible for emergency and long-term accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Learn more about the mainstream and community supports we can help you connect to.

For more information about the homelessness services in your state or territory, visit the Homelessness Australia website.

Are there any risks we need to think about?

Like all NDIS supports, we need to assess any risks. Specialist disability accommodation might reduce risks you have in your current home. We also can't

fund specialist disability accommodation if it's likely to cause harm to you or someone else.

We'll talk to you about:

- any risks to you or others about the home you live in, and whether specialist disability accommodation would help safeguard you against these risks
- how specialist disability accommodation will work with your other home and living supports to manage these risks.

We'll talk to you about how risks can be managed. For example, if you need any other supports to manage risk, and so you're safe. We can talk about this with you during your check-in.

What kind of specialist disability accommodation will we fund?

Like all homes, there are many ways to build specialist disability accommodation. If you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we need to decide what kind of specialist disability accommodation we'll fund for you.

We'll include funding in your plan for:

- a design category – the way the specialist disability accommodation is built to suit your disability support needs
- a building type – such as a house, apartment, or another type of building.

We will also ask where you want to live.

If you were living in specialist disability accommodation when you became a participant, you'll still be eligible. If you want to move to a different home, we'll work with you to check what kind of specialist disability accommodation we can fund.

Once we decide what kind of specialist disability accommodation we'll fund, we'll work out the specialist disability accommodation budget to include in your plan. To

do this, we use the specialist disability accommodation pricing arrangements to help us.

What are the specialist disability accommodation design categories?

There are 4 specialist disability accommodation design categories we can fund if you're new to specialist disability accommodation:

1. **Improved liveability** – housing with better physical access. It also has more features for people with sensory, intellectual or cognitive impairments. For example, you may need walls and floors that are very easy to see, living areas that mean your support workers can see you easily, or very few stairs in your home.
2. **Fully accessible** – housing with a high level of physical access features for people who have lots of physical challenges. For example, you need to use a manual or powered wheelchair at home, or can't use steps.
3. **Robust** – housing that is very strong and durable, reducing the need for repairs and maintenance. The way it is built should make it safe for you and others. This type of design category may suit people who need help managing complex and challenging behaviours. We think about the triggers for your behaviour and how often this may cause property damage, and the extent of the damage.
4. **High physical support** – housing that includes a high level of physical access for people who need very high levels of support. For example, you may need a ceiling hoist, backup power supply, or home automation and communication technology.

We also think about whether you'll need different features in your home in the near future. For example, you may be getting older or your disability support needs are changing quickly.

How do we work out the right design category for you?

We look at your individual needs when we work out which of the 4 specialist disability accommodation design categories meets your needs. A design category refers to the features you need in your home, based on your disability support needs.

We look at how the features of each design category would make your other supports easier to access or use. We'll also think about how all your supports work together.

For example, a design category isn't right for you if it makes it harder to get other supports. And a design category isn't right for you if it would risk your health and safety.

When we work out your design category, we look at reports from allied health professionals. We also look at the goals you want to pursue.

We'll think about things like whether you need extra space around your bed, bathroom or kitchen to be able to use them. Or if your care or support needs require particular features.

We'll look at which design category helps you get your other supports and has the features you need to live there. We'll also think about the support model that best suits your needs.

What are the specialist disability accommodation building types?

There are 4 building types if you're new to specialist disability accommodation. The types and some of the features are:

- **Apartments** – self-contained units that are part of a larger residential building.
- **Duplexes, villas, townhouses** – separate but semi-attached properties within a single land title or strata titled area. This also includes stand-alone villas or granny-flats.
- **Houses** – detached low-rise buildings with garden or courtyard areas.

- **Group homes** – houses that have 4 or 5 residents.

How do we work out the right building type for you?

We look at your individual needs, and the features of each building type, when we work out the right building type for you. This might be a house, an apartment, or another type of building.

The best building type for you will depend on what other home and living supports you need. Some of the things we think about include how many people you'd like to live with, what type of building you'd like to live in, and if it meets all the NDIS funding criteria.

Specialist disability accommodation may be accommodation that you share with others, or you might live there alone.

When we work out the right building type for you, we'll also look at how the building type would:

- help you get your other NDIS supports
- suit the type of home you want to live in and works with your goals
- help you become involved in your community
- help you to maintain or create relationships
- reduce any risks to you and others
- help your informal support network support you
- be more likely than another building type to improve outcomes for you.

Learn more about how you can use your specialist disability accommodation budget once the funding is in your plan.

Living alone

You may prefer to live alone. Or you may need to live alone to reduce the risk of harm to yourself or others, or because of the specific supports you need. We'll talk to

you about any risks, including if you have support to help you take risks. We'll work with you to learn from your experience in how you manage risk and use this in your decisions. If you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we'll need to make sure that any NDIS support to live alone also meets the NDIS funding criteria.

If NDIS supports to live alone meet the NDIS funding criteria for you, one option for your specialist disability accommodation is living alone with onsite shared support.

What is living alone with onsite shared support?

A group of participants might each have their own home on the same site and share onsite support for a limited number of hours per day. They'll have regular NDIS supports in place but may need to call the onsite shared support for assistance when they need unplanned support.

When we consider whether onsite shared support is right for you, we'll look at your individual support needs. We'll also need to make sure:

- you can use technology to call for assistance
- as a guide, you need up to an average of 2.5 hours of ad hoc person-to-person support per day, in addition to your planned activities of daily living support
- you can usually wait up to 60 minutes for unplanned NDIS support without this becoming a risk to your safety and wellbeing
- you understand the risks of living alone.

If you need specialist support or your needs change frequently, onsite shared support may not be the best option to meet your needs. We'll talk to you about what other NDIS supports may be more suitable for you.

Example

Mary lives alone in a single bedroom specialist disability accommodation apartment building which has onsite shared support available. Other participants also live in the

building and can use the onsite shared support. Mary has an active social life and enjoys catching up with friends whenever she can.

Mary needs help each day to complete most of her daily activities. A support worker helps her at the same times each day to get in and out of bed, into her powered wheelchair, prepare meals and with other household tasks. Mary can't use the onsite shared support for these tasks. If Mary's support worker can't attend at the agreed time, the service agreement with her support provider sets out their responsibilities for another worker to support Mary. Mary doesn't need to use the onsite shared support at these times.

There are times when Mary doesn't need regular support and she spends time in her apartment alone. If Mary's friends call unexpectedly to catch up for a coffee, she can ask the onsite shared support to help. The onsite support worker can help Mary get into her wheelchair for her catch-up with friends.

Mary can use the call button next to her bed to call the onsite support worker. They will let Mary know if they can help her straight away or if she'll need to wait for a short time.

Where do you want to live?

We'll include a specialist disability accommodation location in your plan. We generally fund the specialist disability accommodation location based on where you tell us you'd like to live. We'll think about whether this location works with your other supports, and if it meets the NDIS funding criteria.

To decide what specialist disability accommodation location to include in your plan, we look at:

- the location you want to live in and if it helps you pursue your goals
- where you live now and where you've lived before, including any recent changes
- which location would improve your access to community and mainstream services

- which location would help you connect with community or culture
- which location will help you stay connected to your informal support network, like family and friends.

We may discuss these things to help us work out if the location is value for money. For example, you might want to live close to friends and family so they can help you with tasks. This might mean you don't need as much NDIS support in other parts of your plan, so this location is value for money compared to other areas.

What if you were already living in specialist disability accommodation when you became a participant?

If you lived in specialist disability accommodation when you became an NDIS participant, you'll still be eligible.

If you want to stay in the home you lived in when you became a participant, we'll keep funding the same kind of specialist disability accommodation.

If you want to move into different specialist disability accommodation, we'll work with you to decide the design category and building type we'll fund in your plan. We'll also think about what other home and living supports you'll need in your new home.

How do you get specialist disability accommodation in your plan?

Specialist disability accommodation is only one type of home and living support.

We'll look at:

- allied health professional reports
- reports about your daily support and housing needs.

This helps us understand your current situation, strengths, barriers and daily disability support needs. We can help you work this out if you don't know straight away.

We may also ask for other assessments if we need more information to make a decision. We can include funding in your plan to assess your home and living needs if we need more information.

We want to fund the right home and living support option that works for you now and in the long-term. When we look at your options, we think about whether the NDIS 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 if specialist disability accommodation or another home and living support option will suit you better. We'll make sure your NDIS supports work together to meet your disability support needs. Once you give us this information, we'll let you know the outcome as soon as we can.

If you're not eligible for specialist disability accommodation, there may also be other home and living options that better suit your needs. We'll discuss these options with you.

If you're turning 18 in the next year or two, you may be thinking about moving. 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 help you to explore your options and work out the best one for you.

We'll check in with you during your plan to see how you're going. We'll ask if the NDIS supports in your plan are meeting your needs. If the check-in shows your situation has changed and your plan is no longer meeting your needs, we may decide to reassess your plan. This includes the home and living supports you need.

What happens when we reassess your plan?

If your home and living supports aren't meeting your needs, we'll look at your total package of NDIS funded supports and talk to you about what needs to change.

Specialist disability accommodation is designed for people with an extreme functional impairment, or very high support needs. So, it's likely you'll always need it. When we make a decision to include specialist disability accommodation in your plan and it's working well, you won't need to prove you still meet the criteria at every plan reassessment.

If your disability support needs change significantly, you may need another type and category of specialist disability accommodation. If your specialist disability accommodation supports need to change, we'll discuss this with you and make sure the timeframe for the change is reasonable.

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.

What if you don't agree with our decision?

If we decide specialist disability accommodation doesn't meet all our NDIS funding criteria, we can't include it in your plan. If we decide you're eligible, we'll let you know what kind of specialist disability accommodation we have approved.

We'll give you written reasons why we made the decision. You can contact us if you'd like more detail about the reasons for our decision. We can help you connect to other government and community housing services if you need them.

If you don't agree with a decision we make about specialist disability accommodation, you can ask for an internal review of our decision.

You'll need to ask for an internal review within 3 months of getting your plan.

Learn more about reviewing our decisions.

How do you find the right specialist disability accommodation for you?

If you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, your plan will include details of your specialist disability accommodation budget. This is the maximum amount we'll pay for your specialist disability accommodation supports.

We use the specialist disability accommodation pricing arrangements to work out your specialist disability accommodation budget, based on what kind of specialist disability accommodation is in your plan.

This funding is for your specialist disability accommodation provider. You can choose the specialist disability accommodation registered provider you want, unless your plan says which one you need to use. The provider claims specialist disability accommodation funding when they provide the home to you. Specialist disability accommodation providers need to apply to enrol all specialist disability accommodation dwellings with us.

Once we decide you're eligible for specialist disability accommodation, we generally won't remove specialist disability accommodation funding from your plan unless you ask us to. We may need to look at your specialist disability accommodation funding again if your support needs change, or if you want to move into a different kind of specialist disability accommodation.

If you were already living in specialist disability accommodation when you became a participant, we'll keep funding the same kind of specialist disability accommodation unless you want to move. Learn more about what happens if you were already living in specialist disability accommodation when you became a participant.

How do you use your specialist disability accommodation budget?

Your plan will say what design category, building type, and location we've decided meets your needs. You can choose which specialist disability accommodation you

want to live in, as long as you spend in line with your plan. But we won't fund more home and living supports, including a higher cost specialist disability accommodation, if you decide to live in a different building type or design category.

If your situation changes, you may need a plan reassessment so we can reassess your specialist disability accommodation supports. For example, your functional capacity changes or you're planning to relocate.

Can you live in a lower value specialist disability accommodation than what you're eligible for?

You can usually live in a lower value specialist disability accommodation than what's set out in your plan. But you should think about the risks of choosing a property different to the type, category and location in your plan.

If you live in a lower value specialist disability accommodation than what's in your plan, your provider can only claim the value of the property.

Can you live in a higher cost specialist disability accommodation than what we fund you for?

We'll only fund the amount of specialist disability accommodation that's set out in your plan. But some providers may let you live in a higher-valued design category or building type than what's in your plan. If so, they may need more rent than what you have from your reasonable rent contribution. You'll need to talk about this with the specialist disability accommodation provider.

You should make sure any rental payment amounts are included in your specialist disability accommodation service agreement.

Your provider will need to let us know the details of the rental agreement. They will need to let us know in writing within 5 business days. They will also need to give us evidence from a qualified property valuer which tells us the extra rent is reasonable.

Your plan will include a description of the most appropriate specialist disability accommodation for you that we can fund. If you choose to live in a different type of

specialist disability accommodation and pay more rent, your plan won't include this kind of specialist disability accommodation.

How do you find specialist disability accommodation vacancies?

One way to find a specialist disability accommodation vacancy is to use the specialist disability accommodation finder. Providers can list specialist disability accommodation vacancies as they become available.

Once you find specialist disability accommodation you like, you can then contact the provider who has the vacancy. Our specialist disability accommodation finder also has information about all enrolled specialist disability accommodation, in case you'd like to talk to a provider about future vacancies.

If you want help to talk to a provider, you can ask your support coordinator, local area coordinator or your friends and family. Make sure you tell providers the design category, building type and location that is in your plan.

You can talk to as many specialist disability accommodation providers as you want so you can find the right provider. We can fund support coordination to help you to find a provider if you need it.

When do you need to use a specific provider?

Below are 2 situations when we might recommend a specific provider.

When a specific specialist disability accommodation provider is best for your support needs

Your disability may mean you need a very specific type of care that only specific kinds of specialist disability accommodation can provide. We might specify a provider in your plan that can offer you the kind of specialist disability accommodation you need.

This might be because you need a particular person to give you specialist care, and you need to live in a specific specialist disability accommodation to get support from them.

We'll only do this in limited situations, and we'll talk to you about this.

When you need to keep getting specialist disability accommodation from your current provider

In some rare situations, we fund specialist disability accommodation to make sure you can keep getting the same NDIS supports and care. We call this continuity and stability.

If so, we'll note in your plan that your specialist disability accommodation should be supplied by your current provider.

We include this only if changing providers would be a risk to your health or safety. If so, we'll talk to you about what this might mean for you.

What happens if the type of specialist disability accommodation you have in your plan isn't available?

Sometimes the specialist disability accommodation in your plan won't be available yet. We'll still include details of the specialist disability accommodation budget in your plan. You might be moving from one life stage to another, and this can take some time. You can:

- talk to your support coordinator or local area coordinator to help you find an alternative place to live
- use your other NDIS supports flexibly in the short term, or use additional NDIS supports so you can keep living in your current home while you wait
- talk to us about reassessing your plan if your support needs have changed.

We can also let providers know if there are lots of people who need specialist disability accommodation homes through the specialist disability accommodation demand data.

You need to let us know when you find a suitable specialist disability accommodation. This is so we can add the funding to your plan. Once you move into your specialist disability accommodation, you can start using your specialist disability accommodation funding.

How do you make an agreement with a specialist disability accommodation provider?

Before you move into specialist disability accommodation, you'll need to create a written service agreement with the provider you choose. The service agreement should include the roles and responsibilities for you and your provider.

Do you have to pay rent to your specialist disability accommodation provider?

Paying rent is an ordinary cost of living. Once you move into specialist disability accommodation, you'll need to make reasonable rent contributions toward your housing. You will pay this to your specialist disability accommodation provider. You should discuss this with them and agree on how much you'll need to pay to live in specialist disability accommodation.

The maximum reasonable rent contribution is 25% of the Commonwealth Disability Support Pension, 25% of the Pension Supplement, as well as any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you get.

The amount of the reasonable rent contribution should be included in the service agreement between you and the provider, or in a separate rental agreement.

What if you want to live full time with a partner, friend or family member?

You can choose who you live with. They may or may not be an NDIS participant. Your specialist disability accommodation provider will need to agree to your choice, and we'll need to be sure it isn't a risk to your health or safety. When we say live with, we mean someone who you live with full time.

People you may want to live with include:

- family members, including children
- partners
- friends
- another participant who is eligible for specialist disability accommodation
- another person who isn't eligible for specialist disability accommodation.

We can only provide funding to people who are NDIS participants and eligible for specialist disability accommodation. The decision we make about your specialist disability accommodation supports is independent and separate from your choice of who you live with. If you share your home or bedroom with someone else, that person will need to cover their own costs, including rent. We'll take this into account when we work out your specialist disability accommodation needs.

What if you want to share a bedroom with someone else?

If you want to share your specialist disability accommodation bedroom with another person, we can help make sure you're not being asked to share your bedroom if you don't want to. We also check that having more than one person in your bedroom won't mean your needs may not be met.

When we look at whether sharing your bedroom is a risk to you, we think about your situation and the situation of other people you share with. We need to consider the impact on others in the house and make sure the house can accommodate an extra person.

Example

John lives in two-bedroom specialist disability accommodation with Karen, who is also an NDIS participant. John would like his girlfriend Sophie to move in and share his bedroom. After talking with John and Karen, we confirm that they both are happy with this change to the living arrangement. We also confirm that there will be no impact to both of them receiving the disability-related supports they need. The specialist disability accommodation provider will also need to agree to this new arrangement. Sophie is not an NDIS participant, so the 3 housemates will need to discuss with the provider and agree on the amount of rent to be paid by Sophie.

How does sharing a bedroom affect your rent and the specialist disability accommodation amount in your plan?

The rent you have to pay, and specialist disability accommodation amount we'll fund in your plan, depends on the situation of the other person who you want to share your bedroom.

Learn more about how much rent you have to pay to your specialist disability accommodation provider.

For more information about how much rent you and the other person will pay, and how much we'll fund for specialist disability accommodation, check out the specialist disability accommodation pricing arrangements.

Do you need to have the same provider for your other NDIS supports?

No. You can generally choose the provider you want for each of your NDIS supports within the budget in your plan. The specialist disability accommodation provider provides your home, not the support you receive living there.

Generally, you'll choose a different specialist disability accommodation provider to your other NDIS supports. That way, you pick the NDIS supports and providers that suit you best. The other NDIS supports you might need include:

- supported independent living
- individualised living options
- personal care supports
- support coordination.

Your specialist disability accommodation provider must let you change your providers for other NDIS supports at any time.

How can providers apply to enrol dwellings as specialist disability accommodation?

When someone builds a specialist disability accommodation property, we need to enrol it before it can be used as specialist disability accommodation.

How do providers apply to enrol dwellings?

Providers must apply to enrol dwellings online through the my NDIS provider portal. The specialist disability accommodation Design Standard is mandatory for all new specialist disability accommodation dwellings.

Before we can enrol specialist disability accommodation, providers must give us certain information.

For newly built specialist disability accommodation, providers must also give us a Design Standard certificate of compliance. This must be signed by an accredited specialist disability accommodation assessor who is not an employee, associate or otherwise contracted by the provider. Providers will also need to give us any other document it's reasonable for us to ask for.

Learn more about enrolling a dwelling.

When can a provider get Design Standard certification for the dwelling?

The specialist disability accommodation Design Standard is mandatory for all new specialist disability accommodation dwellings.

Accredited specialist disability accommodation assessors can certify that the dwelling meets the criteria of the Design Standard. The certification gives more confidence to providers that their dwelling meets the minimum design requirements in the Design Standard. It allows us to process dwelling enrolment applications faster. It also means it's less likely we'll need to ask for more information before we process an application.

All specialist disability accommodation dwellings must be certified at the final-as-built stage.

Dwellings may also be certified at the design stage.

Design Standard certification doesn't mean the dwelling will be enrolled as specialist disability accommodation. There are a number of requirements a provider and the dwelling must meet before we'll decide to enrol a dwelling.

Learn more about the specialist disability accommodation Design Standard.

Can providers apply to enrol dwellings containing ordinary bedrooms?

Participants can choose to live with people who aren't participants, or participants who aren't eligible for specialist disability accommodation.

Bedrooms for people who aren't participants don't need to meet the specialist disability accommodation Design Standard.

There are a few things to remember:

- We enrol dwellings based on the number of residents that the home can accommodate. This includes both participants and any other residents living at the dwelling, who may or may not have specialist disability accommodation in their plan. It also assumes one person per bedroom.
- Pricing for all enrolled dwellings is according to the specialist disability accommodation pricing arrangements.
- Entrance points and doors must comply with the specialist disability accommodation Design Standard.
- All areas of a dwelling that aren't bedrooms or private bathrooms, such as ensuites, are shared areas that need to comply with the specialist disability accommodation Design Standard.

If an application includes non-compliant bedrooms, providers also need to give us all of the following information:

- The number of non-compliant bedrooms.
- The number of people who will live in those bedrooms.
- A declaration that non-compliant bedrooms won't be used to house specialist disability accommodation eligible participants.

What happens after the provider applies to enrol a dwelling?

When will we decide to enrol a dwelling?

We usually process dwelling enrolment applications within 28 days of receiving a complete and correct application. This is as long as providers have included all the information and documents we need.

We aren't responsible for delays due to incorrect or incomplete applications.

If an application takes longer than 28 days to process because it's very complex, or for other reasons, we'll notify the provider.

When won't we enrol a dwelling?

We make a decision to enrol a dwelling when a provider submits a complete dwelling enrolment application to the NDIS, after the dwelling is built. We'll consider the information provided to us to decide if a dwelling meets the enrolment requirements. We won't enrol a dwelling if the provider and the dwelling don't meet the requirements for enrolment at the time of our decision. This applies even if there is a Design Standard certification or previous feedback from us or any other party.

We won't enrol a dwelling if it doesn't meet the specialist disability accommodation Design Standard, minimum requirements, density restrictions, or other parts of the Specialist Disability Accommodation Rules. If the dwelling is legacy stock and construction was completed between 1 December 2016 and 31 December 2018, we won't enrol the dwelling unless we are satisfied that:

- there is a large financial cost to the provider if the dwelling is not enrolled
- there is not enough alternative specialist disability accommodation in the same area as the dwelling.

If we don't have enough information to enrol a dwelling, we'll notify the provider. If the information isn't given to us, we won't enrol the dwelling.

If an application is incorrect or incomplete and a provider doesn't get back to us in a reasonable timeframe, we may decide the dwelling does not meet the requirements and won't enrol the dwelling. A provider can make a new application to enrol at any time.

If we decide not to enrol a dwelling, we'll let the provider know.

What are the conditions of enrolment for providers?

Providers must meet the conditions of enrolment for each dwelling.

The conditions are:

- The dwelling is kept in a good state of repair.
- The provider lets us know about any changes that impact the suitability of the dwelling.
- The provider gives us an independent certification of the enrolled dwelling if we ask for one.

Providers should use the my NDIS provider portal if they need to tell us anything about a specialist disability accommodation dwelling. If a provider can't use the portal, they should email us at SDAenrolment@ndis.gov.au.

How do we verify the information that providers give us about an enrolled dwelling?

During the life of an enrolled dwelling, we may ask a provider to arrange for another person to certify that the dwelling still meets the same conditions as when it was originally enrolled. We'll tell providers what qualifications the other person must have, and how independent they need to be from the provider.

Can we cancel the enrolment of a dwelling?

We may cancel a provider's enrolment if we become aware of any breach of the conditions of enrolment. This may include if:

- the dwelling isn't in good condition or appropriately maintained
- the provider submits false or misleading information in the dwelling enrolment application
- the provider refuses a reasonable request for information

- the provider doesn't get someone to certify any part of the enrolment application is still accurate after we ask them to
- the provider gives false certification of any part of the application.

We may also cancel a provider's enrolment if they don't tell us about any changes to enrolled dwellings within 5 business days. This may include when a provider doesn't tell us that:

- there's a change, or there will likely be a change, in the specialist disability accommodation design category or building type
- the dwelling is no longer suitable to be used for specialist disability accommodation
- the provider intends to cancel the dwelling's enrolment
- a participant says they're going to leave the specialist disability accommodation home
- a participant has been given notice to leave the specialist disability accommodation home
- there is a vacancy in the specialist disability accommodation home
- the provider wants to charge a participant rent above the maximum amount, without evidence from a qualified property valuer that the rent is fair and reasonable.

We'll give the specialist disability accommodation provider written notice before we cancel an enrolment. In the written notice, we ask the specialist disability accommodation provider to show they meet all conditions of enrolment. We give the provider at least 14 days to get back to us before we cancel the enrolment.

What if providers don't agree with a decision we make?

If we decide not to enrol a dwelling, the provider can ask for a review. They can also ask for a review if we decide to cancel a dwelling enrolment.

If a provider requests a review of these decisions, we'll follow the same process as other reviewable decisions. Learn more about reviewing our decisions.

How much will we fund for a specialist disability accommodation dwelling?

The maximum per participant amounts that providers can receive from NDIS funding for specialist disability accommodation are set out in the specialist disability accommodation pricing arrangements. Providers will receive the lower amount of:

- the maximum per participant amount the dwelling is enrolled for
- the specialist disability accommodation funding amount in the participant's plan.

How do providers use the specialist disability accommodation finder to list a vacancy?

Providers need to let us know if a specialist disability accommodation vacancy becomes available. They will need to let us know in writing within 5 business days. Providers can use the form on the specialist disability accommodation finder to let us know of any vacancies. Once providers let us know, we encourage them to list the vacancy so participants can find it.

The specialist disability accommodation finder also includes information about the locations and types of specialist disability accommodation that participants need.