

SDA PATHWAY AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NDIS PARTICIPANTS



Step 1: Housing goal

This might be something like “I want to move out of aged care”, “I want to live on my own” or “I want to explore my housing options”. The participant can word the goal as they wish, as long as it expresses that they want to change their current housing situation.

It is important to note that only a small proportion (around 6%) of NDIS participants will be eligible for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). To be eligible for SDA the participant must provide evidence to demonstrate that they have “*extreme functional impairment*” or “*very high support needs*” and “meet the SDA needs requirement”, as outlined in the [SDA rules](#). If this is a new housing goal, a participant may want to work with their support coordinator to determine what type of housing and support would best suit them.

This may include if the participant would like to live alone or with others, what area they would like to live in, and what type of housing (e.g. apartment, villa/duplex/townhouse, house). [The Housing Preference guide from Summer Foundation](#) can help support this conversation. Some NDIS plans include funding to explore housing options, which can include additional support coordination and capacity building supports (for allied health reports).



Step 2: Evidence for SDA

A support coordinator, alongside the NDIS participant, should then collect evidence of their housing and support needs. The NDIA does not specify what evidence is needed for an SDA application; however, the following pieces of evidence are commonly required as part of the Home and Living Supports Request:

1. [Participant Housing Statement](#)
2. Functional Capacity Assessment and Report: addressing SDA Rules for eligibility and needing SDA. This report is completed by an allied health professional, usually an Occupational Therapist.
3. Additional assessments: could include a Positive Behaviour Support Plan, or reports from other health professionals such as a psychologists; incident reports, carer statements, reports from service providers etc.

Getting the language right in these reports is crucial. This [Summer Foundation guide](#) provides guidance on what language to use.

TIMING: Often it can take **2–3 months** to collect suitable evidence. COVID-19 is adding to this challenge due to delays in accessing allied health professionals. If a person is in hospital, their hospital team may be able to carry out the necessary assessment for an SDA application.

A support coordinator, alongside the NDIS participant, should then fill out a [Home and Living Supports Request form](#).

The form can be submitted at any time. However, if the participant is seeking an unscheduled review to request SDA, a support coordinator, alongside the NDIS participant they are supporting, can submit a [change in circumstances](#) form with the Home and Living Request form. This may prompt faster action on the request as it will prompt a review meeting to be scheduled.

If you need to submit a Home and Living Form or are supporting someone to do this, [Summer Foundation's guide](#) on completing a Home and Living Supports Request Form provides more detail on this process.



Step 3: SDA Decision

Both the Home and Living Form and evidence for SDA should be sent to enquiries@ndis.gov.au (cc in the person's NDIS planner if known). It is also beneficial to support the NDIS participant to upload the Form and evidence to their [NDIS participant portal](#) should the submission be misplaced or delayed.

The NDIA will review the information provided in this form and supporting evidence provided to identify appropriate home and living supports, including SDA. The form will help the NDIA understand the participants daily support needs, housing history and ongoing requirements, among other things.

The Home and Living Panel reviews the SDA application. The local office does not make this decision.

These details should include design category, building type, number of bedrooms, number of residents, location, with or without On-site Overnight Assistance (OOA), and amount funded for.

If you receive news of the SDA approval verbally, ask that the NDIA send the decision in writing as soon as possible and ask for a reference number to ensure you can follow up if needed. If NDIS decides not to fund SDA, or not to fund the design category or building type requested, you can ask the NDIA to [review their decision](#).

See next page for a full timeline.

Though this is a complex process, there are only 4 main questions that need to be answered:

1. Is the participant eligible for SDA?
2. What design category does the person need and why?
3. What building type, number of residents (or sole occupancy) will meet the person's needs and preferences?
4. What supports will the person need in their new home?

SDA PATHWAY AND APPROVAL PROCESS TIMELINE

SDA Eligibility

See Steps 1-3 on the previous page.

For more information, this resource from Housing Hub is a step-by-step guide through the SDA process

Housing Supports

Participants with very high support needs may require funding for support in the home. This support is commonly called Supported Independent Living (SIL) or Independent Living Options (ILO), though participants also use other support models. Most often, an application for housing supports cannot be progressed until an SDA outcome is clear.

TIMING: Often an application for housing supports can take 2-5 months for an outcome.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology - NDIS participants may also need assistive technology (AT) before moving into an SDA property. AT commonly include hoists, beds and home automation devices.

TIMING: An AT decision can take 2-4 months following the SDA/housing supports outcome.

EXAMPLE: High physical support SDA comes 'ready' for ceiling hoists and home automation. However ceiling hoist rails and home automation devices often need to be funded separately as AT. This enables the opportunity for customisation to the person's needs.

