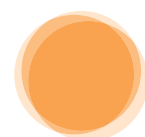




EXPLORING HOUSING OPTIONS PACKAGE (EHOP)

A GUIDE FOR NDIS PARTICIPANTS & PROVIDERS

JULY 2017



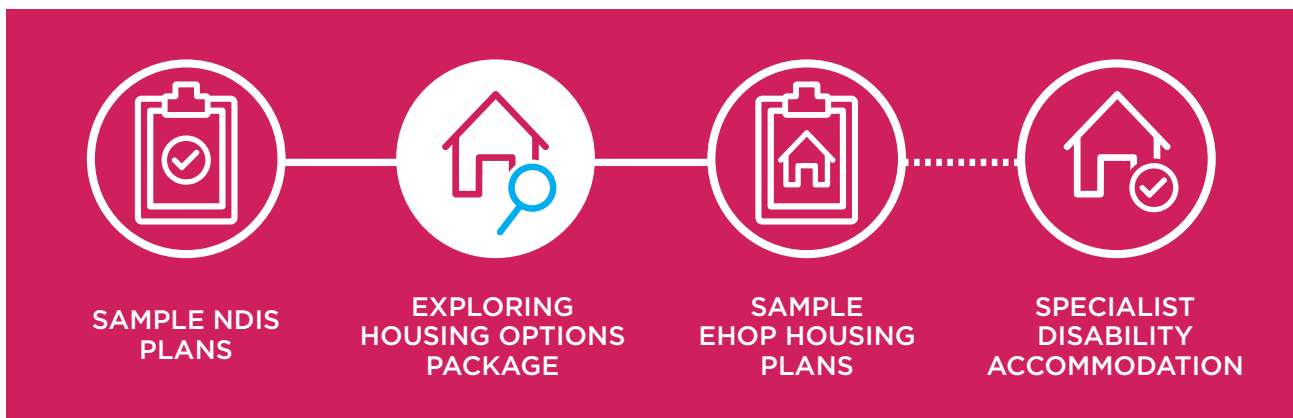
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide explains how to work out if you need an Exploring Housing Options Package (EHOP) in your NDIS Plan, how to go about getting an EHOP and how to make the most of an EHOP if you have one.

This guide forms part of a series of information resources that the Summer Foundation has prepared about accessing housing; it is designed for younger people with complex needs, their families and supporters, NDIS support coordinators and providers.



THIS EXPLORING HOUSING OPTIONS PACKAGE (EHOP) GUIDE IS IN THREE PARTS:

- **Part 1** – explains what an EHOP package is, how to work out if you need an EHOP and how to go about getting one in your NDIS Plan
 - **Part 2** – for people who have an EHOP, it explains how to choose an EHOP support coordinator and how to make the most of your EHOP
 - **Part 3** – explains what an EHOP Housing Plan is and what it should include
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PART 1: EXPLORING HOUSING OPTIONS PACKAGE (EHOP)

What is an Exploring Housing Options Package (EHOP)?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has introduced the EHOP to give NDIS participants an opportunity to explore their housing options.

An EHOP is an amount of money that can be used to investigate other housing options. It is made up of:

- up to 75 hours of support coordination to develop your EHOP Housing Plan – including up to 20 hours that can be used to contract allied health assessments
- up to 50 hours of allied health assessments

If you're not happy with where you live, it's important that you talk about this at your NDIS planning meeting. At the planning meeting, you will be asked to identify goals for the next 12 months. The NDIS will then provide you with a plan, which includes a budget for reasonable and necessary supports to assist you to reach those goals.

If 'Explore more appropriate housing options' is listed as one of your goals for the next 12 months, then an EHOP may be included in your NDIS Plan.



Housing and support under the NDIS

The NDIS does not own or operate any housing, but helps people with disability to find housing that supports their independence through an EHOP. The NDIS can also fund home modifications or, for a small number of participants, Specialist Disability Accommodation payments ([🌐 summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide](https://summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide)).

The NDIS provides funding for reasonable and necessary support to people with a disability to reach their goals and live an ordinary life. For most people, 'an ordinary life' means leaving their parents' family home as a young adult and either living in a shared house with friends, on their own or with a partner and children. But without access to appropriate housing and support in the community, many people with disability live with their parents later into adulthood, or in a group home or residential aged care.

An important change under the NDIS is that housing and support are considered separately. The idea is that you are able to change your support provider without having to move to a new house. This provides NDIS participants with more choice and control over where they live and the services they use.

How do I know if I already have an EHOP?

If you are an NDIS participant with a plan and you answer 'Yes' to any of the questions below, you may already have an EHOP under 'Capacity Building Supports' in your NDIS Plan.

- Is it time to move out of your parents' home?
- Is your current housing putting you and/or your carers at risk?
- Are you living with ageing parents?
- Do you currently live in a group home and want to leave?
- Are you stuck in hospital with no access to appropriate housing?
- Are you currently living in residential aged care?

It's possible that you have EHOP funding and you don't know it, because an EHOP is not always clearly labeled in NDIS Plans. If you aren't sure, please discuss with your support coordinator.

The Summer Foundation have put together a number of sample NDIS Plans that give examples of what might be in a plan. Sample NDIS Plan 2 is for a person who has an EHOP:

[🌐 summerfoundation.org.au/sample-ndis-plans](https://summerfoundation.org.au/sample-ndis-plans)



Do I need an EHOP?

An EHOP is for people who need to move house and where their disability makes finding a new place to live difficult, so not everyone will get an EHOP.

If you need to move house, list this as a goal at your planning meeting.

How do I get an EHOP in my NDIS plan?

If you're preparing for your NDIS planning meeting, or you need a plan review because your current housing is putting you at risk, making you unhappy, making it hard for you to participate in family and community life and/or employment, you should make 'Explore more appropriate housing options' one of the goals in your NDIS Plan. [ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances)

To assist you to reach this goal, your plan may include an Exploring Housing Options Package (EHOP). The EHOP provides funding for you to work with an EHOP support coordinator and allied health professionals to explore your housing options.

Your EHOP support coordinator will write up this work in an EHOP Housing Plan. Your EHOP Housing Plan includes your housing needs, your housing goals and your allied health assessments. For more information on EHOP Housing Plans, see **Part 3** of this guide.

What does an EHOP include?

An EHOP is made up of two separate funding items:

EHOP PART A: SUPPORT COORDINATION

An EHOP can provide up to 75 Hours of support coordination. Your EHOP support coordinator should allow around 20 hours to identify suitable allied health practitioners to source and implement specialist assessments. These assessments will help you to work out the home modifications or specialist housing design features required to support your independence.

Your EHOP support coordinator will use the remaining 55 hours to work with you to define your housing preferences, look for appropriate housing and write your EHOP Housing Plan. For information on choosing your EHOP support coordinator and making the most of your EHOP, see **Part 2** of this guide.



EHOP PART B: ALLIED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

In addition to the support coordination, an EHOP provides up to 50 hours of therapy support for you. This is to pay for suitably qualified allied health practitioners to complete a range of assessments with you. Allied health practitioners include:

- Psychologist
- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Disability specialist
- Acquired brain injury specialist
- Rehabilitation counsellor
- Social worker
- Nurse

These assessments will provide the NDIS with detailed information on your physical, cognitive and functional support needs. These assessments will help you, your EHOP support coordinator and the NDIS to understand how the following supports might maximise your independence:

- Capacity building activities
- Assistive technology
- Home modifications
- Specialist housing design features

The Summer Foundation's EHOP Assessments Guide explains the types of allied health assessments that might best determine how the NDIS can maximise your independence and housing options: summerfoundation.org.au/ehop-assessments-guide



PART 2: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EHOP

The EHOP is a 'capacity building support'. Capacity building supports are reduced as your capacity increases, so it's important that you work with your support coordinator to make the most of your EHOP funding.

What is an EHOP support coordinator and how should I choose one?

If you haven't had a planning meeting with the NDIS, think about who you would like to work with to develop your EHOP Housing Plan. This person is called your EHOP support coordinator.

Is there a person or organisation that you have worked with before? Or is there someone with specialist housing knowledge that you would like to work with? If not, ask around – go to workshops and forums, or look at online forums to find someone you would like to work with.

DO I HAVE TO USE MY GENERALIST SUPPORT COORDINATOR AS MY EHOP SUPPORT COORDINATOR?

No. If you don't tell your NDIS planner who you would like as your support coordinator for your NDIS Plan, the NDIS will allocate you someone. We call this person your generalist support coordinator. Your generalist support coordinator will help you understand and implement your NDIS Plan. They will:

- Help you set up your myGov account
- Help you access your NDIS participant portal, called myplace.

The myplace portal allows you to:

- make service bookings
- submit payment requests
- monitor funding
- provide feedback

Your generalist support coordinator may not have any relevant knowledge and experience in housing and so you may want to choose a different person with the right skills to be your EHOP support coordinator.



CAN I CHOOSE ANYONE TO BE MY EHOP SUPPORT COORDINATOR?

There are some rules about who you can choose as your EHOP support coordinator:

- **If your NDIS Plan is managed by the NDIS** you will need to choose your EHOP support coordinator from the list of NDIS-registered support coordinators and pay them at the rate advised in the NDIS Pricing & Payment guide (available here: [ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-and-payment](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-and-payment)). The list of NDIS-registered support coordinators can be found here: [ndis.gov.au/document/finding-and-engaging-providers/find-registered-service-providers.html](https://www.ndis.gov.au/document/finding-and-engaging-providers/find-registered-service-providers.html)
- **If a plan manager manages your NDIS Plan**, you don't have to choose a registered support coordinator, but you do have to pay them at the hourly rate set down in the NDIS Pricing & Payment guide.
- **If you self manage your NDIS Plan** you don't have to employ an NDIS-registered support coordinator, or pay them at the hourly rate set down in the NDIS price guide. Choosing this option would allow you to employ a person with knowledge and experience in the housing sector to be your EHOP support coordinator.

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT EHOP SUPPORT COORDINATOR?

The person you choose to be your EHOP support coordinator should know about accessible housing and understand what types of housing will meet your specific needs.

The following section contains a list of questions that will help you to learn about the support coordinator's housing knowledge and approach. Use this information when you decide whether to enter a service agreement with them to be your EHOP support coordinator.

The answers to these questions may also give you important information about whether the person:

- Understands your needs
- Listens to you and will explain things clearly to you
- Will help you to think about what housing and support options might suit you
- Is a good problem solver
- Is able to talk to people in government and help you to get things done
- Can negotiate well with others on your behalf
- Is someone you can work with



QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL EHOP SUPPORT COORDINATOR

Tell me about your experience with:

- Working alongside a person with a disability to navigate a large government department to get a successful outcome. What do you think were the critical ingredients of securing a good outcome?
- How the NDIS is improving the lives of people with disability?
- Staying up to date with opportunities for participants under the NDIS?
- Building the capacity of NDIS participants and their families to find appropriate housing? Your knowledge of specialist disability accommodation (SDA) under the NDIS?
- Recording and managing your time working on Exploring Housing Options Packages (EHOP)?
- Managing conflicts of interest. For example, if you are registered to provide supported disability accommodation (SDA), supported independent living (SIL), as well as being an EHOP support coordinator, how do you manage this potential conflict?

Exploring mainstream housing options

Your allied health assessments will be used to determine the most suitable housing options for you. Depending on your situation, this may mean increased personal support, capacity building supports, assistive technology and/or home modifications that would allow you to return to your own home, or to live with your family.

If you are currently living in residential aged care or in hospital and you can't return home, you will be expected to explore mainstream housing options including:

- Public housing
- Community/social housing
- Private rental – including living with peers who don't have a disability



IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS MAINSTREAM HOUSING

Your EHOP Housing Plan is the pathway to test your eligibility for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) payments.

Your EHOP support coordinator will document the outcome of your search for mainstream housing options in your EHOP Housing Plan. If your allied health assessments confirm that you cannot access mainstream housing due to your extreme functional impairment or very high support needs, your EHOP support coordinator may recommend that the NDIS provide you with SDA payments.

ACCESSING SPECIALIST DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION (SDA) PAYMENTS

SDA payments are for the costs of housing for NDIS participants who have an 'extreme functional impairment' or 'very high support needs' requiring specialist housing support; SDA payments are paid directly to the SDA provider. (To understand what the NDIS means by these terms, see our guide to SDA payments: [🌐 summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide](https://summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide)

Ultimately, the NDIS will use your EHOP Housing Plan to decide whether you require SDA and only around 6% of all NDIS participants will be eligible for SDA payments. So it's important that your EHOP Housing Plan provides relevant evidence of your housing needs and preferences, so that the NDIS can make a decision about whether SDA is 'reasonable and necessary' for you.

For more information on SDA payments, refer to this guide: [🌐 summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide](https://summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide)

Information in your allied health assessments may be used by your EHOP support coordinator to recommend which of the following SDA housing design categories would maximise your independence and community and economic participation:

- Improved Livability
- Fully Accessible
- Robust
- High Physical Support

See Information on SDA Design Categories for detailed information about these categories: [🌐 summerfoundation.org.au/sda-design-categories](https://summerfoundation.org.au/sda-design-categories)



If you require SDA, your EHOP Housing Plan should include your preferred location and dwelling type (such as house, villa, duplex, townhouse, apartment etc). See the **Part 3** of this guide for more information about the work that your EHOP provider should undertake.

WHAT'S NEXT?

When your EHOP Housing Plan is complete (or you have located appropriate mainstream housing), you should contact the NDIS and request a review of your NDIS Plan based on your change of circumstances. The process for requesting a review of your NDIS Plan is explained here: [🌐 **ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances**](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances)



PART 3: YOUR EHOP HOUSING PLAN

What is an EHOP Housing Plan?

An EHOP Housing Plan is a document that is prepared by your EHOP support coordinator, to help the NDIS understand your housing needs. It will bring together information about:

- You, your goals and hopes for the future
- Your work, hobbies and community involvement
- Your housing history, current housing arrangements and your search for mainstream housing
- Your disability and support needs and your assessed housing needs – including a recommendation for specialist disability accommodation (SDA), if appropriate
- A Life Transition Plan, which explains the supports you'll need to successfully move into your new housing
- If you are considering moving to a more independent housing situation, your EHOP Housing Plan will also include a Skill Development Plan, which explains the steps you'll take to get ready for living more independently

The information provided by you and your allied health assessments in your EHOP Housing Plan will help the NDIS make a decision about your reasonable and necessary requirement for:

- Capacity building supports
- Person-to-person supports
- Assistance with daily living
- Tenancy supports
- Assistive technology supports
- Home modifications
- Specialist housing design features that would support you to reach your goals and maximise your independence, including SDA payments – for information on SDA payments, see our separate guide: summerfoundation.org.au/sda-payments-guide



How to prepare your EHOP Housing Plan

When finished, your EHOP Housing Plan should include all the information that has helped you to find mainstream housing, or that the NDIS needs to determine your eligibility for specialist disability accommodation (SDA).

We have developed tools to help you and your EHOP support coordinator prepare your EHOP Housing Plan:

- My Housing Preferences, for you to record important information about your housing preferences summerfoundation.org.au/my-housing-preferences (the information you include in this document will also be useful for you when you're applying for a housing vacancy).
- Sample EHOP Housing Plans summerfoundation.org.au/ehop-housing-plan

If you want to move back home

If you are in hospital or residential aged care, and the information in your EHOP Housing Plan details how you could return to live in your own home with home modifications, you should request the necessary home modifications at your NDIS Plan review.



It is important to note that you can access NDIS funding for complex home modifications, or SDA payments, but not both for the same home.

Looking for appropriate housing

Your support coordinator will use the information in your 'My Housing Preferences' and allied health assessments to help you to look for suitable mainstream housing. If you find a mainstream housing option that will suit your needs, then you may need to request an NDIS Plan review to help you transition into your new home and to modify your capacity building and core supports to suit. You can request a Plan Review on the basis of a change in circumstances ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances

If you require SDA, then based on the information in your allied health assessments, your EHOP Housing Plan should recommend the SDA Housing Design Category that is appropriate to your needs. For more information on SDA Housing Design Categories, see our separate guide: summerfoundation.org.au/sda-design-categories



When your EHOP Housing Plan is complete

When your EHOP Housing Plan is complete (or you have located appropriate mainstream housing), your EHOP support coordinator should contact the NDIS and request a review of your NDIS Plan based on your change of circumstances. The process for requesting a review of your NDIS Plan is explained here: [🌐 ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/understanding-your-plan-and-supports/change-circumstances)

WHAT THE NDIS MAY FUND IN YOUR NDIS PLAN

The NDIS uses three categories to describe the supports it funds in your NDIS Plan:

- Capacity building – activities intended to improve your ability to do things and increase your independence
- Capital – permanent changes to your environment to make things easier for you, such as assistive technologies and home modifications or SDA housing
- Core supports – assistance with day-to-day living

On the basis of the information in your EHOP Housing Plan, the NDIS may fund:

- Your Skill Development Plan, including assistive technologies and capacity building activities to increase your ability to live in mainstream housing.
- Home modifications
- Your Life Transition Plan
- Assistance with daily living and/or supports to sustain your informal supports (such as short term accommodation or assistance, or supports in the home)
- More support for self care and day-to-day activities, to ensure that your current housing arrangements don't break down
- Support coordination and other appropriate supports, such as support to make day-to-day decisions and/or tenancy support
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) payments

As mentioned above, the NDIS may fund home modifications, or SDA payments, but not both for the same home.



WHAT IF I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THE NDIS PLAN REVIEW?




If you are unhappy with the outcome of your NDIS Plan review, you can ask the NDIS to review its decision. For example, if your EHOP Housing Plan recommended SDA, but your NDIS Plan provides funding for supports to help you access a mainstream housing option, you may want to ask the NDIS to review its decision. The process is explained here:



[🌐 ndis.gov.au/participants/reasonable-and-necessary-supports/decision-review/application-review-reviewable-decision](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/reasonable-and-necessary-supports/decision-review/application-review-reviewable-decision)

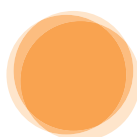
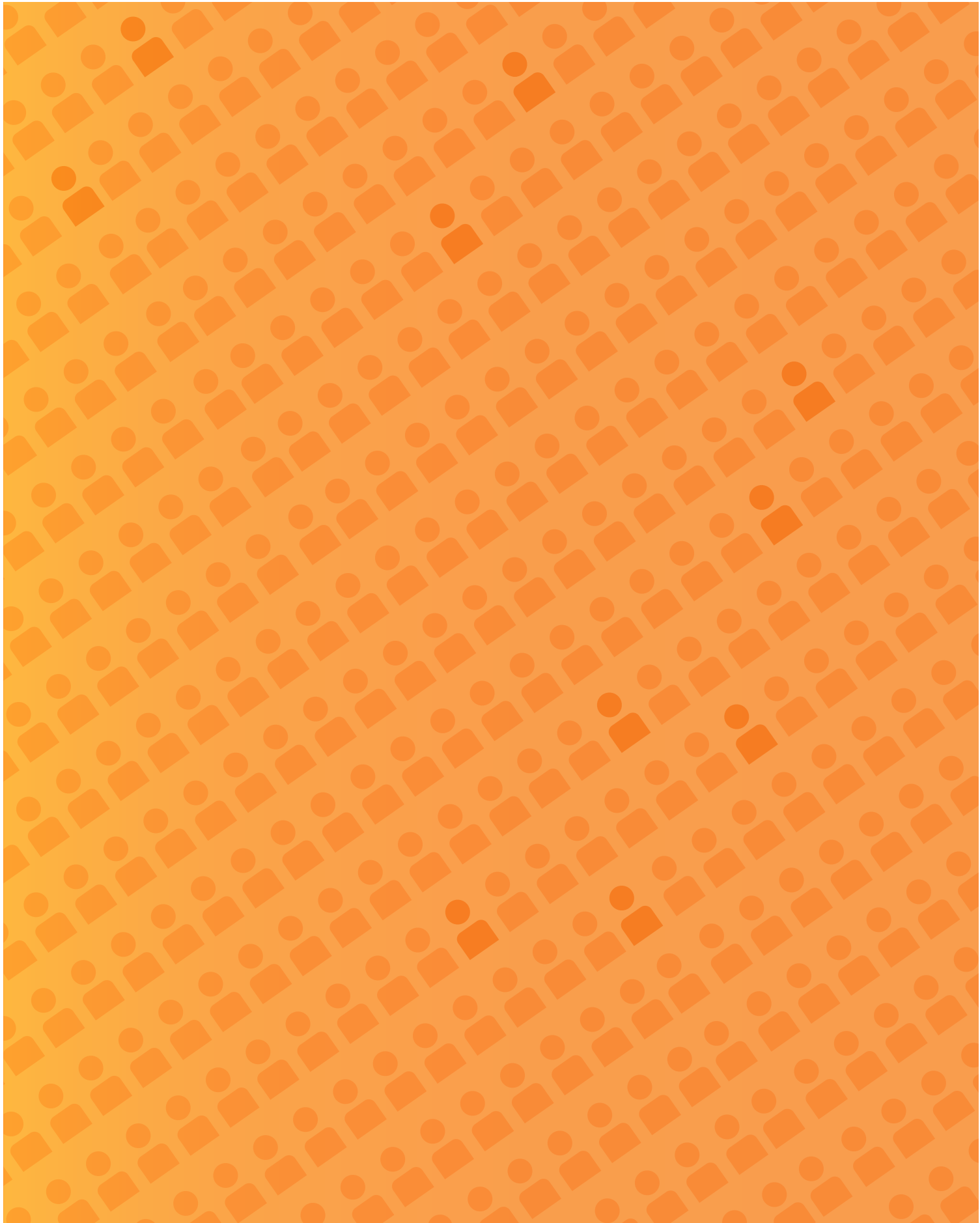
There are a number of organisations that can help you through the process of asking the NDIS to review its decision: [🌐 disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/](https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/)

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