



Annual Public Forum 2021

Q & A resource

NDIS Q&A (Processes, Plans, Funding)

1. Some younger people are in residential aged care (RAC) because they have complex health needs and require a high level of care. What can be done to overcome this?

The NDIS can fund support coordination or specialist support coordination to help a younger person in RAC access mainstream and NDIS services.

An experienced support coordinator or specialist support coordinator can help a younger person living in RAC navigate the NDIS, health, housing and aged care systems. Sometimes called the NDIS and mainstream interface, each system has responsibilities to support and/or provide services to the person with disability. These responsibilities are outlined in the [applied principles and tables of support](#). This is an intergovernmental agreement that defines the services and supports funded by the NDIS and other systems. Additionally the NDIS can fund some disability related health supports including:

- Dysphagia supports
- Respiratory supports
- Nutrition supports
- Diabetes management supports
- Continence supports
- Wound and pressure care supports
- Podiatry supports
- Epilepsy supports

A support coordinator or specialist support coordinator can help bring together mainstream and community services and NDIS supports so a person can live well in the community.

2. There are significant gaps of knowledge and experience in support coordinators regarding sourcing appropriate support funding and finding suitable housing options. What is being done to address this problem?

Support coordinators and allied health professionals play a vital role in enabling and supporting people with complex support needs to live well in the community. The Summer Foundation's [UpSkill program](#) provides professional development to support coordinators and allied health professionals through [training](#), [information and resources](#) and an online [community of practice](#).

UpSkill has recently released the following resources:

- [Best practice podcast series](#). This podcast series features conversations with support coordinators who share their experiences of supporting people with disability and working alongside other sectors such as health, aged care and housing.
- [Good practice guide for support coordinators working with people with complex support needs](#). This guide takes a rights-based approach to supporting people with complex support needs and includes important tools and resources for support coordinators.
- [Choosing a support coordinator](#). This booklet for NDIS participants includes ideas for important things a person with disability might want to know and questions to ask when choosing a support coordinator.

3. NDIS planners in the Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) team play an important role in supporting younger people to exit aged care. What are the key activities YPIRAC planners are doing to support this?

NDIS YPIRAC planners work closely with the participant, their family and nominees/guardians to develop their NDIS plan to support achievement of the participant's goals. Planning conversations with participants include discussions about age-appropriate home and living options.

These discussions can encourage participants to think about alternatives to aged care, and to consider the possibilities of a life outside of RAC. Planners explain the YPIRAC Strategy to participants and the various options that can be explored with them. Planners are cognisant of the wide range of goals that participants may have, and that having a goal to leave aged care can take time to develop.

For some participants their goal to leave aged care is clear, whereas others may be unsure although open to exploring options. The planner's role is to ensure the participant is informed

and aware of their options and can develop a home and living goal that aligns with their needs and preferences. YPIRAC who do not wish to leave RAC can be given additional supports to engage in community activities. This could include [short term accommodation](#) and assistance to build new skills and try new things.

In certain circumstances a participant may be funded supports in addition to those that all aged care residents would normally receive. This can include additional daily living or personal care support. For more information read [supports for participants in residential aged care facilities](#).

The key activities of YPIRAC planners are to ensure participants are informed about their options and to develop a plan that supports achievement of their goals through reasonable and necessary funding. YPIRAC planners assist with plan implementation and connection to a support coordinator, and conduct regular check-ins with participants, support coordinators and/or nominees to monitor progress towards achieving the participants' goals.

Support coordinators have an important role sharing information on housing options with younger people in aged care. Sharing resources such as [Moving out of a nursing home](#) and attending [Housing Options Workshops](#) helps younger people in RAC understand the housing and support available to them in the community.

4. How can NDIS participants better understand what supports are reasonable and necessary?

The NDIS can only fund [reasonable and necessary supports](#) that are related to a participant's disability and are linked to their goals. When a plan is developed, the NDIS planner will discuss with the participant, their needs, what supports will best support them and review the evidence that has been provided by health professionals.

The funding in an NDIS plan should support a person to achieve their goals and access the support needed to live well. Funded supports take into account any mainstream supports available (health/education etc) and also informal supports (informal arrangements that are part of family life or natural connections with friends and community services).

It is important that younger people in RAC are provided with appropriate supports to enable them to actively participate in the community. The NDIS has [published information](#) about how it makes funding decisions, including the importance of goals and meeting the reasonable and necessary criteria. Refer to the NDIS website's: Reviewing your plan and Goals and Operational Guidelines.

If a participant does not agree with an NDIS decision they can ask for a [review](#) of that decision. This is called an 'internal review'. If a participant is still not happy with a decision after an internal review, they can request an external review. A participant can also ask for the information the NDIA used in making the decision. This is called a [participant information access request](#).

5. Navigating NDIS systems and processes is complex. What can be put in place to make processes easier and more efficient for NDIS participants?

The Summer Foundation's Housing Hub team is working hard to help NDIS participants, families and their support teams to understand their housing options. The Housing Hub has a number of [resources](#) that can help participants and their supporters to understand the process, how to start the discussion and application process with their NDIS planner and how to start searching for housing. The Housing Hub team runs [Housing Options Sessions](#) to help people through this process and a series of [self paced online learning](#). They have also created a resource that talks about all the [housing options](#) available in each state, so people can consider which one is right for them.

Through quarterly data sharing arrangements, the Department of Health provides information to the NDIA about younger people living in aged care, which enables the NDIA to proactively reach out to NDIS participants.

6. The latest NDIS quarterly report notes that about 20% of younger people living in RAC are not NDIS participants. What is being done to ensure that younger people are being assisted to access the NDIS if they are eligible?

Where the younger person is not an NDIS participant the Ability First Australia, System Coordinator program and/or the NDIA can assist them to understand the information required and to complete documentation for an NDIS access request. Residents who meet eligibility requirements for the NDIS are then connected with an NDIS YPIRAC planner to develop their NDIS plan. Residents who do not meet NDIS access are supported by Ability First Australia system coordinators to connect to mainstream and community disability, health, housing and social support services.

The NDIA recently centralised the hospital discharge team and YPIRAC team to ensure consistency and efficiencies for decision-making. The NDIA also offers support through Hospital Liaison Officers (HLOs) to assist prospective and existing participants to manage a range of requirements to support their discharge from hospital.

The NDIS is working to give participants more options for how they can set up funded support in their home. NDIS participants are encouraged to complete a Home and Living support application if they have a goal related to Home and Living supports that is not able to be met through mainstream, informal, community or related supports: [Home and Living Supports Request Form](#). Participants wanting to apply for specialist disability accommodation (SDA) housing can complete the Home and Living request form. They might need to be assisted by their support coordinator or allied health professional to complete the form and provide the required level of evidence. It is critical that relevant evidence demonstrating SDA eligibility is provided to ensure that SDA and supports are funded at the right level for the participant.

The NDIA will review the information provided in this form and any other supporting documentation provided. The NDIA will use this information to determine eligibility and need for SDA housing as well as other supports that may assist the participant to pursue their goals.

7. What should an NDIS participant be looking for in a support coordinator?

When choosing a support coordinator it is important a participant can make an informed decision to choose a support coordinator who has the skills and knowledge they need to help achieve their goals. This might be knowledge about a particular disability or skills and experience in working with people in a particular situation.

The Summer Foundation resource, [Choosing a support coordinator](#), can help participants navigate the process.

The Summer Foundation's UpSkill program has launched the [UpSkill Directory](#), where participants can search for a support coordinator or allied health professional who has experience in their area of need. All providers listed on the directory have participated in UpSkill training on topics such as how to help navigate the NDIS, specialist disability accommodation, housing, leaving aged care and leaving hospital.

8. How can family and support workers best assist a younger person who wants to leave aged care?

There are some key actions to follow to support the transition out of aged care, these include:

- Listening to the participant, their goals, needs and preferences
- Taking a person-centred approach to exploring housing and home and living supports
- Thinking beyond what is available right now to what could be possible so a person can live well in the community
- Understanding the process of moving out and what steps need to be taken to move
- Building the person's and their family's resilience for when things don't go to plan
- Managing expectations about how long this might take particularly in thin markets
- Building a strong team - participant, family, support coordinator, allied health, support providers who understand their role and responsibilities - to support the participant achieve their housing goals

Other things to consider include exploring where to find the right support and other resources that might help the person. The following resources are a great start:

- [Moving out of a nursing home](#)
- [Helping participants transition from aged care](#)
- [Housing Options](#) events
- SDA Housing Advice Phone Line: 1300 61 64 63

A support coordinator can help a participant to explore and connect with other home, living and community support options outside of residential aged care. People can also link with specialist YPIRAC planners.

9. What are some of the main barriers to NDIS participants securing SDA funding?

Only a small number of NDIS participants will be eligible for SDA. Most participants will be expected to live in mainstream housing. That is the type of housing that most Australians typically live in. NDIS participants who are eligible for SDA have either 'very high support needs' or an 'extreme functional impairment', and cannot live in mainstream housing.

The SDA Rules (2020) are special laws to determine who gets funded for SDA. This makes the process very complicated. Support coordinators and allied health professionals who understand the SDA Rules can help NDIS participants explore their housing options. They can assist participants to gather the information and evidence that demonstrates they meet SDA eligibility.

The Summer Foundation's UpSkill program offers training to skill up support coordinators and allied health professionals on the evidence required for SDA options. Support coordinators and allied health professionals skilled in SDA can address the barriers faced by NDIS participants who are eligible for SDA. To find out more about UpSkill training click [here](#).

10. Where can people get advice about SDA?

The Summer Foundation has a range of SDA-related resources on its [website](#). You can find information about SDA on the [Housing Hub website](#), including [useful videos](#). Contact the SDA Housing Advice line on 1300 61 64 63 or reach out using the [contact us form](#). The Summer Foundation UpSkill program runs a range of useful events aimed at improving the knowledge of people working in the disability sector. Learn more about UpSkill [here](#).