

# Host Living Arrangements

Information for participants, providers and hosts  
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## Acknowledgement

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) would like to recognise the contribution of Shared Lives Plus UK and Western Australia Individualised Services (WaiS) to this handbook.



# 1. About this Handbook

Normal – The purpose of this Handbook is to provide information to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and providers about Host living arrangements.

This Handbook gives information on:

- what a Host living arrangement is (and what it isn't)
- the roles in a Host arrangement and their responsibilities
- how to create a safe and successful Host living arrangement
- links to useful information

More information about [Individualised Living Options \(ILO\) is available on the NDIS website.](#)



## 2. What is a Host living arrangement?

A Host living arrangement is where an adult participant lives with a non-related person or family (Host) of their choice, who provides support to the participant.

The Host provides disability-related support, household assistance, emotional support and a family environment for an agreed payment from the participant which is funded through their NDIS plan.

Host arrangements are a form of support where a participant gets to share their life with the Host(s). The Host supports the participant to lead an active life in their local community, develop meaningful friendships and achieve their goals.

Host arrangements may also include short breaks such as weekends and holidays for the Host.

While there is an agreement in place to outline roles and expectations, the participant and the Host are free to decide at any time that they no longer want to live together.

Host arrangements are generally for participants aged over 18 years with moderate to high support needs.

Support levels vary across the day, week or year according to the natural rhythm of the participant and the family.

### **Case Study: Lyle, Alice and Joe**

Lyle has lived with Alice and Joe for 5 years in a Host arrangement. Alice and Joe provide Lyle with support to manage his personal care, medical and nutritional needs. Both Alice and Joe have completed training to do this.

Lyle attends a day program, and spends time each day at activities in their community, supported by a disability worker he pays for using his NDIS funding.

Alice and Joe make sure that Lyle is ready each day by preparing his food and drinks so they are easy for him to swallow, undertaking his personal care and grooming and making sure Lyle has his communication board with him. Alice and Joe make sure that Lyle can sleep comfortably and reduce any pressure on his body by turning him during the night, using the hoist they have learned to use through their training.

Alice and Joe communicate with Lyle through his communication board. They regularly ask if he is happy with his living arrangement, and encourage him to raise issues and new ideas with them.

“Lyle is very close to his mum, brothers and extended family in the country. We help him connect with them through FaceTime and we really enjoy staying with them each year when we take Lyle back home to visit,” — Joe.

Lyle is also supported by Gavin and Clare who are secondary hosts. Lyle spends one night a week with Gavin and Clare which enables Lyle to have a broader network of support and offers regular breaks for Alice and Joe.

## 3. Principles of a Host arrangement

**People with disability have a right to lead rich and rewarding lives within their chosen community.**

### Personal growth

People with disability will continue to grow, learn and change throughout their life and Hosts play a key role in promoting this development.

### Family involvement

Families are entitled to continue meaningful relationships with their family members while in a Host arrangement.

### Privacy and security

The Host's home should offer a safe and secure environment that provides a base for the participant to develop relationships, intimacy and express their individuality through flexibility and choice.

### Community inclusion

Inclusion is more than just living in a house. Host arrangements enable meaningful participation in community life and the development of diverse social networks.

### Respect

Maintaining respectful and constructive relationships with everyone in the home to best support the person to live their life well.



## 4. Roles in a Host arrangement

Host arrangements are about sharing your life in a safe and secure home environment. Both participants and Hosts have experiences to contribute, offering enriching experiences and enhanced quality of life to each other.

Just as every home and family is unique, each Host arrangement is different and will represent the preferences of both the participant and Host.

The participant and the Host may share some interests and social activities. They will also have jobs, interests and social activities they do independently of each other.

Participants living in a Host arrangement will still have access to their informal supports, provided by their friends and families, mainstream services, provided by the health, education and other systems, and paid disability support, which may also be funded by the NDIS.

### Participant

A Host arrangement allows a participant to live in a secure home environment and share their life with their Host. Living in a home improves the participant's sense of connection and belonging to their community. In return, a participant will bring companionship and their own set of skills and interests to the home.

The participant may also have other supports to assist them to get out in the community and when the Host is unavailable or has planned breaks.

Participants who want to change their living arrangement can speak to family, friends, or people who have already experienced a similar living arrangement. There are also organisations with experience delivering these types of arrangements that can offer advice.

Once a participant has decided on a Host arrangement as their preferred option, they will need to find and work with a registered provider to implement the arrangement.

### Host

The Host will welcome the participant as an included and valued family member. The Host will be supported by a provider to deliver a nurturing, caring and safe home.

Hosts provide support and share their home, family life and community connections with a participant. The Host may be a single person, couple or family. Their home may be the participant's primary residence, or the person may come for regular short stays.

Hosts come from all walks of life and open their homes to participants with a diverse range of care and support needs. They bring a wealth of life experience to ensure a warm, welcoming and supportive environment.

The Host is committed to sharing their home with the participant who becomes a valued, contributing member of the household. The Host is also committed to building a personal, mutually respectful and nurturing relationship with the person, providing support with the participant's daily life and care as required.

Hosts go through a rigorous selection process and matching criteria.

## Provider\*

Providers do a number of things that are crucial to the success of a Host arrangement, including:

- **allocating** a dedicated staff member to coordinate each Host arrangement
- **recruiting** prospective Hosts and managing the application process
- **screening** Hosts, including doing criminal and medical checks, personal and professional reference checks
- **undertaking home assessments** to ensure a safe and welcoming environment is offered to participants
- **facilitate meetings** between the participant and Host to spend time getting to know each other before they decide if they would like to trial living together
- **completing the ILO Service Proposal** which will be considered by the NDIA to determine reasonable and necessary funding
- **establishing an agreement** with the participant and the Host about how the arrangement will work
- **working with the participant** to transition to the new living arrangement and
- **finding alternative living and support arrangements** when or if an arrangement ends
- **ongoing monitoring and safeguarding** of the Host arrangement, especially when the participant's or Host's needs change
- **supporting decision making and problem solving** throughout the arrangement, including resolving conflict
- **making payments** to the Host
- **maintaining regular contact** with the participant and Host, providing guidance and support along the way.

Host arrangements are person-centered and focus on supporting people with a disability to live their life in the way they want. Becoming a Host provider gives an organisation an opportunity to diversify their services.

Organisations that become Host providers can offer services which align with their values by supporting adults with disabilities to reach their full potential and to lead full lives, as part of their local communities. Host arrangements enable organisations to offer contemporary forms of support built on the foundations of the social model of disability.

## Secondary Hosts

Over the life of a Host arrangement, a Host may go on holidays, become unwell, need respite or the participant may wish to visit family or friends that live in other places regularly or irregularly. In these cases, a Secondary Host could become involved.

Secondary Hosts undergo the same rigorous selection process and matching criteria as Hosts, but only share their homes and their lives for short periods of time. As an alternative to a Secondary Host, the participant and provider might consider respite, or having support workers stay in the home to provide care while the Host is unavailable.

\*This is the role of the provider implementing the host arrangement. If the ILO is plan managed, the Plan Management provider makes authorised payments and the remaining responsibilities sit with the participant or nominee.

## Case Study: Tori, Carol and Ben

Tori lives with Carol and Ben in their family home after moving out of her parents place so she could be more independent. Tori wanted to continue living in a happy home environment where she could further develop her skills to live as independently as possible. Tori hopes she will be able to move in with her friend, Edwina, in the future.

“I love cooking and Carol helps me cook my favourite food – lasagne,” — Tori

Carol, Tori and Ben eat dinner and often watch movies together. Carol helps with Tori’s daily routine and also makes sure that she takes her medication each morning. Key to any Host arrangement is being part of family life and broader social networks.

Tori has made friends with some other young people who live in the suburb and she looks after a neighbour’s dog once a week. She also catches up with her family regularly through visits, video calls and attending family events.

“It has been such a joy to share our lives with Tori. Our grandkids love her and she has become part of our family,” — Carol

Tori, Carol and Ben are supported by an organisation that oversees their Host arrangement. This organisation makes sure Tori’s wishes are upheld while she lives with Carol and Ben and that the arrangement is safe, supported and fulfilling for everyone involved. They do this through regular meetings and visits to their home.



## 5. Personal safety in a Host arrangement

Feeling and being safe and comfortable is an important part of what makes a house a home. This is the same for a Host arrangement. When a participant joins a Host in their home, the home becomes shared, with shared roles and responsibilities. One of these roles is upholding the safety of both the participant and the Host.

### Safeguarding expectations

The registered provider is **legally responsible** for the quality and safety of care in every arrangement. It is the registered provider's duty to monitor care and safeguard participants living in a Host arrangement.

Safeguarding requirements apply to all ILO arrangements. For Host arrangements this includes:

#### Registration

Providers are registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. To provide Host arrangements, providers will need to be registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to deliver supports under registration group 0115. To register, providers must meet the requirements set out by the Commission. More information about this process is available on the [NDIS commission website](#).

#### Quality assurance

Providers must have robust processes which cover governance of their organisation as well as processes and procedures for implementing a Host arrangement program. These processes should include **mandatory criminal records checks (police checks) and other formal checks and references** for Hosts and other adults residing at the home on a regular basis.

#### Agreements

Host providers should have agreements between the provider, the Host and the participant. These agreements should include the roles and responsibilities of each person/group and any relevant arrangements for the living situation. These agreements are freely entered into and the participant or Host are free to decide at any time that they no longer want to live together. When and if an arrangement ends, the provider works with the participant to find alternate living and support arrangements.

## **Suitability of premises**

Host arrangements offer support in the private home of a Host and are not managed by the provider. However, providers have a responsibility to make sure that the home is safe for the participant and to have evidence of the steps they have taken. Evidence could include:

- completing a health and safety check of the Host's home before approving the Host family
- regular follow up checks as part of the provider's ongoing monitoring
- public liability and household insurance
- making sure the participant's personal space is suitable for their needs (for example it is private and can be personalised)

## **Health and wellbeing**

Providers have processes and procedures that ensure that Hosts maintain an environment that upholds the health, wellbeing and safety of the participant including elements such as fire safety, infection control, management of medicines and food preparation.

## **Financial controls**

Any financial support provided to Hosts is fair without being an incentive for people to become Hosts purely for financial gain.

## **Training and development**

Providers ensure that their staff and Hosts have the necessary information and training needed to minimise unnecessary or harmful risks.

## **Support in times of difficulty**

Providers have clear guidance for participants, their families and Host/s about what to do if something goes wrong in a Host arrangement and they can access this information in a timely and accessible manner.

## **Complaints**

Providers have clear complaints processes and participants (or their supporters) understand this information.

## **Support outside the Host arrangement**

Participants living in Host arrangements have, where possible, a circle of support around them to actively check on quality and safeguarding of the arrangements (this is in addition to, but does not replace, the role of the provider).

## **Separation of roles**

Hosts may be appointed as Guardian under state/ territory authority. This results in a real or potential conflict of interest due to them receiving payment. Oversight of the host arrangement by a registered provider in the strongly preferred approach to ensure the participant needs and preferences are safeguarded.

## **Monitoring of living arrangement**

Providers must regularly monitor the living arrangement by maintaining contact with the participant, any relevant supports and the Host. They must ensure that the living environment remains safe, secure, is meeting the needs of the participant and is sustainable for the Host.

## **Support for Host arrangement program staff**

Staff overseeing Host arrangements should receive regular support, supervision and appraisals. This includes ongoing learning and development so Hosts are supported and can continue to meet the needs of the participant, and meet their responsibilities.



### **Case Study: Safeguarding in a Host arrangement: example from Host perspective**

Melissa heard about Hosting through her friends. Melissa has grown up with people with disability in her life and wants to open her home so she can share her life with someone and have company. Melissa knows as a Host, she can receive a payment for the support she provides to a participant.

Melissa contacts a provider who is registered to provide Individualised Living Options with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. The provider invites Melissa to an information session about Host arrangements.

At the information session, Melissa gets an application form which includes questions about why she wants to be a Host. After Melissa submits her application, the provider chats to her about her motivation. The provider sees that Melissa's values are aligned with the Host principles, so she is invited to the next stage of the process. She completes medical, police, personal and professional referee checks.

Melissa passes these checks and then has a series of interviews with the provider which include questions about Melissa's motivations and lifestyle, the living environment she can offer and her capacity to provide the support required for a person with disability. Melissa also attends mandatory two days of training with the provider which is part of the recruitment and selection process.

Once approved as a Host, Melissa has another session with the provider to go through the code of conduct, expectations of Hosts and requirements. Melissa signs a formal agreement to these terms.

The Host provider has also been working with Carly, an NDIS participant and her family who are looking for a Host arrangement for Carly. The Host provider thinks that Carly and Melissa might be a good fit for each other as they have complementary personalities and share some similar interests. The provider gives Carly a summary of Melissa's profile.

Carly thinks that Melissa sounds like a nice person and agrees to meet her at a local café. The meeting goes well and Carly and Melissa spend time together over the following weeks getting to know one another before both agreeing to proceed with a Host arrangement. This included visits to Melissa's home and an overnight stay. They both sign agreements which set out how their arrangement will work, including financial elements. During these discussions, the provider gives Carly and Melissa information about who they can call if they need assistance and how the provider will be involved.

After Carly has moved in, the provider contacts both Melissa and Carly to check how the arrangement is going and keeps in touch monthly. Both Melissa and Carly know that they can contact their provider by email or phone or meet face-to-face. The arrangement is supported by a secondary Host. Melissa also knows that her provider has another meeting set with her every six weeks where she can get any support she needs to enable her to support Carly. Melissa also attends training throughout the year to ensure she maintains the skills she needs to support Carly.

The provider visits the home on a regular basis to ensure that everything is going well. Visits can also happen on an unscheduled basis. Melissa has enjoyed living with Carly and is preparing for her annual review with her provider so that the arrangement may continue. Melissa's provider gathers evidence from both Melissa and Carly throughout the year that Carly's wishes are being upheld and she is enjoying sharing her life with Melissa. The provider keeps records of these discussions.

## Financial arrangements

### Payments to Hosts

Most host arrangements are designed so that Hosts receive a reimbursement which is determined by the support they provide. The amount of the reimbursement payment is based on the individual needs of the participant and takes account of the overall funding in their plan. This allowance is not designed to be the equivalent of a full time wage. Hosts are paid by the provider through funds claimed from the participant's NDIS plan.

Another financial option for Host arrangements is for the Host to undertake the role of Host as a contractor.

### Payments to Host providers

In either arrangement, money comes from the participant's NDIS plan. The Provider receives funding to carry out the roles described above in sections 4 and 5 which are integral to the success and safety of the Host arrangement. The total funding amount is claimed by the provider from the NDIS plan and the provider is responsible for any payments to the Host.

In the Service Proposal, payments for the Hosts are included as the primary support. The total weekly amount for the primary support should include both payment to the host as well as costs borne by the provider to administer the host arrangement.

### Using Agreements to confirm financial arrangements

Further agreements may be made for participants to contribute to board and lodging from their private income or Disability Support Pension to cover day-to-day living costs. It is strongly recommended any agreements are written down. Host providers develop these agreements. Any financial arrangements outside of the support provided by the NDIS is not the responsibility of the NDIA. However, Host providers have a responsibility to oversee and monitor the financial arrangements between the Host and the participant to make sure they are fair for both parties and value-for-money for the participant.

Please refer to the ILO OG for more information about funding levels for Host arrangements and what can be included in an ILO Service Proposal.

## Reporting and monitoring

The purpose of reporting is to demonstrate that the Host arrangement continues to meet the participant needs, Hosts are being adequately supported and risks are managed quickly and appropriately.

Only the participant (or chosen support people) can confirm if the arrangement and supports are meeting their needs and expectations. Therefore, it is paramount that all parties are actively involved in the reporting process and wherever possible co-author the progress report.

It is recommended that providers check in with Hosts and participants regularly throughout the Host arrangement. They should also consider engaging with the family of the participant.

This can be done by phone or in writing but must be in addition to regular face-to-face contact with the Host and participant.

Effective reporting and monitoring processes will help maintain relationships, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure that all parties are safe and thriving.

## 6. Setting up a Host arrangement

Setting up a successful Host arrangement takes time and involves a number of steps. Each step is important to ensure the participant's and Host's needs are met - this will result in a lasting arrangement. Taking shortcuts can result in unsuitable Host arrangements which break down or could put the participant or Host at risk.

**There are 6 steps in setting up the Host arrangement:**

1. Exploring and designing
2. Screening
3. Matching
4. Introductions
5. Agreements
6. Settling in

### 1. Exploring and designing

Participants and/or their family must be involved in exploration and design of their Host arrangement. The proposed Host arrangement must be tailored to their needs and maximize their opportunities for community and economic participation. In addition, participants may receive further support and guidance through peer support and capacity building organisations.

During this step, providers must consider how the arrangement will fit with the informal or supplementary supports in the participant's life – or identify gaps that will need to be filled by new supports.

A Host provider should complete a Service Proposal so that the NDIA can consider funding. More information can be found in the ILO Guideline.

### 2. Screening

Once funding is approved in a participant's plan, work can begin to implement and monitor the Host arrangement.

A Host provider is responsible for attracting and maintaining a pool of potential Hosts from all walks of life. The provider undertakes a thorough recruitment process that involves advertising, information sessions and speaking with potential Hosts. While recruiting openly for potential Hosts is vital, often the best place to start looking for a potential Host is people they already know who may be interested in being a Host.

During the application phase, the provider will help potential Hosts to fill out the application paperwork, conduct interviews, verify professional and personal referees and undertake criminal and medical checks. This step will also assess the suitability of the potential Host's home as well as their interests, preferences and goals.

### 3. Matching

A Host arrangement has a higher chance of success if the Host can meet the needs of the participant and if both parties get on well together. The matching process ensures that Hosts

and participants can trial the Host arrangement, and to make an informed decision about whether to go ahead.

The matching process requires openness and honesty about values, preferences, likes and dislikes. It involves everyone, including any children or partners of the Host or participant. Everyone needs to fully understand and appreciate what the arrangement means.

The matching process takes the following into account:

- the participant's needs and desire of where and who they would like to live with and how they would like to be supported
- the skills, knowledge and experience of the Host
- personal interests of the participant and the Host
- the location of the Host's home
- facilities and the type of home the Host can offer
- the culture and/or faith that are important to the participant and the Host

An effective matching process:

- will have a robust matching process which ensures suitable, timely, safe, and effective Host arrangements. Where a match doesn't work, the provider will work with the participant to find another suitable match
- makes sure everyone involved has a clear understanding of the processes used to match and establish the arrangement
- ensures the participant and Host/s understand all contracts or agreements they need to sign, before signing them
- involves the participant throughout the matching and introduction process, so they can make informed decisions.

## 4. Introductions

The provider will give the participant and Host/s information about each other and they'll be asked if they would like to meet. If they both agree, the provider sets up and oversees an introduction in a neutral location (like a cafe).

If introductions continue to go well, the provider will work with the Host and the participant to formally set up a Host arrangement.

Here are some ideas to help introductions go smoothly:

- Meet the Host and other members of their family or household
- Visit the Host's home and the local neighbourhood
- Have a meal at the Host's house
- Have an overnight stay
- The Host provider and participant talk about how they will resolve issues or concerns respectfully.

## 5. Agreements

Agreements are an important part of a Host arrangement. They set out roles, responsibilities and expectations of all parties. They should be explained clearly to everyone in a way that is accessible to them.

There are three types of agreement:

- Provider and Host
- Provider and participant
- Host and participant

The key responsibilities of each party are outline in the table below:

Responsibility	Safety, wellbeing and support	Ensure participant voice is heard	Code of conduct	Financial	Property and belongings	Ongoing and monitoring
Provider to the Host	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Provider to the Participant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Host to the provider	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Host to the participant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participant to the provider	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Participant to the Host	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Agreements should cover the roles and responsibilities of each person and explain in detail how issues that may arise will be addressed. The provider will develop agreements between itself and the Host or participant.

An agreement between a Host and participant should be co-authored by the provider, Host and participant based on their individual circumstances. Examples of things that could be included are whether a friend or partner can stay overnight, what to do if issues arise and how each party will contribute to household tasks.

Examples of a financial arrangements can include a volunteer with 'tax free reimbursement' or contractor arrangement. A Host is not an employee of the provider although they do receive some form of payment.

Property and belongings refers to an understanding of what property or furnishings are supplied for the participant and what they must provide for themselves, and what will happen if something is damaged, including insurance coverage.

## 6. Settling in

**Once all the agreements are in place, the Host arrangement can begin.**

Here are a few useful ideas for Hosts to help the participant settle in:

- Ask the participant what they can do to help the participant settle in and feel more comfortable
- Ask the participant what they would like to do when they first arrive
- Help them to settle in by showing them around the house and where everything is
- Offer to help them unpack their things and/or to move their furniture.
- Introduce the participant to everyone else who may be a regular visitor to the home
- Organise something fun for the first night – this might be having a special meal, going to the pub together or going out for a walk around the neighbourhood
- Spend the first few days supporting the participant to get to know the area, like learning bus routes and how to get to the shops. The participant may be new to the area
- Spend the first few days doing some fun activities together, which will enable the participant and the Host to get to know each other and build a positive relationship.
- Help the participant to learn any house rules gradually, as this will help them to not feel overwhelmed.



## 7. Further information

There is a range of useful information and resources on the NDIS website for participants and providers:

- [ILO – Information for participants](#)
- [ILO – Information for providers](#)
- [Individualised Living Options Guideline](#)
- [Home and Living Supports Request Form](#)

You can talk to your Local Area Coordinator, Support Coordinator, Plan Manager or contact us by emailing: [Enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:Enquiries@ndis.gov.au)

Information in this handbook is derived from Shared Lives Plus UK and Western Australian Individualised Services:

- [www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk](http://www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk)
- [www.waindividualisedservices.org.au](http://www.waindividualisedservices.org.au)



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