



Helping clients feel confident about Supported Independent Living (SIL)

A Support Coordinator's conversation guide

Introduction

Conversations about Supported Independent Living (SIL) can be both emotional and confusing for participants and their families who are wanting the best outcomes.

For many, it's the first time they're navigating complex funding structures, housing options, and care models under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It's not just about finding a place to live - it's about ensuring the participant is safe, supported, and empowered to live as independently as possible.

As a Support Coordinator, you play a critical role in guiding participants and their families through this journey. From unpacking funding categories to connecting the right providers, you are often the bridge between the NDIS and real-life support.

This guide is designed to help the conversations you have with participants and families to be clearer, calmer, and more confident for you and those you support.



In the following pages you'll find:

- ✓ Explanations of key support types (SIL, SDA, ILO, Core Supports)
- ✓ Common myths and how to debunk them
- ✓ A step-by-step overview from referral to move-in
- ✓ Tips on explaining 24/7 supports
- ✓ Conversation starters, FAQs, and a glossary you can refer back to.



The role of Support Coordinators in the SIL journey

As a Support Coordinator, you already know how much skill it takes to turn a NDIS plan into practical, effective support. You balance competing priorities, keep participants and their families informed, and work within a system that can change just as quickly as your clients' needs.

When it comes to Supported Independent Living (SIL), your guidance can make all the difference. From clarifying funding boundaries to identifying quality providers, your ability to translate the complexities of the NDIS into clear options gives participants and their families confidence to make informed choices.

Working with the right SIL provider, one that communicates well, follows through, and genuinely partners with you, can ease that load. Together, you can create the clarity, consistency and continuity that participants and their families need to thrive. This guide builds upon your expertise, offering tips and process tools that can support smoother SIL discussions and better outcomes for everyone involved.

Understanding different support types

One of the first hurdles participants and families face is understanding how SIL fits within the broader NDIS home and living supports. Terms like SIL, SDA, ILO and Core Supports can sound technical and be overwhelming, but when explained clearly, they help everyone to be informed and in more control.

Here's a simple overview you can refer to in conversations:

Support type	What it covers	Who provides it	Key points to explain
Supported Independent Living (SIL)	24/7 daily living supports	SIL provider	Focuses on care and support, not the house itself
Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)	The physical home	SDA provider	Funded separately to SIL
Individualised Living Options (ILO)	Flexible, tailored living arrangements	Various providers	Less structured than SIL, focuses on participant choice
Core Supports (CS)	Day to day assistance (e.g. personal care, community access)	Mix of providers	Funded under a separate NDIS category

Quick tip

Think of SDA as the house and SIL as the support that happens inside the house. They're funded separately, but they work together to give you/your family member the right home and the right support.



When is SIL typically funded?



According to the NDIS, SIL is generally funded when a participant:

- ✓ Requires a significant amount of help throughout the day, including overnight support
- ✓ Shares supports with other participants (e.g. in a group home)
- ✓ Needs these supports to live as independently as possible
- ✓ Has the functional assessment or evidence that supports the need for this level of assistance.

ILO, on the other hand, is considered when a participant wants to explore alternative living arrangements that may not require 24/7 support, such as living with a host family or in their own home with flexible support.

SDA funding is only available for small groups of NDIS participants with very high support needs or extreme functional impairment, and only after NDIA assessment confirms eligibility.

Requesting home and living supports

As a Support Coordinator, part of your role is helping participants link their home and living supports to their goals and daily support needs, both now and into the future.

When a participant wants to explore or change their home and living supports, the process will depend on where they are in their plan cycle.

1

If a **plan reassessment** is coming up (within about 100 days of the plan end date), information about home and living supports can be submitted as part of that scheduled review.

2

If a participant's **circumstances or housing needs have changed** outside their regular review period, a **Change of Situation or Change of Details Form** can be submitted to request an earlier plan reassessment.

In both cases, the NDIA recommends completing the Supporting Evidence Form which helps outline the participant's goals, current circumstances, and the evidence supporting their home and living needs.

By guiding families to clearly describe their goals and gather the right supporting evidence, you can help the NDIA build a full picture of the participant's current and future needs, supporting timely and well-informed decisions.

For the latest guidance and forms, visit:

ndis.gov.au/participants/home-and-living/requesting-home-and-living-supports



Common myths about SIL and SDA

There are often understandable misconceptions about SIL and SDA. Addressing these misunderstandings early on ensures clarity and builds trust and confidence.

Myth

- ❌ SIL providers give you the house
- ❌ SIL means less independence
- ❌ SIL is only for people with physical disabilities
- ❌ You can only choose one provider

Fact

- ✅ SIL covers the support services. The home could be owned or rented out by a participant, or owned by an SDA provider
- ✅ SIL is designed to increase independence with the right level of tailored support
- ✅ SIL supports people with a wide range of needs, including behavioural and psychosocial.
- ✅ Participants have choice and control, and multiple providers often work in partnership.

From referral to move-in



Breaking down the SIL process into simple steps helps everyone understand the timeline and expectations and can reduce overwhelm for all involved.

Step-by-step overview

1. Initial conversation

- Identify participant goals, funding, and needs.
- Gather key information and reports.

2. Assessment and referral

Ensure the right evidence and documentation are in place for funding decisions.

3. NDIS approval

Submit required documentation for funding; await decision.

4. Select an SIL provider

Shortlist providers who match the participant's needs, values, and location

5. Exploring housing options

Once funding is approved, seek out housing options via SDA or through your SIL provider

6. Compatibility and onboarding

SIL match staff and housemates; begin onboarding discussions.

7. Transition planning

Prepare the participant and family for the move, including support plans and routines.

8. Move-in and ongoing support

Begin service delivery; maintain communication and review supports regularly.

Quick tip

Be sure to provide participants and families with clear expectations around timeframes, required paperwork, and who's responsible for what at each stage. This helps to reduce stress and keeps the process on track.

Explaining 24/7 supports

'24/7 support' can sound abstract to participants and families. Here's how to make it real and reassuring:

Types of support

- **Active overnight:** staff are awake and available throughout the night.
- **Sleepover support:** staff sleep onsite and can respond as needed.
- **Rostered shifts:** tailored to the participant's daily routine.

Daily life example

A typical day might involve support with morning routines, transport to activities, meal preparation, evening routines, and overnight safety monitoring. It's about ensuring the participant's goals and independence are supported consistently.

Safety and continuity

Emphasise that SIL providers coordinate staffing to ensure consistency, reliability, and safety, while still encouraging the independence of the participant.

Conversation starters

Sometimes it can be challenging to get conversation flowing with families and participants. Here are a few questions to help encourage engagement in these situations.

- Tell me about what a good day looks like for you/your family member?
- What's most important to you about where you/they live?
- Have you thought about how SDA and SIL work together?
- What kind of support would help you feel confident about the transition into SIL?



Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

The following questions are commonly asked by participants and the people who support them when it comes to the new housing environment. We've offered some suggested responses.

Questions	Suggested response
Will I/they have a say in who I/they live with?	Yes - participant preferences are central to housemate matching.
What if the staff aren't the right fit for me/them?	Providers can review and adjust staffing to ensure the best match.
How will conflict or challenges be managed in the home?	A quality provider will take a swift and proactive approach. They'll listen to everyone involved and mediate calmly, and find practical solutions that keep the home safe and comfortable. Where needed, they'll adjust routines, staff or house arrangements to restore harmony.
Can I/they have visitors?	Yes, visitors are generally welcome, provided everyone's privacy, comfort, and safety are respected. Each home will have simple guidelines around visitors to make sure it works for all housemates.
Are pets allowed to live in the home?	This will depend on the property and housemate preferences. Some homes allow pets if everyone agrees and it doesn't impact safety or accessibility. Always check with the provider before bringing a pet into the home.
How much does it cost?	The NDIS funds SIL supports, while participants are usually expected to pay a Reasonable Rent Contribution (RRC) and utilities, and personal expenses are usually paid separately by participants. The exact costs depend on the home, the type of support, and what's included in each individual arrangement. Providers can give a clear breakdown before moving forward.
Can we change providers later?	Yes - participants have choice and control under the NDIS.
What does overnight support look like?	It depends on needs. Active overnight, sleepover, or rostered shifts.
What if my/their needs change?	SIL supports are flexible; plans can be reviewed and updated through the NDIS.

Support you can count on.



At Nextt, we help Support Coordinators turn participants' home and living goals into reality. With more than 20 years of disability know-how, we partner with you to make the SIL journey smoother, from the first conversation through to ongoing 24/7 support.

We make it easier for you to:

- ✓ Confidently guide participants through funding and housing options.
- ✓ Match them with the right supports and housemates to achieve greater independence and stability.
- ✓ Stay connected with a responsive, centralised team that keeps communication clear and coordinated.

Together, we help participants feel safe, supported and empowered to live as independently as possible and help you feel confident every step of the way.

If you'd like to talk through your clients' needs or learn more about how we can support you and your clients with Supported Independent Living, reach out to our friendly team today on

1300 369 568 or email hellosil@nextt.com.au

Get in touch

Glossary of common terms

We appreciate there are many terms and acronyms used across services, which can get confusing. We've created this glossary for you to share with anyone you're supporting to give them clarity.

Choice and control

A core principle of the NDIS, meaning participants have the right to choose the supports, services and providers that best suit their needs and preferences.

Core supports

One of the main NDIS funding categories. It covers everyday activities such as personal care, transport, help with household tasks, and community participation. Core Supports funding is flexible and can be used in different ways depending on the participant's plan.

Functional assessment

An assessment used by the NDIA to understand a person's level of function and support needs. This helps determine what types of funding (e.g. SIL, SDA) may be appropriate.

ILO: Individualised Living Options

A flexible NDIS support option that helps people design their own living arrangements. It can include things like living with a host family, co-residency, or living alone with tailored supports. It's more flexible than SIL and doesn't usually involve 24/7 paid support.

NDIA: National Disability Insurance Agency

The government agency that runs the NDIS. The NDIA is responsible for deciding who can access the NDIS, approving plans, and managing the funding.

Participant

A person who has been found eligible for the NDIS and receives an NDIS plan.

Plan

An NDIS plan sets out a participant's goals and the funding they have received to help achieve them. It's developed together with the NDIA and reviewed regularly.

Plan review

A scheduled or requested meeting where a participant's NDIS plan is reviewed to check whether their supports are still appropriate and to make changes if needed.

Provider

A person, business or organisation that delivers NDIS-funded supports or services. Providers can be registered with the NDIS or unregistered, depending on the type of support they offer and the participant's plan.

Rosters of care

A document used in SIL funding to outline the supports a participant will receive, including how many staff are needed, when, and for how long. This helps determine the funding level.

SC: Support Coordinator

A professional who helps participants and their families understand their NDIS plan, find and connect with providers, and make sure the right supports are in place. They often explain complex NDIS terms and processes in simple language.

SDA: Specialist Disability Accommodation

Funding for the physical home where a person lives. SDA homes are designed for people with very high support needs or extreme functional impairment and include specialist features like assistive technology or accessible layouts.

SIL: Supported Independent Living

Funding for help with and/or supervision of daily tasks to help a person live as independently as possible. SIL usually includes 24/7 support (such as active overnight or sleepover support) and is most often used in shared living arrangements.

SW: Support worker

The person who delivers day-to-day supports such as personal care, transport, or community access. In SIL settings, support workers provide daily living assistance and overnight support.