

GIVE US *a break*



TIPS FOR ACCESSING RESPITE-STYLE SUPPORTS UNDER THE NDIS

The move to the NDIS comes with some changes to accessing respite care. Here are some tips to help you continue to access, or begin to access, the respite support you need.

TIP ONE

Write a Carer Statement

It is optional to write a Carer Statement as part of the assessment and preparation for an NDIS Plan. However, we highly recommend that all carers write a Carer Statement, which can be uploaded directly onto the online NDIS Participant Portal, or given to the NDIS Planner before or at the start of the NDIS planning or review meeting.

Your Carer Statement is your opportunity to describe in detail the support and care you currently provide, what out of these supports you are able and willing to continue to provide, and which tasks or care you need assistance with, and should be included in the person being cared for (the participant's) plan.

The Carer Statement has no set format. It may be a simple word document of a few sentences or a couple of pages.

In your Carer Statement:

- It can be useful to explain exactly what it is you do every day for your family member. This might include help to get ready each day, meal preparation, clothes washing, get participant ready for bed each evening, make appointments, transport to community activities.

- Include what respite support is needed, and the reasons why. For example: *"We have been receiving 22 days of overnight care for Tom per year for the past 5 years. This support gives us an essential break from caring. If we don't continue to receive this support, we would struggle to manage Tom's care, and we may not be able to continue to care for Tom at home."*

TIP TWO

Be prepared going into to a planning or review meeting

Carers have shared with us that putting in some time and energy into preparing for the NDIS Planning or Review Meeting can have a significant and positive impact on the supports received in the NDIS Plan.

Here are some tips for preparing for the planning or review meeting:

- if respite care is currently used, record what has been used over the past 12 months, and provide this to the planner at the meeting.
- if access to overnight respite care is needed at a facility, work out how many days per year is required, and when it is needed. This information is needed in order to calculate the right amount of funding required (weekend and public holiday rates are higher than weekdays).

- ask your GP or counsellor to prepare a letter (that you can take to your meeting) that explains the need for respite or other support to maintain your own health and that of your family.
- avoid using the word 'respite', and focus on what the support provides for the participant e.g. community access, socialisation, participation in a meaningful activity, skill development.
- if there is a wish to access overnight respite care in a facility (formerly called Facility-based Respite (FBR)), use the term short-term accommodation assistance (STAA). It is possible to access a higher level of STAA if you do not have any other support in your caring role (i.e. you are a sole carer), or the participant has complex and high support needs. Therefore, explain this in your Carer Statement and/or at your planning meeting, and clearly explain what amount and type of support you need to continue in your caring role.

TIP THREE

Clearly describe the goals associated with the support needed

Every request for NDIS funded supports must be connected to a goal in the participants NDIS Plan. Goals can be broad and can cover both short and long-term needs.

Here are some examples of goals for respite-style supports:

- **GOAL** John wants to become more independent of his family both in and outside the family home

Associated support worker to assist with learning to access and use public transport, learning to cook three different meals, learning to use the dishwasher and washing machine, taking the rubbish out (be specific about supports).

- **GOAL** Penny wants to develop relationships and participate in the community independently of her family, both in and out of the home

Associated support Support worker to go on a holiday with participant, independently of family, transport assistance to travel to and back from holiday, support worker to assist researching and booking holiday, or support worker to attend weekly social activities and weekend recreational activities.

- **GOAL** Martin wants to develop social skills amongst his peers and build capacity to integrate in mainstream settings

Associated support Support worker to accompany participant to take the bus or train to local footy club matches and social activities with peers, support worker to assist to develop social connections and plan social activities.

TIP FOUR

Be clear about why supports are needed

Clearly specify when supports are required to avoid or reduce specific risks.

The following is an example of what may be written in a Carer Statement:

- *In order for Mischa to continue living in the family home, we require _____ days of overnight accommodation (STAA) per year, _____ hours of community access per fortnight, and an additional _____ hours of in-home care during each school holiday period (four times per year). If not, there is a risk that Mischa's siblings will be negatively impacted, and Mischa may not be able to remain living in the family home.*
- It is important to clearly explain any specific mental health support needs the person receiving care might have. This might include for example if "Mary needs regular one-on-one support to assist her in developing and maintaining trusted relationships."

TIP FIVE

Document, document, document

It is essential to provide relevant documentation as evidence for support needs.

- Bring evidence of the person's disability/diagnosis and any specialist reports/recommendations for support to all planning meetings.
- Retain all originals and provide copies of documents at every planning and review meeting.
- Take your own notes at planning meetings for your own records.

TIP SIX

Working towards independent living

If you and the participant are working towards them living independently from you/the family, consider the following:

- There are many housing options to explore for a participant to live independently of family.
- It takes time to find the right housing option, and to prepare for the move.
- Be sure that you include any support you need to research housing options, or learn independent living skills, in the NDIS Plan.
- To ensure this, include a goal about moving into long-term accommodation in the Plan (even if not planned within the next 12 months).

LONGER TERM HOUSING NEEDS

Work out what supports are needed to make the transition to independent living. This could include:

- Funding for Transition Support, including support to develop independent living skills, funding for a specialist support co-ordinator in the area of housing to research, identify and access housing. On average, a specialist co-ordinator requires approximately 70 hours to complete this research, identification and planning. This might be covered under the category 'Improved living arrangements' in the NDIS Plan.

- Support to identify and evidence specific housing access needs. For example, include funding required for a full functional assessment from an Occupational Therapist (OT). Generally, an OT requires a minimum of 12 hours to conduct an assessment and write a report.

This report would accompany the request for specific accommodation, and specify the type and level of staffed (paid) support required. For example: *Sally requires a fully accessible home with a bedroom and bathroom hoist, ramps, hand rails, and 12 hours of 1:1 daily support every day to complete daily living tasks.*

- For any support the participant requires as part of their **transition** to independent living, provide a letter of support from a treating GP, psychologist or other professional to evidence this need.
- For more information about long term accommodation, Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA), options and preparation, contact or visit the website of The Summer Foundation www.summerfoundation.org.au
- To search for vacancies in SDA homes visit www.thehousinghub.org.au

Visit www.carersvic.com.au/ndis to access more details on the NDIS

- NDIS Carers Online
- NDIS Carers Handbook
- NDIS Sample Plans
- NDIS Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE OUR SERIES "GIVE US A BREAK" INFORMATION SHEETS

- Short term accommodation assistance (respite) under the NDIS
- What does respite care look like under the NDIS?
- NDIS Capacity Building and Core Supports
- Opportunities for respite personal notes

www.carersvic.com.au/ndisrespite

