



# Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Tenant Handbook

# WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

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We are dedicated to providing safe, secure, and accessible homes for individuals with disabilities in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Our commitment is to support your independence and well-being through quality housing and services.

## About CHC Community Housing

CHC is a not-for-profit community housing provider operating in the ACT. We offer affordable housing solutions for people on low to moderate incomes, including Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) for eligible NDIS participants.

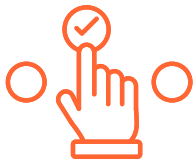
At CHC, our role is to provide well-managed, accessible, and secure housing that enables tenants to live with confidence and independence. We are committed to creating environments where tenants can exercise choice, feel connected to their community, and access the supports they need to thrive.

The CHC Team is deeply committed to the principles and objectives of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We plan, build and manage homes to ensure people living with a disability live with dignity, independence, and genuine inclusion in their community.

We support and uphold the following key principles:



People with disability should be empowered to participate in community life and contribute socially and economically to the extent of their abilities.



Individuals have the right to exercise choice and control in pursuing their goals and in how their supports are planned and delivered.



All people with disability are entitled to access reasonable and necessary supports, including early intervention where appropriate.



Supports should be well-coordinated across the NDIS and other service systems to ensure holistic and integrated assistance.

We support our tenants living in Specialist Disability Accommodation by offering:

- A dedicated and responsive tenancy and property management service, delivered by our experienced team, who understand the unique needs of SDA residents.
- A tenant-first approach which means our team is available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, with clear processes to respond to questions, concerns, or required supports.
- Community connection opportunities, including access to events, information sessions, and tenant engagement initiatives that foster belonging and inclusion.
- Clear, consistent communication, including emails, service updates, and individual contact, to ensure all tenants are informed and involved.
- Prompt, reliable maintenance services with access to 24/7 emergency call out, to ensure homes remain safe, accessible, and of a high standard.

CHC is proud to be a part of a broader movement for inclusive, community-based living. We are here to support you not just as a tenant, but as a valued member of the CHC community.



# Understanding the NDIS and Your Housing Options.





## What is the NDIS?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is how the Australian Government helps people with disability get the support they need. It provides funding for things like daily living help, therapies, equipment, and housing supports.

You can learn more at: [www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/what-ndis](http://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/what-ndis)

## What is SDA?

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is housing that's specially designed for people who have very high support needs. These homes include special features that make daily living easier and safer, or are set up in ways that make it easier to get support from carers or support workers.

### What is SDA Funding?

If you're eligible, your NDIS Plan might include SDA funding. This funding helps cover the cost of the specially designed home.

- SDA funding is paid straight to the registered housing provider (like CHC).
- It covers the cost of the home itself, not the cost of day-to-day personal support.

You can choose from available SDA homes in the market that suit your needs.

Find more information at: [www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services/specialist-disability-accommodation](http://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services/specialist-disability-accommodation)

### What is Supported Independent Living (SIL)

Supported Independent Living (SIL) is the help you get in your home to do everyday tasks like cooking, cleaning, or getting ready for the day. SIL supports are designed to help you build skills and live as independently as possible.

You can get SIL whether you live by yourself or with others, and you can choose the SIL provider that works best for you.

### SDA vs SIL – What's the Difference?

Think of it this way:

- SDA is the home itself — specially designed for people with high needs.
- SIL is the support you receive in the home to help you live your life.

You can have SDA without SIL, or SIL without SDA — and you can choose different providers for each.

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM CHC

At CHC, we're here to make sure your home is safe, comfortable, and well looked after. Here's what you can expect from us:

- » We'll keep your home in good condition, safe, secure, and working the way it should.
- » We'll do our best to make sure your home is peaceful, and that you feel comfortable living there.
- » We'll treat you, and everyone in your household, with respect at all times. We're here to listen to your feedback and support you if you have any concerns.
- » If something goes wrong, we'll work quickly to fix it. Our team responds to repairs and maintenance as soon as possible.
- » We'll make sure your home has proper locks and security features to help you feel safe.
- » Your property is officially registered with the NDIS as Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA).



We'll follow all the rules when it comes to notices about your tenancy, and we'll make sure you know your rights, including how to ask for a review if you think a decision isn't fair.



We take safety seriously. We'll do everything we need to keep our staff, support workers, and visitors safe when they're at your property.



If your support provider (SIL) needs to change, we'll work with you through that process and help make the change as smooth as possible.



If we ever need to end your SDA agreement, we'll give you the right amount of notice and support you through the process.



Your privacy is important. We'll protect your personal information, and if our contact details change, we'll let you know within five business days.



If you live with other tenants, we'll involve you in the process when finding a new co-resident, so we can find the right match.



If someone's behaviour at your property is making things hard for you, we'll work with you and your support provider to help find a solution that improves things for everyone



# YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a tenant, you have rights and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (ACT) and the NDIS framework:

## YOUR RIGHTS:



Live in a safe and well-maintained home



Privacy and respect in your home



Access to information about your tenancy



Make complaints or provide feedback without fear of reprisal



## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:



Pay rent on time



Maintain your home in a clean and tidy condition



Respect your neighbours and the community



Let CHC know if something is broken  
and needs to be fixed



Let CHC know if you might need to go away from  
your home. This could be for holiday or to go into  
hospital









# YOUR HOME AND LIVING SAFELY



## Contents Insurance

CHC covers the building insurance, but this doesn't include your personal belongings. We strongly recommend getting contents insurance to protect your things – like furniture, electronics, and clothes – in case of theft, fire, or damage.



## Pets

We know how important pets can be. If you'd like to have a pet, you'll need to show that you can care for it properly.

- All pets must follow any rules set by your building's body corporate or house rules.
- Talk to us first before bringing a pet home, we'll help you work through the approval process.



## Smoking

All CHC SDA homes are **smoke-free inside**. If you smoke, please do so **outside** and be respectful of your neighbours and shared spaces.



## Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan

- Every CHC SDA home has a Fire Evacuation Diagram on display – usually in the living area.
- Take a moment to read it and know where your assembly point is.
- If you're ever unsure about what to do in an emergency, ask your support provider or contact us – your safety is our priority.

# RENT AND PAYMENTS

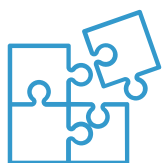
## How is SDA Paid For?



There are two parts to how your Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is paid for:

1. The NDIS pays a big part of the cost through something called SDA funding.
2. You also pay a small contribution, called the Reasonable Rent Contribution, or RRC.

## What is the Reasonable Rent Contribution (RRC)?



Your Reasonable Rent Contribution is your share of the rent. This is set by the NDIS, and is the same for everyone who receives SDA, no matter where you live. It's calculated based on:

- 25% of your Disability Support Pension (DSP)
- 25% of your pension supplement
- 100% of your Commonwealth Rent Assistance

This means your rent is based on your income, so it stays affordable.

You pay your contribution every two weeks, in advance (just like most rent payments).

## What About the Rest of the Cost?



The rest of the cost of your SDA home is covered by SDA funding from the NDIS. This is paid directly to CHC – you don't need to manage it yourself.

It's important to make sure your NDIS plan always includes SDA funding. If you have a Plan Nominee or Support Coordinator, they can help with this. CHC is also happy to work with you to make sure everything is set up properly in your plan.

### Will My Rent Go Up?

Your rent might change twice a year if the Disability Support Pension (DSP) goes up.

If there is a rent increase, CHC will let you know at least 14 days in advance so you can plan ahead.

### Do I Need to Pay a Bond?

No, you don't need to pay a rental bond for your SDA home with CHC.

### What Other Costs Do I Need to Pay?

In addition to your rent, you are responsible for paying your own household and personal costs, such as:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Water usage
- Internet
- Groceries, medications, and personal items

These are not covered by the NDIS or by CHC, so it's important to plan for them in your budget.

### What Happens if I Go on Holidays or Am Away?

If you go away on holiday or are not living at the property for a little while, that's okay — just let CHC know.

You'll still need to keep paying your rent while you're away, as your home is still being held for you.

You can be away for up to 60 days without any changes to your agreement.

### How Do I Pay My Rent?

You can choose the payment method that works best for you. Options include:

- Direct debit from your bank account (set up by you or your support team)
- CentrePay, which is a free service that takes the rent out of your Centrelink payment automatically
- Payment from your guardian or financial representative
- Through the NSW Trustee & Guardian (if you're under formal financial management – ACT equivalents may apply)

If you're not sure how to set this up, our team can help you or your support person get it sorted.



# MOVING OUT OF YOUR SDA HOME

SDA



### What if I want to move out?

If you decide you want to leave your SDA home, that's okay. All we ask is that you give CHC 60 days' notice in writing. This helps us plan and support you with the process.

You'll still need to pay rent until the end of the 60 days (unless we agree to something different together). When you leave, please make sure you take all of your belongings with you.

What if CHC needs to end your SDA Agreement?

In some cases, CHC may need to end your SDA Agreement. If this happens, we'll:

- Talk with you, your family or carer, and your support provider
- Give you at least 90 days' written notice
- Help you find a new home or support provider if needed

We will only end your agreement if there's a serious reason, such as:

- Your SDA home no longer suits your needs
- You no longer require SDA
- The property can't be used as SDA anymore
- There has been illegal activity in the home
- You haven't paid rent after several reminders
- Your NDIS Plan no longer includes SDA funding
- Your behaviour causes serious harm or risk to others

We will always explain what's happening and support you through the process.

### Leaving the Property?

When you move out, you're responsible for:

- Taking all of your furniture and personal items
- Cleaning the property
- Making sure all your bills are paid
- Cancelling any utilities in your name (like electricity or internet)

If you need help with this, talk to us or your support provider.

# REPAIRS AND CHANGES TO THE PROPERTY

## Need a repair or want to make a change?

If something needs fixing, or if you want to ask for a change to the property (like installing a handrail), you can contact CHC by phone or email. We'll look at each request based on safety, accessibility, and your need

## What if damage happens?

We understand accidents can happen. If the property is damaged on purpose, you may need to help pay for repairs. We'll talk with you about it first and handle each situation fairly.

## Property inspections

CHC may visit your home every 6 months to check how things are going. We'll always book a time with you in advance. This is also a good time to talk about anything you need help with in your home.

Sometimes we'll need to do cleaning, maintenance, or upgrades in shared areas. We'll always give you notice and try to do it at a time that suits you.

## Support Providers

CHC can help you find or change a support provider (like your SIL provider). We'll help make sure:

- Your support is fully funded
- Everyone understands their responsibilities including for safety and care
- Emergency plans are in place



### What if you want to change your provider?

If you want to change support providers, that's okay. Just let CHC know. We'll help guide you through the steps. This might include:

- Getting proposals from new providers
- Holding a house meeting to talk through the options
- Voting or agreeing together on who the new provider will be

We may also need to help change your provider if:

- They're no longer registered with the NDIS
- They go out of business
- CHC ends the agreement with the provider

### In an Emergency

CHC wants you to feel safe in your home. We make sure the property has up-to-date safety features and we do regular checks to keep everything working properly. If your home is in a bushfire or flood zone, we'll also have plans and preparations in place to reduce the risk.

Your support provider must have an emergency evacuation plan, just for you. They'll also run practice drills and report to CHC on how these went. In an emergency (like a fire or natural disaster), your support provider will help you get to safety.

### Your Privacy

CHC takes your privacy seriously. We follow all Australian privacy laws. That means:

- We keep your personal and health information safe
- We may ask for your permission to share information with your support provider if it helps us provide better SDA services
- You can say no to giving permission, and you can change your mind at any time

There may be times when CHC might still share some basic information but this is only in the cases where the law allows it, and if it's necessary for your safety and wellbeing.

# FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS



## Feedback and Complaints

We love hearing what's working well – and we also want to know when things aren't going right. Your feedback helps us improve.

We'll give you a copy of our Complaints and Feedback Policy when you sign your SDA Agreement. You can:

- Ask for repairs or support
- Let us know about an issue with a neighbour
- Give feedback or make a complaint

Contact us at CHC by phone on (02) 6248 7716 or email [info@chcaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@chcaustralia.com.au)

We will always explain what's happening and support you through the process.

## Giving Feedback About Your NDIS Plan

If you want to give feedback or make a complaint about your NDIS Plan, you can:

- Call the NDIA on 1800 800 110
- Visit their website at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)
- Go to a local NDIS office

If your concern is about how your supports are delivered, you can also contact: NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Visit: [www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints)

## Contact Us

For any inquiries or assistance, please contact CHC Community Housing:

- Address: 224/29 Braybrooke St, Bruce ACT 2617
- Phone: (02) 6248 7716
- Email: [info@chcaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@chcaustralia.com.au)
- Website: [www.chcaustralia.com.au](http://www.chcaustralia.com.au)

This handbook is intended to provide general information and does not replace your tenancy agreement or legal advice. For detailed information, please refer to your tenancy agreement and relevant legislation.

## Useful Contacts and Emergency Information

Below are key contacts you may need throughout your tenancy:

Contact	Phone / Website	Purpose
CHC Maintenance (Business Hours)	(02) 6248 7716	Report repairs or issues
After-Hours Emergency Repairs	(02) 6248 7716 (follow prompts)	Urgent issues (e.g. flooding, gas leaks)
ACT Emergency Services	Triple Zero – 000	Fire, Ambulance, Police
Police Assistance (non-emergency)	13 14 44	Report incidents that are not emergencies
Lifeline Canberra	13 11 14	24/7 crisis support
ACT Mental Health Triage	1800 629 354	Mental health support
ACT Housing & Tenancy Advice – Legal Aid	1300 654 314	Free tenancy legal advice
NDIS Commission	1800 035 544 <a href="http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au">www.ndiscommission.gov.au</a>	Complaints about NDIS supports or services
ACT Human Rights Commission	02 6205 2222 / <a href="http://www.hrc.act.gov.au">www.hrc.act.gov.au</a>	Discrimination, abuse, rights violations
ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)	02 6207 1740 <a href="http://www.acat.act.gov.au">www.acat.act.gov.au</a>	Tenancy disputes or appeals



## Complaints and Appeals

We are committed to transparent, respectful, and fair communication. If you are unhappy with a decision, service, or aspect of your tenancy, you have the right to raise your concerns.

### Internal CHC Feedback and Complaints Process

- Step 1: Talk to your CHC Housing Officer or SDA Coordinator.
- Step 2: If the issue isn't resolved, submit a written complaint to CHC via:
  - Email: [info@chcaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@chcaustralia.com.au)
  - Phone: (02) 6248 7716
  - Post: CHC Community Housing, PO Box 6239, O'Connor ACT 2602
- Step 3: If you are still unsatisfied with the outcome, you may request an internal review.

We aim to resolve all complaints within 14 working days.

### External Review Options

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our internal review, you can contact:

- **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**

For complaints about SDA service delivery, tenancy rights breaches, or neglect.

Call 1800 035 544 or lodge online at [ndiscommission.gov.au](https://ndiscommission.gov.au).

- **ACT Human Rights Commission**

For complaints about disability rights, housing discrimination, or abuse.

Call (02) 6205 2222 or visit [hrc.act.gov.au](https://hrc.act.gov.au).

- **ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)**

For tenancy-related matters under the ACT Residential Tenancies Act.

Call (02) 6207 1740 or visit [acat.act.gov.au](https://acat.act.gov.au).

**MAINTENANCE**

**TENANCY**

**SDA**

**(02) 6248 7716**  
**chc@chcaustralia.com.au**  
**www.chcaustralia.com.au**  
**PO Box 6239, O'Connor 2602**  
**Unit 224/29 Braybrooke St, Bruce, ACT 2617**

