FUTURE HOME & LIVING / COMMUNITY FRONT DOOR

An Open Future Home & Living Community

How The Helpers invites people to learn, explore and plan without creating a closed SIL waiting list

External positioning paper for participants, families, referrers and community partners

FRONT DOOR 01 — POSITIONING PAPER

The Helpers Future Home & Living

Person-led • relationship-centred • evidence-informed • open to ongoing participation

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Table of contents

Use this paper as a working reference. Page numbers are fixed to this review edition.

Executive summary	3
Why we are building an open community	4
Open door, not waiting list	5
How the community works	6
The participant remains at the centre	7
Relationships before real estate	8
Fairness: nobody has to miss out	9
Privacy, consent and respectful information sharing	10
Integrated, not locked in	11
From community participation to an individual journey	12
Founding community and future cohorts	13
What families can expect next	14
References and source notes	15

How to use this paper

This paper explains the public promise. It does not allocate homes, assess eligibility or guarantee NDIS funding.

1. Executive summary

The Helpers is building a community around future planning, not a queue for one SIL vacancy.

The public promise

People can join the Future Home & Living Community to learn, plan, build skills, strengthen relationships and explore future housing and support options. Joining does not reserve a home, guarantee funding or require a person to use The Helpers as their eventual provider.

The model is designed to remain open over time. Some people may be years away from moving. Others may already be exploring SIL, ILO, SDA, social housing, ordinary housing with supports or another solution. The common starting point is knowledge, participant voice and early planning.

- Open participation in learning and exploration.
- Individual decisions about where, how and with whom to live.
- No automatic entitlement to a particular house because someone joined earlier.
- No assumption that existing friends must become housemates.
- No requirement to purchase multiple The Helpers services.
- A pathway that can pause, repeat or change direction when the participant's preferences change.

Why this matters

A closed SIL waiting list encourages people to compete for vacancies. An open Future Home & Living Community encourages people to build knowledge, relationships and options before a property is chosen.

2. Why we are building an open community

Families often start asking the same question years before a move: “What should we be doing now?”

The Helpers has been approached by a growing number of participants and families who want to prepare for future home and living arrangements. Their circumstances differ, but the underlying need is similar: they want time to understand the options, include the participant properly, reduce dependence on crisis decisions and build a pathway that can mature over several years.

KNOWLEDGE	VOICE	RELATIONSHIPS	EXPERIENCE	EVIDENCE
Understand the options	Hear the participant	Protect belonging	Have a go	Learn what support is needed

Current NDIS home-and-living guidance asks participants to think about their goals, support needs, informal/community supports, where they would like to live and who they would like to live with before the evidence stage. [R01]

The Helpers’ role

Create the structure, information, opportunities and records that help each person move from “we should think about this one day” to an informed individual Future Home & Living plan.

3. Open door, not waiting list

Joining the community means joining a process of learning and exploration - not taking a place in a queue.

What joining DOES mean	What joining DOES NOT mean
Receiving Future Home & Living information and learning materials.	A guaranteed SIL placement.
Being invited to relevant group discussions, events and learning cohorts.	A promise that the NDIS will fund a chosen model.
Beginning to understand the participant's own preferences.	A reservation of a future house or bedroom.
Building a record of interests, relationships and planning horizon.	An obligation to use The Helpers for SIL, Support Coordination, Plan Management or housing.
Having the opportunity to progress into an individual journey when ready.	Automatic access to another participant's private information or friendship network.

Language matters

We recommend "Community Registry" rather than "waiting list". A registry records participation and planning. A waiting list implies entitlement to a scarce future vacancy.

4. How the community works

New participants can enter while others are already further along the pathway.

INTERESTED	CONNECTED	LEARNING	EXPLORING	DESIGNING	TRANSITIONING
Hear about the community	Consent and contact established	LRN-00 to LRN-05	PTH / STG activities	Evidence + model design	Funding + housing + move

This is a continuous-entry model. A person may stay in the Learning phase for several years. Another person may join later but progress quickly because their circumstances are different. The purpose is not to race people through stages.

Once someone begins an individual Future Home & Living journey, participant-specific care, assessment and risk information should move into the formal participant record environment. The community registry should remain a minimal front-door dataset, not a clinical record.

One important boundary

The community is broad. House-specific groups are narrow. A person can belong to the community without ever being considered for a particular shared home.

5. The participant remains at the centre

Family involvement is valuable, but it does not replace the person's own will and preferences.



Choose
Home, privacy, people and daily life

Prepare
Experience, confidence and practical support

Protect
Voluntary family roles and reliable backup

Connect
Relationships beyond the paid support roster

Review
What helps life become better?

Consent, privacy, safeguarding and human judgement across every layer

The NDIA's Supported Decision Making Policy states that adults have an equal right to make decisions affecting their lives, that people should have communication support where needed, and that decisions should be directed by the person's will, preferences and rights. [R02]

- The participant can need significant decision support and still remain central to the process.
- Parents, siblings and professionals can contribute knowledge without automatically becoming the decision-maker.
- The test is not whether the participant attended the meeting; it is whether their preferences influenced what happened next.

6. Relationships before real estate

The starting question is not “Who can fill this vacancy?” It is “Who matters to this person?”

The Future Home & Living model treats friendship, chosen family, existing social networks and community belonging as part of planning. A relationship can inform future possibilities without becoming a promise of co-residence.

FRIENDSHIP	EXPLORATION	TRIAL	CHOICE
I like this person	I want to spend more time together	I want to test shared routines	I want / do not want to live together

A participant may prefer to live with a friend, near a friend, in the same apartment complex, in the same suburb, or independently with strong community connections. All of these are legitimate possibilities.

Privacy safeguard

A participant naming a friend does not enrol that friend in the program. The other person must be approached only where there is an appropriate permission/consent basis, and their own preferences must be established independently.

7. Fairness: nobody has to miss out

Fair access to the community is different from automatic access to a particular home.

Fairness principle	How it operates
Open access to learning	People can express interest and join future learning cohorts over time.
No first-come entitlement to housemates	Housing decisions later consider participant preference, compatibility, support needs, safety, funding and location.
No closed founding club	Founding families help test the model but do not own future vacancies.
Different pace is acceptable	People can pause, repeat or remain in learning without losing community membership.
Transparent housing processes	When a specific housing opportunity emerges, criteria and decision processes should be explained to the people involved.

The fairness promise

Equal opportunity to explore. Individual choice in deciding where, how and with whom to live.

8. Privacy, consent and respectful information sharing

The front door should collect less information than a formal service intake.

At expression-of-interest stage, The Helpers should collect only information reasonably necessary to maintain contact, understand broad planning interests and support participation in the community. Detailed diagnoses, NDIS numbers, medical reports, behaviour information and plans are not needed simply to join the conversation.

- Explain who is collecting the information and why.
- Tell people how the information will be used and who it may be disclosed to.
- Obtain appropriate consent before collecting sensitive information, unless an applicable exception exists.
- Do not use one participant's relationship information to contact another person without an appropriate permission basis.
- Provide a clear route to correct details, change communication preferences or leave the community.

OAIC guidance says sensitive information generally requires consent and must be reasonably necessary for the entity's functions; privacy notices should explain the circumstances and purpose of collection. [R04-R06]

9. Integrated, not locked in

The Helpers may ultimately provide several services, but the community must preserve genuine choice.

The Helpers can offer an integrated pathway across learning, Support Coordination, Plan Management, community participation, direct supports and potentially SIL. That integration can be useful, but it also creates actual or perceived conflicts of interest that need to be openly managed.

- Joining the community does not require a person to use The Helpers as their future SIL provider.
- External Support Coordinators, allied health professionals, housing providers and advocates should be welcome.
- Alternative providers should be visible when choices are being made.
- Housing and support agreements should be clearly separated where possible.
- A person should be able to change one service without automatically losing access to another.

Current NDIS provider guidance requires reasonable steps to avoid and manage actual and perceived conflicts of interest and warns against limiting participant choice to benefit the provider. [R03]

10. From community participation to an individual journey

A person crosses from “community” to “formal journey” only when more detailed individual planning is appropriate.

COMMUNITY REGISTRY	LEARNING	INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY	SHIFTCARE	LIGHT
Minimal contact + interest data	LRN materials + group participation	Consent + formal FHL record	Assessments, risks, evidence	Journey, gaps, actions, dashboard

A transfer into the individual journey should occur when the participant/family wants structured planning, when individual assessments or risk information need to be recorded, when The Helpers is asked to coordinate a formal NDIS/housing process, or when service delivery begins.

Do not over-collect early

The community registry should be deliberately smaller than the later ShiftCare participant record.

11. Founding community and future cohorts

The first families help build the model, but the model stays open.

The first participants and families can be recognised as a Founding Community because they are contributing questions, testing learning materials and helping The Helpers understand what an effective pathway needs to look like. This recognition should not create preferential entitlement to future housing.

Community structure	Purpose
Founding Community	Co-design and test the early model.
Learning Cohorts	Participants/families work through shared education modules.
Interest / Geography Cohorts	People explore a location, housing type or life stage together.
Relationship Circles	Participants who already know or choose to know one another share ordinary activities.
House-specific Exploration Group	Only later, where participants independently want to explore a particular living arrangement.

12. What families can expect next

A simple, respectful front door.

The proposed first contact process is intentionally light:

1. RECEIVE	2. EXPRESS INTEREST	3. CONNECT	4. LEARN	5. CHOOSE
Positioning paper + LRN-00	Short EOI form	Introductory call / meeting	Join suitable cohort	Decide whether to start an individual journey

Families should not be required to produce NDIS plans, diagnoses or clinical reports simply to hear about the community. Those records become relevant later if the person chooses to progress into individual planning.

> **The invitation**
>
> Come and learn. Bring the participant's voice. Bring your questions. Nothing about joining the community forces a future housing decision.

13. References and source notes

[R01] NDIS, “How to ask for home and living supports”.
https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/home-and-living/exploring-home-and-living-options/how-ask-home-and-living-supports

[R02] NDIS, “Supported decision making policy”.
https://ndis.gov.au/policies-rules-and-legal/policy/supported-decision-making-policy

[R03] NDIS, “What is a conflict of interest”.
https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/provider-responsibilities/what-conflict-interest

[R04] OAIC, APP 3 - Collection of solicited personal information.
https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles/australian-privacy-principles-guidelines/chapter-3-app-3-collection-of-solicited-personal-information

[R05] OAIC, APP 5 - Notification of collection.
https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles/australian-privacy-principles-guidelines/chapter-5-app-5-notification-of-the-collection-of-personal-information

[R06] OAIC, APP 6 - Use or disclosure of personal information.
https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles/australian-privacy-principles-guidelines/chapter-6-app-6-use-or-disclosure-of-personal-information

Status of this paper

This paper is a positioning and service-design document. It is not legal advice, an NDIS funding decision or a promise of housing. Individual circumstances require individual assessment.