

EVOLVEHOUSING

A photograph of two women sitting side-by-side, smiling. They are wearing blue and white patterned dresses. The woman on the left has her hair pulled back, and the woman on the right has shoulder-length brown hair. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with a brick wall on the left.

SPECIALIST DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION RESIDENT HANDBOOK

WHAT WE DO FOR OUR RESIDENTS

At Evolve Housing Group, we aim to do more than put a roof over our residents' heads. We offer people a place in a thriving and inclusive community, with access to a variety of programs and tailored support to enhance every part of their life. Our purpose is to enable more people to live in quality homes in thriving and inclusive communities.



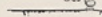
A HOME

Our social and affordable housing residents are offered a home that is well suited to their needs and budget. Our properties are of a high quality and amenity that supports community connection. We are responsive to support and maintenance requests and manage our residents' tenancies fairly.



A NEW SKILL

We offer support for residents who wish to access training, employment pathways and workshops relating to digital skills and money management.



A PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN

Social Housing residents who may require extra support are offered a Personal Support Plan to address personal health, wellbeing, education, training and employment needs.



A GRANT OR FINANCIAL HELP

Our residents have access to a variety of grants to help them get active within their community and improve their lives. We offer grants to support secondary and tertiary students, and to support young people to access sporting and physical activities.



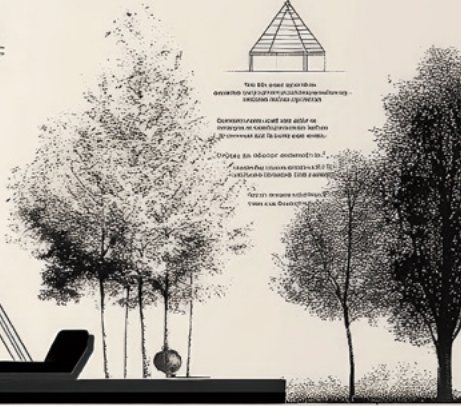
AN EXPERIENCE

We aim to create thriving and inclusive communities where people belong and feel connected. We regularly hold events and activities that cater to the needs of our residents. These events are an opportunity to meet neighbours, feel part of a community, and enjoy new experiences.



A BRIGHT FUTURE

With quality, safe and secure housing in a connected community, our residents can focus on improving their health, happiness and overall wellbeing. We are proud to offer housing and support across the housing continuum, encouraging housing independence.



A VOICE

Our residents can advocate on behalf of their communities through our Resident and Maintenance Advisory Groups, and our Reflection Reconciliation Action Plan working group to inform Evolve Housing programs and initiatives. There are also opportunities for residents to volunteer and get involved in our resident phone service called the Friendship Aged Network.



THRIVING COMMUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Evolve Housing acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land where we deliver our housing and services. We acknowledge and pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future. We welcome all First Nations People to our services, as we walk together towards reconciliation.

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Welcome from the CEO

Dear resident,

Welcome to your new home, and your new journey as a resident of Evolve Housing. We hope that you settle in quickly and soon find yourself feeling connected with your community.

Here at Evolve Housing, our purpose is to enable more people to live in quality homes in thriving and inclusive communities. We are committed to offering you an exceptional standard of customer service and treating you with respect, dignity and fairness at all times.

Evolve Housing is a registered Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and our residents come from all walks of life and have different needs. We will work with you to provide opportunities for choice and inclusion in your new tenancy while supporting your independence and ability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of your goals and personalised support services.

We aim to offer a variety of support services, programs and activities so hopefully there will be something that suits you. We also have a highly qualified in-house support team who can provide one-on-one tailored support.

We hope that this handbook is helpful and contains all the information you need about your SDA tenancy. If you have any questions at any point during your tenancy with us call the Evolve Housing contact centre on 1800 693 865 or speak to your Housing Manager.

Kind regards,

Lyall Gorman

CEO, Evolve Housing Group

About Evolve Housing

At Evolve Housing, we believe in everyone's right to a home — somewhere to feel safe and secure and to be part of a community. Although our core service is providing housing to those in need, we do more than simply put a roof over our residents' heads. We deliver solutions that empower people to reach their full potential, pursue their goals and feel connected to their community.

OUR VISION

Thriving communities for all people.

OUR PURPOSE

To enable more people to live in quality homes in thriving and inclusive communities.

WHO WE ARE

Evolve Housing is an award-winning, Tier-1 nationally registered community housing provider (CHP). We are recognised as one of the most innovative, high performing CHPs in Australia. We are also a registered not-for-profit, with Deductible Gift Recipient and Public Benevolent Institution status.

We are based in New South Wales, with offices in Parramatta and Penrith.

What we do

- Safe and secure housing for people experiencing homelessness or those on lower incomes experiencing housing stress,
- Support services, programs, financial grants and activities that empower individuals, build their capabilities, and provide pathways to greater independence, and
- Quality, accessible, affordable housing developments that build strong, integrated and sustainable communities.

We provide subsidised housing to people living on very low to moderate incomes who are unable to afford appropriate housing in the private market.

We engage in partnerships with government, developers and investors to create new social and affordable housing stock to help meet a growing demand. Our properties cater to a diverse range of needs, household sizes and incomes so we can offer a variety of options to our residents.

We help people to reach their potential by providing support services and programs. These include education and training programs that empower residents to participate in their communities, pursue their career goals and participate in the workforce.

We also offer tailored support plans to improve physical and personal wellbeing. Our regular social activities bring people together, which helps residents to feel welcome and part of a local community.

We are committed to working with our key stakeholders and partners to reduce homelessness and housing stress.

01

Welcome home



1.0 About us

Welcome to your new home. We aim to assist you in living to your full potential in our Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Enrolled Dwelling.

Evolve Housing is a registered NDIS provider of Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). Our organisation provides and maintains the SDA Enrolled Dwelling according to NDIS (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Rules 2020 and state tenancy legislation.

Our person-centered approach allows us to match you and other SDA Residents to maintain your preferred lifestyle in your home.

Our services include providing a well-maintained home with other people with similar aspirations and interests so you can live in a congenial and protected home environment.

YOUR DETAILS

Please fill in your details for easy reference.

Your Housing Manager is:

Your Tenant Reference Number is:

(use this number when you pay your rent and utilities)

What category is your property? Eg, Social, Affordable, Leasehold.

SOCIAL

AFFORDABLE

LEASEHOLD

Your address is:

OUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Website:

evolvehousing.com.au

Email:

info@evolvehousing.com.au

Telephone:

1800 693 865

Head office address:

9– 13 Argyle Street, Parramatta NSW 2150

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Our services include:

- Helping to settle residents into their new home
- Managing the SDA Enrolled Dwelling to ensure it is in safe repair
- Collecting rent and tenancy-related payments, and
- Collaborating with Supported Independent Living (SIL) providers who support our SDA Residents.

We are committed to working with our SDA Residents, their networks, service providers, governments, councils and others to ensure each resident can live with dignity.

1.1 About this handbook

The SDA Handbook is designed to provide information about your rights and responsibilities as an SDA resident and our responsibilities as your property manager.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Contact	Evolve Housing
Phone	1800 693 865
Email	sda@evolvehousing.com.au
Address	9–13 Argyle Street, Parramatta NSW 2150



02

Accommodation Agreement



2.1 Your agreement

Before living in our residence, you would have signed an Accommodation Agreement (tenancy agreement).

This Accommodation Agreement is a legal contract that sets out your rights and responsibilities, our responsibilities and other information that is expected as part of your residency.



For more information, please visit [evolvehousing.com.au](https://www.evolvehousing.com.au)

2.2 Your rights

Your rights are described further in this handbook. They are the same as any individuals in Australia and any state or territory tenancy agreement.

In summary, your rights include:

- Equal and fair treatment
- Being shown respect
- Choosing your lifestyle
- Having the SDA Enrolled Dwelling maintained in good order
- Living in a safe, secure environment
- Having your privacy and confidentiality respected
- Having the security of tenure within the terms of your Accommodation Agreement
- Freedom of expression and self-determination
- Privacy, including within your room and in the SDA Enrolled Dwelling
- Having your needs catered to in a safe and clean environment
- Feeling comfortable to raise concerns regarding the services received and having these concerns acted upon promptly
- Making complaints without fear of retribution
- Living free from violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse
- Living free from sexual misconduct.

2.3 Your responsibilities

Living in any home requires you to act responsibly. Some of your responsibilities are described in this handbook and included in detail in your Accommodation Agreement.

In summary, your responsibilities are to:

- Pay all rent and any other charges on time and as agreed
- Keep your property in good order and look after it
- Keep the environment clean
- Not use the property for any illegal purpose
- Report any faults:
 - maintenance, electrical, leaks
 - gas/water etc.
- Accept our rights to entry for inspection and maintenance requirements
- Take reasonable steps to avoid fire and electricity accidents and to stay safe
- Respect the rights of other residents and neighbours.
For example, their right to:
 - Freedom from harassment or violence
 - Safety
 - Privacy
 - Comfort (keep noise levels low, especially at night, keep common areas free of mess, remove rubbish regularly)
- Provide the correct amount of notice if you decide to end your tenancy
- Leave the property in a similar condition to when you moved in, except for everyday wear and tear.

2.4 Our commitment to you

Our commitment to you is further described in this handbook and detailed in your Accommodation Agreement.

In summary, we agree to:

- Always treat you with courtesy and respect
- Maintain your home in a good state of repair
- Manage all aspects of the Accommodation Agreement
- Respond promptly to maintenance requests
- Secure your home with locks and security features
- Listen and respond to your feedback and resolve problems quickly
- Provide you with adequate notice of any changes in the listed terms of your Accommodation Agreement
- Issue invoices for payments on time
- Record rent payments and receipts for you to access when you wish
- Make reasonable adjustments to the SDA Enrolled Dwelling to meet your needs
- Comply with all relevant legislation, guidelines, codes of conduct, regulations and standards
- Protect your privacy and confidential information
- Work with the appointed service provider that supports your best interests and reflects your goals and preferences.

2.5 Rental Bonds

Any Rental Bond will be listed in your Accommodation Agreement if you live in an SDA Enrolled Dwelling.

A bond is a deposit paid to us by you. We send it to Fair Trading via their website.

At the end of the Accommodation Agreement, we may use the bond for tenancy-related charges.

2.6 Rent

Rent for SDA residents is set as required by the NDIS guidelines and recorded in your Accommodation Agreement.

Rent is charged at 25% of the Disability Support Pension (DSP), plus the full Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) entitlement.

Your rent will be listed on your Accommodation Agreement.

2.6.1 Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

If you get a Centrelink Benefit such as the DSP, you can receive CRA. We will determine the amount of CRA you are entitled to during reviews of your rental subsidy. You need to claim your CRA entitlement from Centrelink, as we will charge you rent based on 100% of your CRA.

2.6.2 How to pay your rent

From the start date of your lease, you will pay two weeks' rent either weekly or fortnightly, as agreed with your Evolve Housing Manager so that your rent is always two weeks in advance.

There are two ways you can choose to pay your rent:

Method	Details
Centrepay	Centrepay is a voluntary and easy payment option available to Centrelink customers. You can use Centrepay to make regular deductions from your Centrelink payments. Go to www.humanservices.gov.au/Centrepay for more information and to set up your Centrepay deductions.
Bank account	You can set up a direct debit from your bank account. Please talk to your Evolve Housing Manager if you would like to set up this form of payment.

Falling behind in your rent (rent arrears) or other payments (non-rent arrears) can put you at risk of losing your tenancy. It is essential to pay your rent on time and not fall behind.

Make sure you let us know if you are falling behind. We will work with you to organise a payment, a repayment plan, or refer you to financial counselling.

2.7 Taking leave

If you plan to be away from your home for more than six (6) weeks, you need to inform your Evolve Housing Manager. Please provide us with an emergency contact to get in touch with in case of an emergency whilst you are away.

Evolve Housing will approve an absence from the property for up to three (3) consecutive months if we are satisfied that your absence does not exceed twelve (12) months in a five (5) year period, and:

- Payment of your tenancy charges, such as rent and fees, have been arranged
- The property is securely locked and will be adequately cared for.

2.8 Ending your tenancy

Your tenancy can be ended by you or Evolve Housing. All termination notices must comply with the Accommodation Agreement. Ensure you know your rights and responsibilities when ending a tenancy.

To ensure the security of your tenure, we will only end your tenancy in situations where you have breached the conditions of your Accommodation Agreement. Our team will give you enough time to find somewhere else to live and move your belongings.

Should you wish to end the tenancy, you must give us 90 days' notice in writing. If you cannot meet this deadline due to exceptional circumstances, you will need to contact us to negotiate a shorter timeframe.

Once we receive your notice, we will contact you to discuss the requirements for vacating the property. We will also discuss with you any issues such as:

- Outstanding payments
- Disconnection of any services in your name
- Any repairs, cleaning or rubbish removal that will need to be done
- Access to the premises/room for viewings by potential new residents
- Repayment of any rent in advance and bond (if you have paid a bond).

03

Your Home (SDA Enrolled Dwelling)



3.1 Looking after your home

You have a responsibility to look after your home.

This includes:

- Keeping your home clean
- Notifying Evolve Housing of any damage
- Not causing any intentional damage
- Preventing damage through negligence
- Preventing visitors from causing intentional damage
- Keeping shared areas clean and free of obstruction, including:
 - Entrances
 - Halls and stairs
 - Lounge areas
 - Shared kitchens, bathrooms, yards and parking spaces
 - Paths and driveways.

Evolve Housing is responsible for:

- Providing the property to you in a clean state and a reasonable state of repair
- Managing the property
- Maintaining a safe environment
- Repairing any issues promptly
- Taking your reasonable wear and tear into consideration

3.2 Rubbish

- Shared areas must be rubbish-free.
- Council bins
 - Please place household rubbish in the council bins
 - Place these bins outside on collection day
 - Return them when emptied
- Large items
 - Can be removed by the council in an organised clean-up (if relevant)
 - A contractor may be supplied at your expense.

For enquiries about rubbish-disposal:

Contact	Evolve Housing
Phone	1800 693 865
Email	sda@evolvehousing.com.au

3.3 Pests

Undesired pests have a history of living, invading, causing damage, eating human foods, and acting as a means of spreading a disease or causing other harm to human habitation.

To keep your property as pest-free as possible, you can:

- Wrap food and/or keep it in airtight containers
- Clean all surfaces, benches and floors
- Clean cupboards, shelving
- Avoid leaving rubbish out
- Wrap your rubbish and place it in bins
- Avoid bringing in soft furnishings from the street.

3.4 Modifications to your SDA Enrolled Dwelling

Evolve Housing supports affordable modifications to help improve living standards for SDA residents. Modifications should be undertaken before entering your new home, but we recognise that this may not be possible. If you require modifications, you will need to obtain the approval of a health practitioner such as an Occupational Therapist.

For more information, contact your Evolve Housing Manager to discuss.

Contact	Evolve Housing
Phone	1800 693 865
Email	sda@evolvehousing.com.au

3.5 Security

Your security is important to us. We have installed some safety features in your home. Approval is required to change any of these features, including locks. Make sure that you take care when allowing visitors to enter your home.

You can do this by:

- Asking who they are and where they are from
- Seeking identification
- Asking for a contact number to confirm the visitor's identification.

Before leaving your home, make sure that you always lock up the property.

3.6 Fire safety and smoke alarms

Always phone 000 and leave your home if there is a severe fire threat.

To make your home safer, you can take these important precautions:

- Do not damage, remove or interfere with smoke alarms
- Report to Evolve Housing if any alarms are not working*
- Do not leave pans unattended when cooking on the stove
- Never put water on a fire that is caused by cooking oil
- Do not put items too close to, or dry clothes on a heater
- Turn off heaters at night before sleeping
- Keep fire exits free of clutter
- Know your emergency exit plan.

* Evolve Housing will arrange for all smoke alarms to be checked as per requirements

3.7 Electrical safety

Remember the rules for using electricity correctly to be safe around your home.

Here are some basic precautions you can take to avoid dangerous shocks or fires:

- Do not mix water and electricity
 - Do not use an electrical appliance near water
 - Keep liquids away from appliances, e.g. video game consoles, laptops, computers and televisions
- Report all broken switches, plugs and light fittings to Evolve Housing
- Never try to repair broken electrical cords, plugs or fittings yourself
- Replace broken electrical cords, plugs or fittings
- Clean the lint filter on your drier after each use
- Switch off appliances when you are not using them
- Do not overload outlets with too many plugs
- To unplug an appliance,
 - Turn the power-point off
 - Hold the plug while removing
- Put socket covers over outlets to keep children safe.

3.8 Water usage

Depending on your Accommodation Agreement, you may be held responsible for water use charges. As part of our sustainable practices, our appliances meet standards for water efficiency.

To avoid excess water use:

- Turn off taps after use
- Advise us of any leaks as soon as you notice them
- Do not interfere with the flow of showerheads or change them
- Monitor the time you spend in the shower.

3.9 Keys

You are responsible for your keys. Do not attach your address to your house keys as this could give someone access if you lose them.

Contact Evolve Housing on 1800 693 865 if you lose your keys. We can help you to access the property or contact a locksmith. Please note this may be tenant charged.

For security purposes, if you lose or damage any security keys to garages, you will need to pay for a replacement.

3.10 Pets

Many of our properties do not allow pets. If you have an assistance dog, Evolve Housing will consider approval in line with the Equal Opportunity Act.

You will need to seek consent to keep a pet. Please note that we may refuse to give consent to your request when another resident living in your home:

- Has not consented to the keeping of the pet at the property; and
- Has reasonable grounds for not consenting to keep the pet at the property; or concerns that the pet would create a health and safety hazard if it was to be kept at the property.

If your request to keep a pet at the property is approved, you are responsible for the following:

- The animal must be on a lead or adequately restrained while on common property
- The animal must be regularly treated for fleas
- The animal must not cause any nuisance or interfere unreasonably with any person's use or enjoyment of the property
- The animal is kept in good health and free from fleas and parasites
- Any animal waste must be disposed of to prevent noxious odours or to contaminate the environment
- Reasonable steps must be taken to minimise the transfer of airborne allergens from the animal, such as regular vacuuming and grooming.

If you fail to comply with the above, you may be asked to remove the animal from the property.

Any approval to keep a pet only applies to the animal in the application and does not allow for any additional replacement or substitute animals.

3.11 Access to your property

Evolve Housing will inspect your property as per Table 1 Right of Entry, at the end of your tenancy, if repairs or inspections are needed and if you request us to.

We inspect to ensure everything is in good order and that you are looking after your home as required in your Accommodation Agreement.

As per your Accommodation Agreement, we will provide you with notice before any visits or inspections.

Table 1: Right of Entry

Reason	Notice required
To inspect the property	At least seven (7) days of written notice each time (up to four (4) times in a 12-month period)
To carry out or assess the need for necessary repairs or maintenance	At least two (2) days of notice each time
To carry out urgent repairs, such as fixing a burst water pipe, a gas leak, or a blocked toilet	None
To comply with health and safety obligations, such as inspecting swimming/spa pool fencing	At least two (2) days of notice each time
To inspect or assess the need to repair or replace a smoke alarm	At least two (2) days of notice each time
To repair or replace a smoke alarm	At least 1-hour notice
To obtain a property valuation	At least seven (7) days of notice each time (once in 12 months)
To take photos or videos to advertise a property for sale or rent	Reasonable notice and reasonable opportunity must be given in order for the SDA Resident to move any personal belongings out of the picture frame/video scope (only once in 28 days before marketing starts or the agreement ends)
To show a prospective SDA Resident (in the last 14 days before the tenancy is due to end)	Reasonable each time
In an emergency	None

Reason	Notice required
If our organisation/agent has tried to contact the SDA Resident and has been unable to and has reasonable cause for serious concern about the health or safety of the SDA Resident or other occupants	None
If our organisation reasonably believes the SDA Resident has abandoned the property	None
To show the property to prospective buyers	Fourteen (14) days of written notice before the first inspection. After the first inspection, the SDA Resident can agree on a suitable timeframe but no more than two (2) inspections per week with 48 hours of notice each time

These limits in Table 1: Right of Entry do not apply:

- In an emergency
- To carry out urgent repairs
- If the property is abandoned
- If the Tribunal orders, or
- If the SDA Resident otherwise agrees.

3.12 Reporting repairs

To report repairs:

Contact	Evolve Housing
Phone	1800 693 865
Email	sda@evolvehousing.com.au

3.12 Emergencies

For emergencies involving:

- Flooding
- Serious storm damage
- Fire
- Gas leak



Phone emergency services on 000

3.13 Urgent repairs

The following incidents are identified as urgent repairs:

- A burst water service or a serious water service leak
- A blocked or broken toilet
- A serious roof leak
- A gas leak
- An electrical fault
- Flooding or severe flood damage
- A severe storm or fire damage
- A failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the property
- A failure or breakdown of the hot water service
- A failure or breakdown of the stove or oven
- A failure or breakdown of a heater or air-conditioner
- A fault or damage that makes the property unsafe or unsecure.

We may need to access your property for urgent repairs without notice to limit any damage.

3.14 Repair timeframes

Types of repairs	Action timeframe
Urgent repair <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electrical danger such as exposed wires• Burst water pipe or sewer• Cannot lock the house	24 hours
Priority repairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toilets not flushing• Minor leaks• Grab rails loose or falling off• Faulty smoke alarms	From one (1) to five (5) working days
Responsive repair <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broken clothesline• Blocked gutters• Exhaust fans	28 days

3.15 Home contents insurance

We recommend that you take out a home contents insurance policy to ensure your personal belongings and furniture are insured against damage or loss due to theft, fire or water damage.

3.16 Lawns and gardens

Evolve Housing Limited will look after all aspects of the lawn and gardens unless stipulated in the Accommodation Agreement.

3.17 Internet and subscription TV

SDA Residents are liable for any additional costs relating to internet and subscription TV services, such as Foxtel, Netflix, Stan and Wi-Fi. If you wish to add additional services to the property that may require adjustments to your home, you must seek written approval.

These adjustments could include drilling, antennae installation or similar.



04

You as an SDA Resident — services and support



You should consider Evolve Housing to be your landlord. Our services relate directly to the physical property, including managing water, electricity and gas services, and ensuring the building is safe, well-maintained, and in good repair.

Any other supports provided under your NDIS plan are the responsibility of a Supported Independent Living (SIL) provider. You will be required to enter into a separate Service Agreement with a SIL provider for the delivery of these supports, such as assistance with daily personal activities.

You are free to choose your SIL provider, and your choice will not impact your tenancy with Evolve Housing.

Where a shared living arrangement is in place, residents may choose different SIL providers. If you choose a provider that is different from other residents in the same home, you will not be required to leave your accommodation or tenancy. Evolve Housing will respect and support your choice and will work collaboratively with all providers to ensure services are delivered effectively.

4.2 How to be a good SDA Resident and neighbour

A good SDA Resident and neighbour respects the rights of others to live in peace, comfort and privacy, through:

- Not playing loud music
- Keeping noise levels down, especially at night
- Not behaving in a manner that is a nuisance and annoying to others
- Not behaving in an aggressive, bullying or violent manner
- Asking your visitors to be respectful of others and not be a nuisance or annoyance to the household or neighbours
- Not leaving rubbish or other items in common areas
- Allowing others their right to privacy and confidentiality
- Listening to others' concerns and trying to resolve problems early
- Being happy and positive in your actions and discussions with others.

Let your Evolve Housing Manager know as soon as possible if you have any issues. We can offer support or strategies to help.

4.3 Violence, bullying and assault

Violence, assault, bullying and discrimination against any SDA Resident will not be tolerated and are grounds for terminating your tenancy.

Evolve Housing recognises your right to feel safe and to live in an environment where you are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of abuse.

We will support any person who has witnessed or suspects abuse has occurred towards one of our SDA Residents to make a report and be confident of doing so without fear of retribution. Our reporting process includes any kind of abuse, including financial, emotional, social, psychological, sexual, physical abuse or neglect.

You can make a report to whomever you feel comfortable and safe with. This may include one of our employees, our CEO, a family member, your advocate or a trusted friend.

If you would like to speak with someone outside of Evolve Housing, you can contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:

- Phone: **1800 035 544** (free call from landlines) or TTY **133 677**
- **National Relay Service** and ask for **1800 035 544**. Interpreters can be arranged.

You can also complete a **NDIS Complaint Contact Form** online on the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website.

Evolve Housing acknowledges that prevention is the best protection from abuse and neglect. We recognise our duty of care to put in place prevention strategies that include appropriate protocols to identify potential risks. Our prevention strategies include only employing skilled staff who respect SDA Residents' rights and are aware of current legislation and policies regarding abuse and neglect.

Our staff can assist you, your family or your advocate to access our complaints process and raise any concerns regarding our service provision.

Where abuse, harm or neglect has occurred, Evolve Housing will respond quickly, considerately and effectively to protect you from further harm. We will give you access to any required counselling, medical and/or legal assistance.

4.4 Privacy

Evolve Housing complies with all relevant privacy legislation and has systems for the collection, use, disclosure, quality, security, accuracy and correction of personal information relating to you as our SDA Resident.

Your privacy and dignity will always be maintained. You will be asked to sign a Participant. Information Consent Agreement so we may collect, use and disclose your personal information to comply with the Privacy Act 1988. If you want more information about this, contact our Privacy Officer. Information regarding your privacy is also included in your service agreement.

Your privacy contact person is:

Contact	Evolve Housing
Phone	1800 693 865
Email	privacy@evolvehousing.com.au

Requests for access to the personal information we hold about you can be made by:

- Phone: 1800 693 865
- Email: privacy@evolvehousing.com.au
- Visiting or writing to us: 9–13 Argyle Street, Parramatta NSW 2150

If we lose your personal information, someone uses your information when they're not allowed to and this is likely to cause serious harm to you, or someone else affected by it or we couldn't stop the harm, we will:

- Make sure your information doesn't get shared further
- Investigate and work out what happened
- Tell you, and anyone else affected by the breach
- Report it to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Where you believe a breach of your privacy or the Privacy Act has occurred, you can also contact our Privacy Officer in any of the ways shown above.

If you do not receive a response within thirty (30) days, or you are dissatisfied with the response, you may complain to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) by:

- Mail: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001
- Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au
- Online: www.oaic.gov.au

Our Privacy Policy can be supplied to you at any time. You can ask for the Privacy Policy to be provided to you in your first language or in an easy-to-read format. You can also request to speak with our Privacy Officer.

4.5 Access to information about our services

The best way to receive information about all the services we can provide you is to speak to your Evolve Housing Manager. You are entitled to receive information regarding our services. We will aim to provide you with information about the services most appropriate for you.

4.6 Complaints

Your feedback allows us to provide a safe and secure environment. We actively seek your input. Feedback can be provided anonymously, through written or online surveys or through conversations.

The following table will give you some extra information on providing feedback on specific issues:

Table 2: Type of complaint

Types of complaint	Who to speak with/complain to
Problems with furniture, blinds, curtains — dirty, broken or not working	Evolve Housing
Problems with your room, bathroom or shared areas — dirty, broken or not working	Evolve Housing
Issues with locks	Evolve Housing
Problems with another SDA Resident	Talk to your housemate about the problem or ask the SIL Provider to intervene and help. If this does not work, talk to Evolve Housing.
Problem with your support provider	If you are unsatisfied with your support, you may be able to change your SIL Provider. If all avenues have been exhausted, you can complain to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
Problem with a worker who comes to repair something	Evolve Housing

Types of complaint	Who to speak with/complain to
I don't like the food	Tell your SIL Provider what you like to eat. Speak to your housemates about what they like to eat and see if you can change the menu, if relevant.
Problem with too much noise	Speak to your housemates about the noise levels to see if they can make changes. Talk to your SIL Provider and Evolve Housing.
Other problems	Talk to your SDA Provider, Support Coordinator, or Evolve Housing Manager.

You always have the right to expect the best possible standard of service from Evolve Housing. We will treat any concern or complaint you provide as a severe issue. No matter the situation, staff will not react badly to your complaint. You should feel safe knowing that our staff will not retaliate or hurt you.

You can make a complaint regarding our services. If you do not feel comfortable making a complaint, someone else can do this on your behalf, including:

- An advocate
- A family member
- A close friend
- Your care worker
- A person you know and trust.

You can complain to our organisation through the following mechanisms:

Contact	Address
Phone	1800 693 865
Email	ihear@evolvehousing.com.au
Letter	Evolve Housing, 9-13 Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150
In-person	Please call Evolve Housing to make an appointment with our Complaints Officer.
Anonymously	An anonymous complaint can be made via any of the forms of communication mentioned above. Please state that you wish to remain anonymous.

Once a complaint has been received, the Complaints Officer will investigate the complaint and work with the team to find a resolution. The Complaints Officer will write a letter to confirm that your complaint has been received and the date of expected resolution.

The complaint will then be investigated, and a plan to resolve it created. You will be informed of this plan, and we will ask you to provide your opinion on our recommended solution. You can advise if you are happy with the proposed solution or unhappy with the outcome and feel the matter is not resolved.

You may have an advocate or support person to help you at any stage of the process. If you need help, we will assist you to get an advocate. We will need your permission to speak with them directly. Interpreters can be arranged.

We will tell you we have received your complaint within two (2) working days and deal with complaints within 21 days. If more time is needed, we will tell you why and work with you.

If you are not happy with the solution proposed by Evolve Housing regarding your complaint, you can speak to NDIS Complaints:

- Telephone: 1800 800 110
- Email: feedback@ndis.gov.au or
- Website: www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints

4.7 Appeals

You may appeal against any decision Evolve Housing makes.

It would be best if you lodged your appeal within three (3) months of making the decision. This appeal timeframe can be extended if there are particular circumstances.

You can appeal against decisions such as:

- Not allowing you to keep a pet
- Eligibility to transfer
- Level of rent
- Permission to make modifications or alterations.

4.8 Critical incident

While we hope that a critical incident does not occur, in the event it does, we are prepared to support and assist you by following procedures that appropriately deal with a critical incident.

A critical incident is classified as an event (or alleged event) that occurs because of, or during, the delivery of services and has caused, or is likely to cause, a significant negative impact on your health, safety or wellbeing.

If an incident does occur, we will engage with the required authorities to support you during this time.

Critical incidents that relate to you may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- An unexpected death, serious injury or alleged assault (including physical, sexual abuse, sexual assault or indecent assault) that occurs as a result or during the delivery of services
- Allegations of serious, unlawful or criminal activity or conduct involving an Evolve Housing employee, subcontractor or volunteer that has caused, or has the potential to cause, serious harm to you
- An incident where you assault or cause serious harm to others (including our employees, volunteers or contractors), as a result, or during the delivery, of services
- A severe fire, natural disaster, accident or another incident that will, or is likely to prevent, service provision, or that results in closure or significant damage to premises or property, or that poses a significant threat to your health and safety (see 4.9 Natural Disaster).

Evolve Housing has established procedures that identify, manage and resolve incidents. These include:

- Staff members will report all incidents to Governance and Legal (GAL) or the Program Manager — Programs and Partnerships (PMPP). Who they report it to depends on if it is a 'general incident' or 'reportable incident'.
- Completion of an incident report no matter the incident, that identifies and records an incident (whether it is a 'general incident' or a 'reportable incident').
- GAL is responsible for reporting incidents that are 'reportable incidents' to the NDIS Commissioner and other required agencies.
- Compliance with the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable) Rules 2018.
- Supporting and assisting you if you are affected by the incident.
- Review of the incident by the General Manager of Resident Services, if you or others were affected.
- Working with you, your family and/or advocate to manage and resolve the incident.
- Reviewing the incident and making necessary amendments to systems and processes to reduce the risk of recurrence.

4.9 Natural disasters

Your emergency evacuation plan is recorded in your Accommodation Agreement.

If your property has been affected by a natural disaster, such as a flood, bushfire or storm, SDA Residents and Evolve Housing have certain rights and responsibilities:

- You can move out temporarily and return once repairs have been carried out. We will assist you to find or pay for your temporary accommodation.
- If the property is only partly uninhabitable, you can choose to stay in the property while repairs are being carried out. You should only consider doing this if the damage is minor and there is no ongoing safety risk.
- If the property is destroyed or becomes totally or partly uninhabitable, Evolve Housing and you can mutually agree to end the tenancy.
- If no mutual agreement is possible, you or Evolve Housing can give a written termination notice to end the tenancy. As the SDA Resident, you cannot be evicted without a Tribunal Order.

4.9.1 Repairs after natural disaster

Severe storm, fire or flood damage are considered urgent repairs and should be handled quickly. Refer to '3.13 Urgent repairs' in this handbook for more information. If the repairs are not urgent, you and Evolve Housing should agree to a repair timetable.

Evolve Housing is not obliged to compensate you for any damage to your furniture or personal belongings from a natural disaster.

4.9.2 Rent after natural disaster

If you move out temporarily or continue living in the partially damaged property, the rent should be waived or reduced. We will negotiate with you on rent, and any agreement in these situations should be put in writing.

4.10 Behaviours of concern

Behaviours of concern are taken into consideration when matching you to a suitable home. Appropriate measures may need to be taken to ensure the safety of all residents.

It is possible that some behaviours of concern may put your tenancy at risk because of the risk to you, other residents, staff or others who access the home. This can happen with any behaviour that causes harm to you or another person in the home.

It is important that you and everyone in the home feel safe. Evolve Housing will work with your Service Provider to ensure any residents, including you, are provided with the necessary support needed.

Strategies and measures are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate.

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ENVIRONMENT

Evolve Housing cares about the environment.

This Handbook is printed on FSR® certified paper traceable to certified sources.



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