



Sleepover shifts

Worker Alert

August 2026

Key points

- A sleepover shift is when a worker is required to sleep overnight at a participant's home. The span for a sleepover is a continuous period of 8 hours.
- NDIS pricing arrangements provide for up to 2 hours of active NDIS supports provided by a worker to a participant within the 8-hour sleepover shift.
- The Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award determines:
 - the amount a worker is to be paid for a sleepover period, and
 - the amount they are to be paid if they're required to perform work during the sleepover
 - how long the work periods need to be before and after the sleepover period, and the amount a worker is to be paid for those work periods.
- The sleepover and any hours worked before and after the sleepover are counted as one continuous shift.
- Sleepover shifts are different from active overnight supports, which is where workers are awake during normal sleeping hours to provide supports to a participant due to their disability.
- NDIS providers and NDIS participants engaging their own workers have a duty to ensure a safe working environment for workers, as far as is reasonably practicable, during a sleepover shift.
- The NDIS Commission has published an online resource. This will help workers understand the importance of issues related to sleepover shifts.

Sleepover shifts

A sleepover shift is when a worker is required to sleep overnight at a participant's residence and provide them with up to 2 hours of active NDIS supports during the night when required. The span for a sleepover is a continuous period of 8 hours. Residence can include a group home or a private home.

The Fair Work Ombudsman provides [guidance](#) about the SCHADS Award. The [NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits \(PAPL\)](#) helps providers and participants understand NDIS pricing for this support.

The Fair Work Commission has made changes to sleepovers in the SCHADS Award. These changes took effect from a worker's first full pay period starting on or after 1 June 2026 and cover:

- [Ordinary hours of work](#)
- [Rest breaks between rostered work](#)
- [Shift allowances and penalty rates](#)

For current information about sleepovers in the SCHADS Award, read the [Hours of work in the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award](#). For information about sleepovers in the SCHADS Award before 1 June 2026, read [Sleepovers in the SCHADS Award](#).

Under the PAPL, sleepover shifts are referred to as Night-Time Sleepover Supports. This is any support delivered to a participant:

- on a weekday, a Saturday, a Sunday or a public holiday

- that starts before midnight and finishes after midnight
- for a continuous period of 8 hours or more.

Workers can sleep during the 8-hour sleepover shift. NDIS pricing arrangements provide up to 2 hours of active supports to the participant when needed (for example, going to the bathroom).

Sleepover shifts should not be confused with active overnight supports, which are funded for participants who require more than 2 hours of support overnight.

In addition, a sleepover is different from a 24-hour care shift or an excursion under the SCHADS Award.

Disruptions during a sleepover shift

If a participant's needs change and workers are routinely required to be awake for more than 2 hours a night, they and their provider should contact the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and talk about whether there is a need to change the way overnight supports are funded in their plan.

It is also important to monitor sleeping patterns of participants. This might include participants waking up regularly during the night or experiencing unexpected changes in their sleeping patterns. If this happens, the provider must work with professionals, such as an occupational therapist, for review and conversion to active night supports.

Where a participant has behaviour support needs during a sleepover shift, workers should be responsive to such needs. Workers should implement strategies that centre on the participant's needs and are informed by evidence, as outlined in their behaviour support plan. Where a participant does not have a behaviour support plan, the provider should take steps to:

- minimise any identified risk of harm
- document the changes in behaviour, and
- work with the participant's support team to find ways to best support the person.

Additionally, providers are required to make sure their workers:

- have systems and procedures that provide a safe, predictable and stable environment
- are aware of environmental aspects that may pose risk factors
- are provided with reasonable supports and adaptations to understand a behaviour support plan and follow it correctly.

You can find the [Positive Behaviour Support Capability Framework](#) on the NDIS Commission website.

Work health and safety (WHS) obligations

NDIS workers' WHS rights and obligations are set out in Australia's model WHS laws, and state and territory WHS legislation.

Visit the Safe Work Australia website to learn more about the [Model WHS laws](#).

Workers have responsibilities to:

- perform duties in a safe manner for themselves and others
- ask if they are not sure about how to safely perform any aspect of the work
- if required, use personal protective equipment correctly
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- report all injuries and unsafe and unhealthy situations to a manager or employer
- comply with any reasonable instructions, policies and procedure given by a manager or employer.

For more information, visit the [NSW SafeWork website](#).

Understanding these obligations will assist workers to do their day-to-day work lawfully and competently and know when an incident needs to be reported.

Workers can also ask for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to assist them in discussions about work health and safety. Learn more on the [Safe Work Australia website](#). This includes managing fatigue during a sleepover shift. Safe Work Australia offers a list of strategies to help workers in the [Fatigue management: a worker's guide](#).

NDIS Code of Conduct

All NDIS providers must comply with the [NDIS Code of Conduct](#). Support workers must also understand and apply the Code of Conduct in the course of their daily work.

The Code of Conduct requires that workers and providers who deliver NDIS supports:

promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability.

NDIS Practice Standards

The NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators ([NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators \(NDIS Practice Standards\)](#)) specify the quality standards to be met by registered NDIS providers and workers who provide supports and services to NDIS participants.

Workers engaged by registered NDIS providers must demonstrate compliance with the NDIS Practice Standards including the following standards.

Risk management

Workers provide supports and services in a way that is consistent with the provider's documented risk-management system, including in incident, complaints, emergency and disaster management.

WHS risks are identified and managed during sleepover shifts.

Incident management

Workers are aware of, trained in, and compliant with the required incident-management procedures.

Workers are consulted on incident-management processes.

Emergency and disaster management

Workers are trained in the implementation of the participant's emergency and disaster management plan.

Provision of supports environment

Work is undertaken with each participant, and others, in settings where supports are provided (including their home), to ensure a safe support-delivery environment.

Governance and operational management

Strategic and business planning requirements consider worker needs.

Human resource management

Timely supervision, training support and resources are available to workers. They should be relevant to the scope and complexity of supports delivered.

Records of worker pre-employment checks, qualifications and experience are maintained.

Providers record details of workers' secondary employment.

Case study

Bea from Boorloo, Western Australia

Bea is a young worker for a large disability provider (AABBCC Homes) in Boorloo (Perth). She loves working with participants and assisting with daily activities in group homes. Other AABBCC Homes staff worked with Bea to look at her bedroom set-up in the home where she works, and what a good night's sleep looks like for her. The staff also checked the quality of the mattress, ensured the linens were clean and that the staff bedroom door has a lock so that Bea can sleep with the door locked if needed.

The 3 residents of the home were also informed about the conditions of the sleepover shift. However, the residents began making sure they used the 2 hours of active NDIS supports each sleepover shift to maximise their time with Bea.

AABBCC Homes management dealt with this by explaining to the residents that a sleepover shift means that Bea is available to assist during the night, but the expectation is that she

will be sleeping during this time. For this reason, it is not appropriate to schedule the washing and drying of their laundry from 10pm to midnight, for example. However, Bea does set an alarm so that she can assist with delivering medication at a set time that night. Bea also frequently gets up during the night to assist one of the residents to use the bathroom and to return to bed.

The management team explains that if Bea is consistently required to work on a sleepover, and is not getting enough sleep, they will work with the participants and the NDIA to discuss alternatives. This might be active night supports, or other changes to better support participants during the night.

Setting expectations appropriately for the sleepover shift helps Bea get enough sleep to meet the requirements of her day shift and the needs of the participants.

Resources

NDIS Commission

- [Worker training modules and resources](#)
- [NDIS Code of Conduct](#) including the NDIS Code of Conduct for Workers and the NDIS Code of Conduct for Providers guidelines
- [The complaints process](#)
- [Managing complaints](#)
- [Resources to support incident reporting, management and prevention](#)
- [Positive Behaviour Support Capability Framework For NDIS providers and behaviour support practitioners](#)
- [Policy Guidance - Working within your knowledge, skills, and experience](#)

Fair Work Ombudsman

- For current information on sleepover shifts (as of 1 June 2026), visit [Hours of work in the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award](#)
- For information on sleepovers before 1 June 2026, visit [Sleepovers in the SCHADS Award](#)
- For general information about the SCHADS Award, visit [Understanding the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award - Fair Work Ombudsman](#)
- [Employer Guide to Fair Work Ombudsman Tools and Resources](#)

- [Employee Guide to Fair Work Ombudsman Tools and Resources](#)
- [Workplace compliance made easy: A small business owner's guide to staying ahead](#)
- [Employee's guide to fixing workplace problems](#)

NDIA

- [Supported Independent Living Guideline](#)
- [Guide to using the provider SIL roster of care tool; and Supported Independent Living Roster of care submissions](#)
- [Directly engaging your own staff](#)

Resources on sleep support

- [Health Direct - Guidance on Sleep](#)
- [Better Health Channel - Sleep Hygiene](#)
- [Centre for Clinical Interventions - Sleep hygiene](#)

Federal, state and territory WHS agencies

Safe Work Australia

- [Fatigue](#)
- [Fatigue - WHS duties](#)
- [PCBU glossary definition](#)
- [Guide for managing the risk of fatigue at work](#)
- [Fatigue management - a worker's guide](#)

- [Model WHS Act cross-comparison table](#)
- [Model Code of Practice: Healthcare and social assistance industry](#)

SafeWork NSW

- [Disability support](#)
- [Home Safety Risk Assessment](#)
- [Work health and safety guidance for NDIS participants](#)
- [Work health and safety guidance for NDIS platform providers](#)

WorkSafe Victoria

- [Occupational health and safety – your legal duties](#)

SafeWork SA

- [Primary duty of care](#)

WorkSafe Qld

- [Guide to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

WorkSafe Tasmania

- [Common work health and safety terms](#)
- [How PCBUs must support HSRs](#)

WorkSafe WA

- [Fatigue](#)
- [PCBU](#)

WorkSafe ACT

- [Workplace rights and responsibilities](#)

NT WorkSafe

- [PCBU duties](#)