



Independent Living Supports (ILS) and Supported Collaborative Living (SCL) Approval and Licensing Guide

Purpose: This reference explains how OQE reviews licensable ILS and SCL services for providers approved by DDS before start-up, during the Initial Review period when applicable, and during ongoing licensing oversight.

1. Decision Guide: When Approval to Operate and Initial Review Are Required

Use this section first. It determines whether a pre-approval assessment, Approval to Operate (ATO), and/or an Initial Review (IR) are required.

Scenario	Service	Provider has Residential License	IHS (3798/3703) on current residential license?	ATO required	IR Required	Next step
1	ILS or SCL	Yes	Yes	No	No	Include the new service in the provider's next scheduled OQE L&C review.
2	ILS or SCL	Yes	No	Yes	No	Complete the Pre-Approval Assessment and issue ATO before operation. Then include the service in the next scheduled OQE L&C review.
3	ILS only	No	No	Yes	Yes, once one person receives 7+ hrs/week	Complete the Pre-Approval Assessment and issue ATO before operation. When one person receives 7+ hours of ILS per week, notify the Area Office and OQE so an IR can be scheduled. Then include the service in the next scheduled OQE L&C review.
4	SCL	No	No	N/A	N/A	SCL cannot be added unless the provider already holds a residential service grouping license. This pathway does not move forward until that requirement is met.
5	ILS only	Not previously licensed by DDS	N/A	Yes	Yes, once one person receives 7+ hrs/week	Complete the Pre-Approval Assessment and issue ATO before operation. When one person receives 7+ hours of ILS per week, notify the Area Office and OQE so an IR can be scheduled. Then complete a full L&C review within 6 months after the IR.

Note: For ILS, an Initial Review is not automatic at start-up. It is required, however, when the provider does not already hold the residential service grouping license and begins to serve any individual at 7 hours per week or more in ILS (provider to notify both Area Office and OQE when this occurs). For SCL, an existing residential service grouping license is required before the service can be added.

2. General Process Steps

Step	What happens
1. Intake and routing	The provider and/or Area Office notify OQE when the new service is being initiated. The provider completes Appendix Q, which routes ILS and SCL requests through the appropriate intake process.
2. Pre-approval review	When required, OQE completes the Pre-Approval Assessment and issues Approval to Operate before services begin.
3. Service start confirmation	The provider should confirm the actual service start date with OQE. The ATO date may be earlier than the date services actually begin.
4. Application for licensure	The provider completes an Application for Residential Licensure when applicable.
5. Licensing follow-up	Follow the pathway identified in Section 1. Providers with an existing residential service grouping license add the service to the next regular licensing cycle. Providers without that license follow the Initial Review pathway at that point in time when at least one individual is receiving 7 or more hours per week of ILS.

3. How OQE Reviews ILS and SCL

Service Model Description

Independent Living Supports (ILS)	Supported Collaborative Living (SCL)
ILS is an individualized, one-to-one support model designed to help a person establish, live in, and maintain an independent community living arrangement.	SCL is a community-based support model that combines individualized supports with shared staffing, shared resources, and mutual support among people living together or in close proximity.

Topic	OQE Review Focus
Why OQE reviews it before start-up	When pre-start review is required, OQE confirms that the provider has the core systems, oversight, and staff readiness needed to begin the service safely.
Primary pre-approval focus	Provider oversight, service-specific policies and procedures, staff supervision and training, urgent staff support and emergency communication, documentation systems, incident reporting, on-call availability, and the process for identifying support needs before the first service is delivered.
Ongoing licensing focus	OQE reviews implementation of the applicable licensing and certification indicators, including organizational indicators and any applicable location- or individual-level indicators based on the supports the provider has agreed to deliver.

4. Indicator Applicability and Safety Plan Requirements

Topic	How OQE applies the requirement
Organizational Indicators	All organizational indicators apply to ILS and SCL.

Location and Individual Level Indicators	For SCL, location and individual-level indicators are reviewed for all individuals receiving the service. For ILS, these indicators are reviewed only for individuals receiving 7 or more hours of ILS per week. Surveyors will use the Licensing and Certification Applicability Chart to determine which specific indicators are relevant based on the provider’s responsibilities and the supports delivered.
Applicability Chart Reference	For both ILS and SCL, the Licensing and Certification Applicability Charts identify which indicators always pertain and which are relevant only when the provider is responsible for oversight or when the location is owned, rented, or leased by the provider.
Safety Plan Threshold	A Safety Plan is required only for an individual who receives 15 or more hours of service per week. The 15-hour threshold is applied per individual.

5. Follow-Up Summary

Use the pathway below after start-up:

If the provider holds a residential service grouping license, the existing license is amended to include the new service type, and the service is reviewed during the provider’s next Licensure and Certification cycle.

If the provider does not hold a residential service grouping license, OQE uses the Initial Review pathway when applicable. For ILS, an Initial Review is required only once at least one individual is receiving 7 or more hours of ILS per week.

If the provider was not previously licensed by DDS, the provider undergoes a full Licensure and Certification review within six months of that Initial Review.