

153 Domestic and Family Violence Policy

1. Purpose

Link Housing recognises that all reports of domestic and family violence require a fast and effective response. This policy provides a framework for staff when providing advice and support to the victims of domestic and family violence.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Link Housing tenants.

3. Definition of Domestic and Family Violence

Link has adopted the following definition of domestic and family violence:

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional and/or social isolation) between partners, family members and/or co-tenants.

4. Policy

Link Housing will respond to any form of domestic and family violence by working with the tenant in collaboration with Police, Communities & Justice and other support agencies to resolve housing issues related to domestic and family violence.

5. Principles

Link Housing will:

- Support victims of domestic and family violence by resolving issues related to their safety and tenure by taking the following steps:
 - Take a person-centred approach to reports of domestic and family violence;
 - Give priority to the safety of victims and children;
 - Provide the victims with a consistent and effective response;
 - Protect victims' tenancy rights and choices regarding housing options;
 - Take appropriate action regarding the perpetrators of domestic and family violence;
- Continue our membership and collaboration with partners in our response to domestic and family violence;
- Commit to the NSW Governments domestic and family violence framework.

6. Tenancy Support and Assistance

Link Housing is committed to providing tenancy support and assistance to tenants who are victims of domestic and family violence.

Where appropriate Link Housing will:

- Support the tenant to report any criminal activity to the police;
- Meet with the victim in an environment where they feel safe;

- Keep all information confidential and only give to third parties with the person's specific consent or as required by law;
- If there is a threat to safety, Link Housing will assist the person to access short- and medium-term housing options including refuge accommodation;
- Should the tenant wish to transfer accommodation, the application for transfer will be assessed under the 'Tenant Initiated Transfer Policy';
- Provide appropriate support and referral to ensure the safety of our tenants;
- Ensure that any necessary repairs or safety modifications are undertaken to ensure the property is secure;
- Take appropriate action against perpetrators of domestic violence in collaboration with NSW Police.

7. Related Policies and Legislation

- *Residential Tenancy Act 2010*
- Tenant Initiated Transfer Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Succession Policy
- *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*
- <http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/publications/blueprint>

8. Privacy and Confidentiality

Link Housing will keep applicants', tenants' and residents' information and feedback confidential, in line with privacy laws and standards.

9. Complaints and appeals

Decisions made by Link Housing can be challenged, where Link Housing has not followed this policy. Complaints and appeals can be made using the available complaints and appeals policies accessible on the Link Housing website www.linkhousing.org.au or by phoning Link Housing on 9412 5111.

10. Quality Assurance

The Domestic and Family Violence Policy will be formally reviewed every two (2) years, or when necessitated through a sufficient change in circumstances, e.g. due to legislative change.