

312 SDA Vacancy Policy

1. Customer Statement

At Link Wentworth, our customers and communities are at the centre of what we do. We are committed to:

- treating our customers with compassion and respect
- communicating clearly so that our customers can make informed decisions
- providing fair service by following the right process
- working openly with customers to find shared solutions
- following all relevant laws and regulations

2. Purpose

This policy outlines how Link Wentworth supplies Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) to eligible participants in compliance with all standards and legislative requirements.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all SDA properties managed by Link Wentworth. It also applies to all Link Wentworth employees and contractors.

It does not apply to vacancies in Link Wentworth properties under social, affordable, and transitional housing programs.

4. Policy

Link Wentworth supplies SDA in line with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) terms of business and the Accommodation and Service Provider Agreement (ASPA) or partnership agreement in place with the Shared Independent Living (SIL) provider.

When Link Wentworth has a vacancy in an SDA dwelling it works cooperatively with the SIL provider and potential participants to select a participant who is the best fit for the current dwelling community.

Link Wentworth operates transparently throughout the vacancy process so that the SIL provider and applicants understand where the selection process is up to. This includes transparent processes for declaring a vacancy, managing applications, the screening and decision-making process, and informing successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Declaring a vacancy

An SDA dwelling vacancy may arise in any of the following situations:

- a new dwelling is enrolled with the NDIA,
- a participant advises that they are vacating the premises,
- Link Wentworth issues a notice to vacate or notice of temporary relocation,
- a participant is appropriately advised they have sixty (60) days to relocate to new accommodation,
- a participant dies.

Advertising a vacancy

Link Wentworth advertises SDA dwelling vacancies online. It may advertise on its own website, service partner websites, or external websites such as Housing Hub, Go Nest and/or real estate websites.

Advertisements include clear information regarding the vacancy including the location, design type, category, and a general description of facilities.

Link Wentworth provides all eligible participants with the opportunity to view and apply for a vacancy. All vacancy information is accessible in a language, mode of communication, and terms that participants are likely to understand.

SDA applications

Potential participants use the information provided by Link Wentworth and the SIL provider to make an informed decision about whether to apply to live at an SDA dwelling.

Link Wentworth gathers information through the application process to determine if an applicant is a good fit for the existing household, and if they are likely to enjoy a long-term and sustainable residency.

Link Wentworth reviews each application on its merits in collaboration with the SIL provider. The application review process includes each of the following activities:

- reviewing the applicant's plan to confirm their SDA funding is suitable for the dwelling type in terms of design category and building type
- screening applicants to find the participant most likely to support sustainable and long-term residencies in the SDA dwelling.

Selecting a tenant

Link Wentworth collaborates with the SIL provider to identify the preferred applicant to offer residency. The process of determining the preferred applicant includes sharing information and reviewing current residents of the dwelling. If there is a dispute over two applicants, the SIL provider has the final decision.

Where it is lawful, Link Wentworth and the SIL provider communicate and share information during the process of selecting a tenant. Any exchange of information is subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Link Wentworth and the SIL provider are separately responsible for understanding their legislative obligations and ensuring compliance.

Communicating the outcome

Link Wentworth makes a formal offer of specialist disability accommodation to the preferred participant. At this time the participant, in consultation with their support coordinator or their informal supports, may elect to accept, decline, or negotiate the offer.

Behaviours of concern

Where there is a behaviour of concern, SIL providers may consider developing and implementing support strategies that prevent, or significantly reduce, any risk to the applicant or from the applicant to a current resident. These strategies provide opportunities for participants to develop skills for meaningful interaction and participation and could include a behaviour support plan that documents information such as:

- behavioural history
- current legal orders
- risks to self or others
- relevant risk indicators
- protective factors
- strategies for low, moderate, and severe escalation.

In situations where current residents are more independent than the applicant, but still have support needs resulting from behaviours of concern, the SIL provider is responsible for determining if there are potential issues of incompatibility and potential risk of harm. If this is the case, it is the responsibility of the SIL provider to determine if they can implement appropriate measures to ensure the safety of all residents in the household.

Documenting the application process

Link Wentworth maintains a documentary record of the application process including clear information about the process taken to consider each application in line with this policy. This record is stored in Link Wentworth's electronic document management system.

5. Definitions

Behaviour of concern is any behaviour that causes harm to the participant or another person.

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is a range of housing designed for people with extreme functional impairment or very high support needs. SDA dwellings have accessible features to help residents live more independently and allow other supports to be delivered better or more safely.

6. Legislation and other relevant policies

- *NDIS Act, 2013* (Cth)
- *Disability Discrimination Act, 1992* (Cth)
- *Privacy Act, 1988* (Cth)
- *Work Health and Safety Act, 2011* (NSW)
- NDIS (Quality and Safeguards) Commission 2018
- NDIS Practice Standard and Quality Indicators 2020
- NDIS (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Rules 2018
- NDIA Terms of Business

7. Complaints and appeals

An applicant for SDA housing who is not happy with a decision we make or who believes that we have not followed this policy can complain or appeal using the complaints and appeals policies that are available on the Link Wentworth website www.linkwentworth.org.au or by phoning Link Wentworth on 9412 5111.

8. References

- Privacy Policy
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Participants' Rights and Responsibilities Policy

9. Privacy and Confidentiality

Link Wentworth has obligations and responsibilities under its Privacy Policy. Please refer to the policy for further information.

Approval, Policy Owner and Review Frequency

Policy type:	Management Level
Executive Leadership team owner:	Chief Customer Officer
Business owner:	Manager, Partnerships and Disability Supports
Ultimate Approval body:	Chief Customer Officer
Review Frequency:	Every two years or more frequently if circumstances warrant

Approved by – **Chief Customer Officer**