



Tenancy management

Introduction

As a specialist disability accommodation (SDA) provider, we are responsible for providing housing solutions that meet the needs of tenants with a significant functional impairment and/or very high support needs. This policy sets out the principles and approach to SDA tenancy management, including creating tenancies, assigning tenancies, supporting sustainment of tenancies and ending tenancies.

New tenancy visits

Participants approved for SDA housing have the right to choose their new home. We welcome any potential tenant who wants to visit a property. Workers will provide them with a guided tour of the property and answer any questions they may have. Visits will be arranged at a time that will be least disruptive to existing tenants.

Vacancies

Filling vacancies with suitable tenants must be balanced with the needs and suitability of potential new tenants and existing tenants. In SDA, there are two sides to this compatibility:

- Resident support needs
- The SDA service model.

Partnerships with local carer groups or support providers can be invaluable to help identify potential tenants, identify local unmet needs and to expertly assess a potential tenant's support needs, accessibility requirements and tenant compatibility.

Behaviours of concern

Behaviours of concern are challenging behaviours that may cause a risk of or actual harm or psychological distress to the person or others. Behaviours of concern develop as a way of communicating a need or indicating distress.

Residents with behaviours of concern require support that includes strategies to encourage positive behaviour. These strategies may include restrictive practices but only after all other less restrictive strategies are first tried.

Conflicts

Conflicts involving participants are best prevented by working proactively to avoid conflict in the first place. This is best done by:

- Always focusing on the interests of the participant
- Constructive engagement with the participant and their family/carer/supporters
- Thorough transition planning
- Including the participant and their family/carer/supporters in all communication.



Communication is key to preventing conflicts so the preferred method of communication should be agreed upon when commencing services. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of family members should be established and who they should contact if they have concerns about the participant's health, safety or infringement of their rights. When conflicts occur, early resolution is the best response while unresolved protracted conflicts are best avoided.

Conflicts which remain unresolved despite best efforts to facilitate resolution may require a third party mediator. In this case, we may consider contacting the local state or territory justice service or community justice centre to assist in mediation.

Reviews and feedback

Feedback about our accommodation services is highly valued as it helps to improve the quality of our dwellings and related services. We provide a number of ways for participants, supporters, workers or any member of the community to submit feedback including doing so anonymously. Information on how to provide feedback is provided to participants during the on-boarding process, on request and is available in each dwelling.

Additionally, feedback is sought during a tenant's regular reviews. This provides tenants a regular and direct way to give feedback, no matter how small the concern, which can be used to help improve services provided.

Emergency repairs

Participants should immediately contact their support worker or support contact if they become aware that emergency repairs are required. This in turn is urgently escalated to the relevant property manager. Examples of emergency repairs include:

- Blocked toilet
- Electrical fault
- Severe water leak
- A serious roof leak
- Serious storm or fire damage
- Maintenance that may be a risk to a person's health and safety.

Applicability

When

- Applies when providing SDA services.

Who

- Applies to all workers, supervisors and key management personnel supporting participants living in SDA.

Documents relevant to this policy

- Tenancy management policy (easy read)



Regulations relevant to this policy

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
- NDIS (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Rules 2020 (Cth)
- NDIS (Specialist Disability Accommodation Conditions) Rule 2018 (Cth)
- NDIS (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018 (Cth)

Tenancy management guidelines

We are committed to working with each person living in our properties and providing them with a well-managed home. All our services and workers work to the following guiding principles:

- We will support and develop communities of tenants through the provision of an effective and efficient tenancy management system
- We will use effective tenancy management to provide homes where people with disabilities want to live and which have a positive impact on their lives
- We will support people to successfully sustain their tenancies, building positive relationships between tenants and workers and work with individuals, where there is a breach of their accommodation service agreement, to resolve issues before considering terminating their tenancy
- We will ensure that all our tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities and these are clearly outlined in an accommodation service agreement
- We are committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity across our properties and will treat all tenants fairly, with respect and professionalism.

Legislative guidelines

All our properties will meet the requirements and obligations imposed on registered SDA providers as set out in legislation and NDIA guidance including:

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013
- Rules and instruments made under the NDIS Act and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Relevant state and territory legislation, including applicable codes and standards.

Sustaining tenancies

- We will work with tenants to ensure they are able to maintain their tenancies
- We will carry out an initial risk assessment to identify any additional support needs a tenant might have and make adaptations to a room if needed, e.g. to meet mobility requirements, or work with a supported independent living provider to put in place additional supports to reduce the likelihood a tenant will have reason to end their accommodation service agreement
- If we wish to terminate an agreement within the first two years of a tenancy, we must hold a meeting with the tenant, their service provider(s), an NDIS or COS support coordinator, and family/carer to discuss if additional supports can be put in place to help the person maintain their tenancy—if additional support needs are identified, we must work to put them in place.



Tenancy inspections

- We will carry out regular inspections of the property to ensure:
 - It is well maintained
 - That any repairs needed are carried out
 - It continues to meet all relevant building codes and laws and holds all required certifications
- We will submit an annual attestation that each property we manage is in a good state of repair and being appropriately maintained, having regard to the safety, security and the privacy of tenants (to be done by 1 March each year and submitted to NDIS)
- Tenants will be given reasonable notice of any inspection that requires access to their rooms.

Vacancy management

The following guidelines apply when managing vacancies:

- Equity—we will ensure all eligible participants are considered for a vacancy in a fair and transparent manner
- Consistency—we will ensure decision making is done in a reliable manner using enough information to make sound decisions
- Sustainability—we will ensure potential tenants are part of long-term and proactive plans that consider sustainable operations of providers supporting tenants
- Compatibility—we will ensure the physical, emotional, social and support needs of current residents are considered when identifying potential tenants
- Safety—we will ensure the support needs of current and prospective tenants are addressed.

When filling a vacancy at a SDA property, we consider the impact of placement decisions on the well-being and quality of life of existing tenants in the dwelling and the person considered for the vacancy. When considering the compatibility of a potential tenant, we look at the potential benefit to the person and the capacity of the service to meet their requirements with the resources available.

Potential tenants for a vacancy are screened based on their suitability by considering their:

- Age
- Gender
- Cultural background
- Support needs including:
 - Personal support
 - Self-management
 - Activities of daily living
 - Mobility
- Communication skills
- Behaviours of concern
- Personal interests.



Alterations

- Wherever possible, we will make alterations to our properties to ensure they are accessible to tenants e.g. installing ramps or hoists
- We will agree with tenants on the adaptations needed and how the cost will be covered—we may not cover this cost in which case we will ask the tenant to cover the cost
- Any alterations to the property will be included in the accommodation service agreement.

Behaviours of concern

When supporting tenants with behaviours of concern, we will:

- Screen potential tenants according to their suitability for a dwelling including support needs for any likely behaviours of concern
- Ensure residents with behaviours of concern are supported with a positive behaviour support plan developed by a qualified behaviour support provider
- Ensure any restricted practices implemented for a resident are the least restrictive possible and in accordance with their approved positive behaviour support plan
- Work with the behaviour support provider to make modifications to the dwelling if required.

Conflict management

To prevent conflicts from occurring between tenants, we will:

- Remind tenants of their responsibilities under their accommodation agreement
- Encourage tenants to make a list of agreed house rules
- Ensure potential tenants are aware of the house rules prior to moving in
- Ensure all tenants and their family/supporters are involved in decisions that affect the house
- Facilitate the communication of any concerns between tenants.

If a conflict occurs between participants, we will:

- Avoid taking sides
- Facilitate mediation
- Clarify the issues
- Follow up after resolution.

Concerns and feedback

To ensure our dwellings and related services suit tenants, we will:

- Listen to tenants and their family/supporters
- Encourage and support tenants to provide feedback



- Keep feedback confidential
- Protect people providing feedback from unfavourable treatment
- Review all feedback
- Arrange any emergency repairs in a timely manner.

Key management personnel responsibilities when supporting participants in specialist disability accommodation

- Ensure workers have current knowledge and training plan for supporting participants with SDA
- Integrate tenancy management into all areas of SDA delivery e.g. provider registration and property enrolment
- Ensure the NDIA is promptly advised about any vacancies
- Ensure vacancies are offered to the most suitable participants
- Set performance targets for each of our properties
- Ensure workers comply with this policy.

Worker responsibilities when supporting participants in specialist disability accommodation

- Be suitably skilled and trained to provide the support needed to tenants to help them successfully maintain their tenancy
- Consult, listen and respond to tenants and work in partnership with the supported independent living provider offering day-to-day assistance to ensure participants make progress towards their personal goals according to their support plan
- Set performance targets for each of our properties
- Work to agreed standards, best practice and procedures
- Integrate tenancy management into all areas of SDA delivery e.g. provider registration and property enrolment
- Participate in tenancy management training as directed by key management personnel.