

Introduction

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding to people based on their needs. The NDIS is available to Australian citizens who are under the age of 65 and who have permanent and significant disability

The NDIS provides funding for supports to live an ordinary life. It also provides funding for disability-suitable accommodation (housing) if the participant needs it.

The NDIS considers the house separate from day-to-day supports. As such, the NDIS funds them separately. The two funding types are:

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) – is money to help the participant contribute to the cost of living in a specialist house that meets their disability-related needs.

Supported Independent Living (SIL) – is money to help the participant with activities of daily living.

Life Without Barriers (LWB) can be the:

- SIL and SDA provider
- SIL provider only
- SDA provider only
- SIL provider in non-SDA property

When an LWB client moves out of a SIL/SDA house, this creates a vacancy. The NDIA does not give money to LWB for vacancies.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to make sure:

- Vacancies are managed in a fair and transparent way.
- Vacancy Management follows the principles of Collaboration, Equity, Consistency, Sustainability, Compatibility and Safety.
- Rooms remain vacant for the shortest time possible. This will help LWB to maximise service availability and reduce financial risks to the business.

Application of this Procedure

This procedure describes the process and timeframes of LWB Vacancy Management.

Vacancy Management at LWB is a 6-stage process:



Refer to the [NDIS LWB 310 Vacancy Management – Flowchart](#) for a detailed visual explanation of each of the stages.

Stage One - Declaring a Vacancy

You must update the bed allocation record in Lumary within 48 hours of becoming aware of an actual or planned vacancy. SIL Central, NDIS SIL Claiming, Client Funds Intake, Intake & Engagement and the DSSC will be automatically notified of the vacancy. This will be the trigger for each business unit to start its vacancy-related processes.

A vacancy is defined as an unoccupied bedroom that is available and suitable for occupancy.

Vacancies to be considered for this procedure may occur due to:

- an existing resident tells LWB that they will be moving out;
- LWB or the SDA housing provider tells an existing resident that they must move out; or
- an existing resident dies.

Stage One – Notification of a Vacancy			
Timeframe – 48 hours			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
1.	Change the bed allocation record and dates to reflect the vacancy.	Local Operations or DSSC	Lumary
2.	Talk to the remaining residents and their families about the vacancy and the options available. These include advertising and filling the vacancy, a new model of support or other residential options. Refer to Other Strategies to Address Vacancies for more information. If the remaining residents elect to advertise, continue from step 4.	Local Operations	
3.	If the remaining residents choose to explore one of the other strategies, notify the DSSC that advertising is not required using the Withdrawal of Advertising form	Local Operations	NDIS LWB 319 Vacancy Management – Withdrawal of Advertising
4.	Advise the SDA provider of the vacancy as per local arrangements (if applicable)	DSSC	

Stage One – Notification of a Vacancy Timeframe – 48 hours			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
5.	Notify the NDIA if the vacancy is in an LWB SDA Registered property.	NDHU	
6.	Talk to the remaining residents and their families about the vacancy and document their preferences for the new housemate. Communicate the current resident’s preferences to the Intake Team or ROM.	Local Operations	

Stage Two - Advertising a Vacancy

All vacancies will be advertised to ensure that all eligible participants have an opportunity to view and apply for a vacancy.

NOTE – Advertising of vacancies will only occur a maximum of twice. If no suitable applicant is identified after two advertising periods (an advertising period is a minimum of 10 working days), refer to [Other Strategies to Address Vacancies](#).

Stage Two - Advertising a Vacancy Steps – Timeframe – Five Business Days Minimum to Ten Business Days maximum			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
7.	Check if advertising assets (photographs, floorplans etc.) exist	DSSC	
8.	<u>If assets exist</u> , DSSC to ask Marketing to advertise the vacancy. Advertisements for all vacancies will be on the LWB website, Go Nest & Housing Hub (unless local SDA provider arrangements do not permit this). Advertisements must be live within 5 business days.	DSSC and Marketing	
9.	<u>If assets do not exist</u> , DSSC to ask Marketing to arrange for assets to be produced. Marketing will contact the house staff to organise a suitable time for photography.	DSSC and Marketing Local Operations	

Stage Two - Advertising a Vacancy Steps – Timeframe – Five Business Days Minimum to Ten Business Days maximum			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
	<p>Once assets are available, Marketing will arrange to advertise the vacancy.</p> <p>Advertisements for all vacancies will be on the LWB website, Go Nest & Housing Hub (unless local SDA provider arrangements do not permit this).</p> <p>Advertisements must be live within 10 business days.</p>		
10.	<p>Receive Expressions of Interest and Applications directly from applicants or the SDA provider. Log them in Lumary, and forward them to Local Operations or the Intake Team as they are received.</p> <p>Applications from current LWB SIL clients may also be considered.</p>	<p>DSSC or Intake Team</p> <p>Local Operations</p>	
11.	<p>Respond to any applicant queries.</p>	<p>Local Operations or Intake Team</p>	<p>Expressions of Interest forms or Application Forms agreed to or produced by the SDA provider</p>
12.	<p>Collate Applications</p>	<p>Local Operations, or Intake Team and SDA provider as per agreed arrangement</p>	
13.	<p>Gather additional information from the applicant, family or Support Coordinator, if required.</p> <p>This might include a Home and Living Assessment from the NDIA if the client is not already in receipt of SIL/SDA funding.</p>	<p>Local Operations, or Intake Team</p>	

Stage Two - Advertising a Vacancy Steps – Timeframe – Five Business Days Minimum to Ten Business Days maximum			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
14.	Develop a shortlist of applicants: A minimum of 2 staff complete the Vacancy Management – Client Matching form	Local Operations, or Intake Team	NDIS LWB 315 Vacancy Management – Client Matching

Stage Three - Identifying a Preferred Applicant

LWB’s matching process must consider all factors that may impact a long-term tenancy and service delivery, including existing client and family preferences compatibility of SIL funding (or equivalent), SDA funding (where relevant), and contributions to rent and other shared household expenses. Evidence of the basis for any matching and placement decisions must be recorded and stored.

Existing residents must be represented in the consultation group when identifying the preferred applicant.

Stage Three – Identifying a Preferred Applicant – Timeframe – Five Business Days			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
15.	Seek a preliminary assessment from SIL Central as to whether the SIL funding is compatible with existing residents and support requirements. This includes LWB SIL clients who wish to move to another LWB SIL home. If SIL Central advise that SIL funding is compatible proceed to task 16. If SIL Central advise that funding is incompatible, and there are no clear paths to support the applicant to acquire the appropriate funding, advise the applicant that their application will not be considered further for this vacancy.	Local Operations, or Intake Team	

Stage Three – Identifying a Preferred Applicant – Timeframe – Five Business Days			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
	Send the completed documentation and funding information to the Intake Team and ROM.		
16.	Organise property viewings, if required	Local Operations, or Intake Team with SDA provider or property owner (for non SDA)	NDIS LWB 314 Vacancy Management – Property Viewings
17.	Current residents should meet with applicants so that they can make an informed decision about who should be considered for tenancy (creation of a shortlist). This could include a house visit for a BBQ, or a social outing where existing and potential residents spend time getting to know each other.	Local Operations, or Intake Team	
18.	<p>The Disability Support Leader will facilitate house meetings to consider the shortlisted applicants and identify the preferred applicant/s.</p> <p>The group must consider applicants based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The views, needs and preferences of the existing residents and the applicants • Any risks to the health and safety to current residents and staff • Suitability of the house and environment to meet the support needs of the applicants 	The house meeting must consist of at least three people and include existing residents and/or their representative /s and the DSL / House Supervisor. Others may include Intake Team, SIL	<p>NDIS LWB 315 Vacancy Management – Client Matching</p> <p>SIL Request Form for Potential Client</p> <p>Application forms</p>

Stage Three – Identifying a Preferred Applicant – Timeframe – Five Business Days			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the applicant’s support requirements, health management and personal goals can be met by any existing SIL funding (or equivalent) The knowledge, skills and profile of the existing support staff, and whether additional staff / training will be required Whether the applicant’s contact with family and natural supports can be maintained Whether the applicant will be provided with opportunities to gain new skills and independence Any other factors <p>The amount of SIL funding each applicant has may also be considered; however, this should not be the main factor in choosing the preferred applicant. This means that the preferred applicant is not automatically selected because they have the highest amount of SIL funding.</p>	staff, Regional Operations Manager, others from existing residents’ support network such as Support Coordinators or other professionals	
19.	Current residents should be given the opportunity to meet again with the identified preferred applicant/s before a final decision is made	Local Operations	
20.	Consider feedback from residents about their preferred applicant.	Disability Support Leader	
21.	Depending on the outcome of the house meeting/s and application assessments:	Local Operations	NDIS LWB 315 Vacancy Management – Client Matching

Stage Three – Identifying a Preferred Applicant – Timeframe – Five Business Days			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preferred applicant identified - continue to Stage 4. • no preferred applicant identified – return to Stage 2. 		

NOTE: LWB’s preferred outcome is a unanimous decision. Where a preferred applicant is not unanimously identified by the house meeting representatives, the majority view of the existing resident/s and/or their representative/s will be considered by LWB and as required, “the landlord”, as the preferred applicant. LWB will work with the existing resident/s and/or their representative/s and landlords to ensure all safety considerations/concerns are addressed prior to endorsing the majority view.

Where a consensus cannot be reached, LWB will communicate to the existing residents the rationale behind the decision to make an offer of residency.

Stage Four - Communicating the Offer

A formal offer of residency and support should be made to the preferred applicant. The applicant, in consultation with their Support Coordinator (SC) and/or their informal supports, must decide whether to accept or decline the offer.

NOTE: All offers of residency are conditional on:

- A full assessment by LWB of the client’s support needs. This will require the client to provide LWB with their health care plans and other personal information
- The client has or can obtain, sufficient SIL funding from the NDIA to cover LWB’s costs associated with the delivery of SIL supports.

Stage Four – Communicating the Offer – Timeframe – Two Business Days			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
22.	Inform the preferred applicant of the offer of residency, including sending the Vacancy Management - Offer of Shared and Supported Living Place Letter	Intake Team / SDA Provider	NDIS LWB 316 Vacancy Management - Offer of Shared and Supported Living Place Letter

Stage Four – Communicating the Offer – Timeframe – Two Business Days			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
23.	<p>If the preferred applicant doesn't accept the offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an alternate preferred applicant was identified – make an offer of residency to the alternate applicant • If no alternate preferred applicant was identified and the vacancy has only been advertised once – readvertise the vacancy • If no alternate preferred applicant was identified and the vacancy has already been advertised twice – refer to Other Strategies to Address Vacancies 	Local Operations / Intake Team	
24.	<p>If the preferred applicant accepts the offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Lumary with the successful applicant's details • Notify the SIL Central team of the successful applicant and who was unsuccessful 	Local Operations / Intake Team	
25.	Remove all advertising once the preferred applicant accepts the offer.	DSSC	
26.	Once the preferred applicant has accepted the offer, send the unsuccessful applicants the Vacancy Management - Unsuccessful Outcome Letter	Intake Team / SDA Provider	NDIS LWB 317 Vacancy Management - Unsuccessful Outcome Letter
27.	If filling an LWB SDA Registered Dwelling vacancy, notify the NDHU that the vacancy is being filled and that an Accommodation Agreement is required for the new client.	DSSC	
28.	Notify the NDIA that the vacancy is being filled	NDHU	
29.	Log the successful applicant's details in Lumary as confirmed	DSSC	Lumary

Stage Five – Negotiating Service Agreements and SIL Funding

For clients without SIL funding in their current NDIA Plan

For a client without SIL funding in their current NDIA Plan, Local Operations must contact SIL Central to request a SIL quote submission once the applicant has formally accepted the offer.

For clients with SIL funding in their current NDIA Plan or an internal client move between LWB SIL homes

If the applicant has compatible SIL funding, Local Operations must negotiate the move-in date with the applicant. Local Operations should then inform SIL Central of the move-in date. SIL Central will confirm the Service Booking value is enough to cover the remainder of the plan period.

If the value of the supports required is more than the applicant's current SIL funding, Local Operations must ask SIL Central if a Change of Circumstances (CoC) is appropriate and adequate evidence is available.

If the SIL Central team advise a CoC is warranted and appropriate evidence is available, Local Operations need to follow the standard CoC process.

If the SIL Central team advise a CoC is unlikely to be approved by the NDIA, Local Operations will need to negotiate with the client. Negotiations may include a reduction in the supports that LWB can offer, or may mean that the offer of residency may need to be withdrawn and the vacancy readvertised.

Stage Five – Negotiating service agreements and SIL funding Time Frame 6 weeks (subject to NDIA approval of new quote)			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
30.	<p>For a client without SIL funding in their current NDIS Plan, SIL Central develop the SIL quote for submission to the NDIA.</p> <p>If the SIL quote is approved by the NDIA with sufficient SIL funding - proceed to task 32.</p> <p>If the SIL quote is approved by the NDIA with insufficient SIL funding, Local Operations will need to discuss alternative options with the applicant. This may include a reduction in the supports that LWB can offer, or may mean that the offer</p>	<p>SIL Central</p> <p>Local Operations / Intake Team / SIL Central</p>	<p>SIL Request Form (no SIL)</p>

Stage Five – Negotiating service agreements and SIL funding Time Frame 6 weeks (subject to NDIA approval of new quote)			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
	of residency needs to be withdrawn and the vacancy readvertised.		
31.	<p>For a client with SIL funding in their current NDIS plan, confirm with the client or Support Coordinator the amount of SIL funding remaining, and the current plan end date. Advise SIL Central of the intended move-in date for the client.</p> <p>If there is sufficient SIL funding - proceed to task 32.</p> <p>If there is not sufficient SIL funding, Local Operations must ask SIL Central if a Change of Circumstances (CoC) is likely to be successful. CoCs will only be considered by the NDIA if there has been a change to the client's circumstances or support requirements.</p> <p>If the CoC is likely to be successful, Local Operations should speak to the applicant and their Support Coordinator about a CoC to seek additional SIL funding.</p> <p>If a CoC is unlikely to be successful, Local Operations must discuss alternative options with the applicant. This may include a reduction in the supports that LWB can offer, or may mean that the offer of residency should be withdrawn and the vacancy readvertised.</p>	<p>Local Operations / Intake Team</p> <p>SIL Central</p>	
32.	Develop the LWB Service Agreement, LWB Client Profile, LWB Shared and Supported Living - Individual Support Plan.	Local Operations / Intake Team / SIL Central	<p>NDIS LWB 5001 Client Profile</p> <p>NDIS LWB 5201 Shared and Supported Living - Individual Support Plan</p>
33.	Send the Service Agreement to the client / Support Coordinator for their review and signature once agreed to.	Local Operations /	

Stage Five – Negotiating service agreements and SIL funding			
Time Frame 6 weeks (subject to NDIA approval of new quote)			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
		Intake Team	
34.	If SIL Central team is unable to make a Service Booking for the amount required, they will contact Local Operations and the client’s Support Coordinator. Arrangements will need to be made to have funds released by the client’s current SIL provider, so that LWB can access the funds.	SIL Central / Local Operations	
35.	The client returns the signed Service Agreement to LWB.	Client	
36.	Check the Service Booking has been created.	Local Operations	

Stage Six – Transition and Move-in

The client should not move in (stay overnight) until the client has a Service Agreement, Client Profile and Share and Supported Living - Individual Support Plan in place. SIL funding approved by NDIA and a SIL service booking with sufficient value for the remainder of the plan period is also required.

The client should also have an Accommodation Agreement in place. The SDA Housing Provider is responsible for developing the Accommodation Agreement. For LWB, this is the responsibility of the National Disability Housing Unit.

As part of the transition period, meet and greets such as morning teas and BBQs with existing residents are encouraged, but there must be **no** overnight stays during this time.

Stage Six– Transition and move in			
Time Frame 2 weeks			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
37.	Local Operations and Intake Team liaise with the client and the Support Coordinator to agree on a move-in date based on the Service Agreement information and accommodation agreement.	Local Operations / Intake Team	

Stage Six– Transition and move in Time Frame 2 weeks			
#	Task	Responsible Party	Required Systems, Tools & Templates
38.	Arrange for the client to attend the house for pre-move-in social visits with existing residents.	Local Operations / Intake Team	
39.	The client moves in on the agreed date as per the Service Agreement.	Client	
40.	Update the bed allocation details in Lumary to close the vacancy	DSSC / Local Operations / Intake Team	
41.	Ensure all advertising is closed	DSSC	

Other Strategies to address Vacancies

Target Reduction (Remove the room from the SIL target to become an Unavailable Room)

Unavailable Rooms are unoccupied bedroom/s within a dwelling, where the bedroom is NOT available for occupancy. An unavailable room can be used for purposes such as a sensory room or office/sleepover room for staff. A room may also be defined as unavailable if it is too small for use as a bedroom.

If the decision is made to change the room status from Vacant to Unavailable, Local Operations staff will need to obtain approval from the State Director for either a SIL Target Reduction or an SDA Target Reduction in conjunction with a SIL Target Reduction.

For NON-SDA PROPERTIES ONLY - SIL Target Reduction only - If LWB can remain financially viable without the vacancy being filled, the SIL target may be reduced. Requests to reduce SIL targets can only be approved by the State Director.

For SDA PROPERTIES - SDA Target Reduction and SIL Target Reduction - Requests to reduce SDA targets must be negotiated with and approved by, the SDA housing provider.

If the SDA provider agrees to a reduction in the SDA target AND if the house can remain financially viable without the vacancy being filled, the SIL target may be reduced with the approval of the relevant State Director.

If the SDA housing provider will not reduce the SDA target and LWB still wishes to reduce the SIL target, LWB may have to compensate the housing provider for lost SDA funding and reasonable rent contributions. This additional financial impact will need to be considered by

the State Director before approval is given to reduce the SIL target. An escalation in negotiations with the SDA provider for an SDA target reduction can also be considered

Once the Target reductions have been approved, the room status can be changed to Unavailable in Lumary, and advertising can be withdrawn. The relevant State Director will need to approve and submit the [NDIS LWB 319 Vacancy Management - Withdrawal of Advertising](#) form to the DSSC.

House Rationalisation

LWB can rationalise (reduce) the number of SIL houses we maintain by moving existing residents between houses. This process must follow the standard LWB client matching principles and all impacted clients must agree to the move.

Wherever there is a vacancy, Team Leaders/House Supervisors should speak with remaining residents to see if they are interested in moving to another house. For example, if there are two houses with four bedrooms in each, and only two residents in each house, the residents in one house could choose to move into the other house. This would leave one house with four residents and no vacancies. LWB could then stop offering SIL services in the empty house.

Glossary

The following terms are used throughout this document:

Term / Function	Definition
Accommodation Agreement	Any conditions of occupying the dwelling, including the paying of rent, are outlined in an Accommodation Agreement. This Agreement could be the NDIS LWB Accommodation Agreement if we are collecting the rent or the Accommodation Agreement of a partner organisation if they are the SDA or Accommodation provider. Everyone who pays rent must have an Accommodation Agreement in place.
Disability Staff Support Centre (DSSC)	The DSSC will assist Client Services in the LWB vacancy management process. The DSSC is <u>not</u> responsible for placement decisions and filling vacancies.
Dwelling	The physical building where the vacancy occurs.

Term / Function	Definition
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	The National Disability Insurance Scheme
Participant	A person with a disability that has met the access requirements to become a participant of the NDIS.
Service Agreement	Anyone receiving SIL from LWB must have an NDIS LWB Service Agreement in place. This Agreement outlines the conditions under which SIL is provided including any charges to be paid.
SDA Target	The minimum number of clients the SDA provider requires to be residing in the property at any given time.
SIL Target	The minimum number of clients LWB requires to be residing at the property for the property to remain financially viable.
Shared and Supported Living (SSL)	LWB's product name for SIL and/or SDA supports.
Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)	Housing provided by an NDIS registered provider to participants who require specialist housing solutions to assist with the delivery of their supports. SDA refers to the dwelling itself and not the support being provided within the dwelling.
Supported Independent Living (SIL)	Support to participants within any accommodation setting, shared or otherwise, to assist with the tasks of daily life.
Unavailable Bedroom	An unoccupied bedroom, within a dwelling that is NOT available for occupancy. For example, an empty bedroom that cannot be occupied due to the support needs of current residents living in the dwelling.

Term / Function	Definition
Vacancy	An unoccupied bedroom, within a dwelling that is available for occupancy. For example, someone can move into and live in the vacant bedroom.