



Domestic and family violence can be a major factor in homelessness. Link Wentworth helps vulnerable people escaping such situations to access safe and affordable housing through the NSW Government's Start Safety Private Rental Assistance Subsidy Policy.

What is the Start Safely Private Rental Assistance Subsidy Policy?

Start Safely is a rental assistance program that provides rent support to those who have already left or need to leave an unsafe home due to family or domestic violence. Support is provided by:

- Assisting in finding a safe and affordable rental property
- Paying a proportion of rent for up to three years
- Assisting with education and employment to encourage financial independence.

Who is eligible for the Subsidy?

In order to be eligible for the Subsidy, clients must be:

- Eligible for social housing
- Escaping domestic or family violence
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Willing to receive support services where relevant.

To be eligible, clients must also have capacity to afford private rental accommodation at the end of the subsidy period. Clients on this program are eligible to receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), which is provided to suitable people renting in the private or community housing market.

How does it work?

It is expected clients will find a property within their financial means, and that the rent should not exceed 50% of the household's total gross weekly income (not including the CRA).

For the first 12 months, the Subsidy clients contribute 25% of their income to rent (plus 100% of any CRA they receive). The NSW Government funds the remaining amount – which is paid directly to the landlord/agent, either by us (if it is a Link Wentworth client) or by the local housing office.

If the client is a Link Wentworth client, we will pay the landlord/agent the subsidy amount 28 days in advance – every time. NOTE: this is the case for all clients receiving a subsidy across all offices. Gradually, the amount the client contributes to the rent increases.

What assistance does Link Wentworth provide in relation to the Subsidy?

Link Wentworth is committed to assisting people who are, or at risk of becoming, homeless or need help to rent in the private rental market. Our staff support clients on the Start Safely Subsidy through:

- working with landlords/agents to find suitable housing for our clients
- paying the subsidy direct to the landlord/agent – 28 days in advance.
- issuing **Bond Extra** if necessary (providing up to \$1,500 GST inclusive to real estate agents or landlords to cover rental arrears and/or property damage, over and above the rental bond. This can provide additional reassurance to landlords/real estate agents if they are feeling hesitant about letting their properties to clients, they may not have a tenancy history or experience disadvantage in accessing the private rental market.
- we can also act as a liaison point between the client and the landlord/agent if necessary.

If you need more information, please contact Link Wentworth on 9412 5111 or email enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au

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