

**Link Wentworth**  
**Affordable**

Providing homes, building futures.



Tenant

Handbook

Affordable Housing

December 2021





**Your Affordable Housing Manager is:**

**Your Tenant Reference Number is:**

(use this number when you pay your rent and utilities)

**Your property is:**

(Social, Affordable, Leasehold)

## Our Offices

### Chatswood

Level 10 67 Albert Avenue,  
Chatswood NSW 2067

#### Contact during office hours

P (02) 9412 5111

E [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au)

#### Office hours

Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

#### Mailing Address

PO Box 5124

Chatswood West NSW 2067

### Penrith

Borec House,  
Suite 1002, Level 1,  
29–57 Station Street,  
Penrith NSW 2750

#### Contact during office hours

P (02) 47778000

E [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au)

#### Office hours

Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm

#### Mailing Address

PO Box 4303, Penrith Westfield NSW 2750

### West Ryde

Level 2, 3-5 Anthony Road,  
West Ryde NSW 2114

#### Contact during office hours

P (02) 94125111

E [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au)

#### Office hours

Monday to Friday,  
9am – 5pm

### Katoomba

Level 2, 98 Bathurst St,  
Katoomba NSW 2780

#### Contact during office hours

P (02) 47778000

E [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au)

#### Office hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday,  
8.30am – 4.30pm (closed on Wednesday)

### Lithgow

42 Main Street,  
Lithgow NSW 2790

#### Contact during office hours

P (02) 47778000

E [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au)

#### Office hours

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday,  
11am – 3pm (closed on Monday and Thursday)

### Windsor

409A George Street,  
South Windsor NSW 2756

#### Contact during office hours

P (02) 47778000

E [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au)

#### Office hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday,  
8.30am – 4.30pm (closed on Wednesday)

### General maintenance and after-hours emergencies

8:30am to 4:30pm

*Monday to Friday (02) 9412 5111*

## Acknowledgement of Country

Link Wentworth wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we work and pay our respect to the Elders both past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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# Welcome to Link Wentworth



On behalf of the team at  
Link Wentworth, I warmly  
welcome you to your new home.

We believe everyone has a right to a safe and secure home. A place where you can grow, connect with the community, and build brighter futures that create positive change.

This Handbook has been designed to give you all the general information to help you settle in. We hope that the handbook answers any questions you have about your tenancy with Link Wentworth and your home. You can also get more information on our website [linkwentworth.org.au](http://linkwentworth.org.au).

If you still have questions or wish to discuss any aspect of your tenancy, you can contact your Affordable Housing Manager.

We are committed to providing you with a secure home and a high standard of service.

**Enjoy your new home!**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew McNulty".

**Andrew McNulty**  
CEO

# About Us

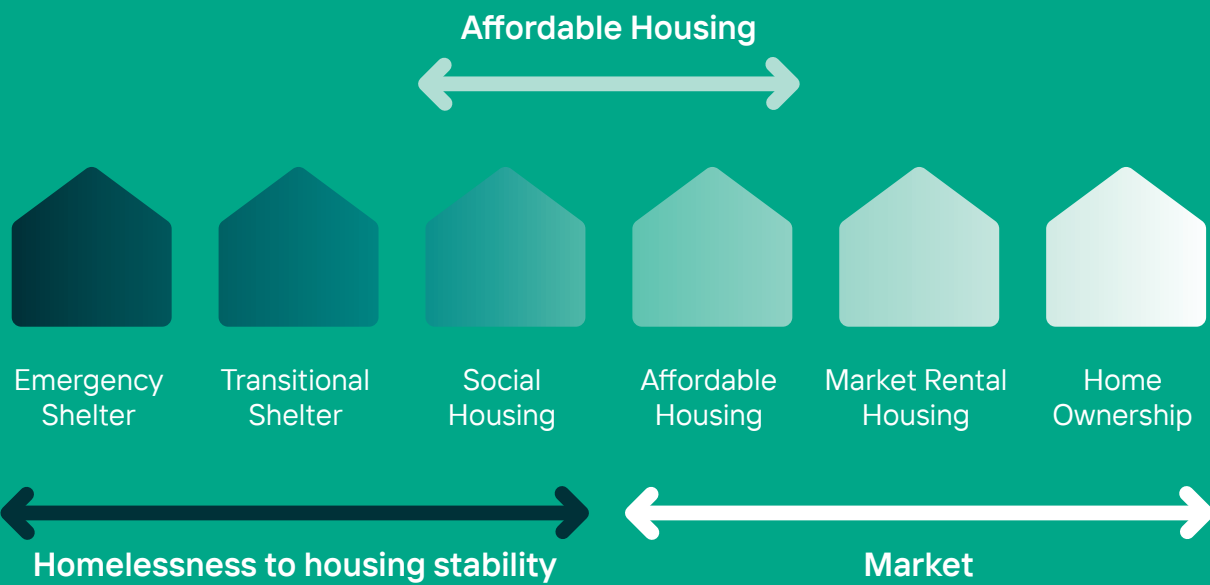
Link Wentworth is committed to creating and improving housing options and services that help people facing housing stress or homelessness.

Using decades of community driven experience, our work engages the full spectrum of housing needs from homelessness services, to social, disability and affordable housing.

With more than 6,400 homes across NSW, Link Wentworth is one of the largest community housing providers in Australia. Our mission is to not only create more community housing and better services, but to also advocate for inclusive and forward-thinking housing policy that will deliver a range of solutions to meet the current and future demand of all Australians.

We partner with private property owners, investors, property developers, local government, and other charitable organisations to offer Affordable Housing.

Below is a graph to help you understand how Affordable Housing fits within the Housing Continuum.



# Providing Homes, Building Futures

## Our Commitment

Link Wentworth is a client-focused and service-orientated organisation committed to providing:

**Quality service – locally delivered – by people who care.**

Our strategic intent is depicted in the image below.





## List of key terms

**Affordable housing:** for those who have paid employment and are receiving a moderate income.

**Affordable Housing Manager:** your Affordable Housing Manager is your main contact within Link Wentworth, and they will help support you through your tenancy.

**Bond:** a rental bond is a financial deposit paid by you to Link Wentworth. Your bond is equivalent to four (4) weeks market rent.

**Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA):** financial help to eligible people getting a Centrelink payment who pay rent and are not public tenants.

**Community housing:** affordable rental housing for people on very low to moderate incomes.

**Client Service Visit (CSV):** Link Wentworth will visit you at home from time to time. We call these visits Client Service Visits or CSVs.

**Fair wear and tear:** damage or loss of condition to a home which occurs over time because of day-to-day use.

**Fixed term lease:** a lease for a specific time, where there is a definite start and end date.

**Household income:** the gross total income of all adults (over 18 years) who live in your home.

**Leasehold properties:** are properties that Link Wentworth rent through the private rental market. Link Wentworth manages all contact with the Real Estate/Owner who is responsible for carrying out repairs or maintenance.

**Main tenant(s):** this is the tenant whose name is on the lease.

**Market rent:** this is the rent you would pay if you were renting your home in the private market.

**Occupant(s):** everyone living in the property.

**Planned works:** Link Wentworth plans to replace, upgrade or renovate major items in a property.

**Periodic lease:** when a fixed term lease ends and a new lease is not signed, the tenant automatically moves to a continuing lease. There is no specific end date.

**Rental subsidy:** this is the difference between the rent you pay and the market rent of the property.

**Rent review:** conducted every twelve months, the purpose of the rent review is to make sure you are paying the correct amount of rent and update changes to the household income.

**Social housing:** affordable rental housing for people on very low incomes provided by the government and community sectors to assist people who are unable to afford or access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. It includes public, community and Aboriginal housing.

**Transitional housing:** generally, accommodation for up to 12 months, for those who are experiencing long-term homelessness.





# Moving into your home

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Link Wentworth will do our best to make the process of moving into your new home as simple as possible. When you sign up with Link Wentworth there are things you need to know about your rights and responsibilities, important documents, things you need to pay, and your privacy.

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## 1.1 Your rights and responsibilities

### Your rights

As a tenant, you have the right to:

- be treated in a fair and non-discriminatory way
- be treated with respect
- have access to safe and secure housing
- be informed of changes to the way your tenancy is managed
- complain and to appeal decisions
- use advocates to help you talk to Link Wentworth
- have your personal information treated as confidential
- have access to information you have given us.

### Your responsibilities

As a tenant you have the responsibility to:

- fill in and return your Property Condition Report within seven days of signing your lease
- report all non-urgent and urgent repairs promptly. Urgent repairs are interruptions to gas, water or electricity that are dangerous or impede service delivery
- pay the rent on time and continue paying rent until the tenancy ends
- pay your water usage bill within 14 days
- submit your Rent Review by the due date (if applicable to your property and circumstance)
- keep your home and yard neat and tidy
- get written consent from Link Wentworth before making changes to the property, unless the tenancy agreement permits it
- treat Link Wentworth staff, contractors and representatives with respect
- be a good neighbour and respect your neighbours' right to quiet enjoyment
- advise us within 21 days if your circumstances change, for example if your income changes or someone moves into your home
- get written permission from Link Wentworth to sub-let or transfer any part of the property. If you do this without consent, you are breaching the terms of the tenancy agreement.

## 1.2 Important documents you need to keep

### Residential Tenancies Agreement (lease)

The Residential Tenancies Agreement is your lease. This is a contract between you and the owner or stakeholder of the property in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. It includes a range of rights and responsibilities for both the tenant (you) and the landlord or stakeholder. It is an important document, so make sure you keep a copy.

### Property Condition Report

A Property Condition Report is Part 2 of your tenancy agreement. It outlines the condition of your new home when you move in. The report will be used when we inspect the property at the beginning and end of your tenancy. We consider fair wear and tear when we inspect your home. You are responsible for keeping your home clean, neat and tidy.

Please review and return the Property Condition Report within seven (7) days of signing up. We ask you to check whether we have:

- missed any items on the report
- listed something incorrectly.

To complete the form, you need to:

- Put a (Y) for yes or an (N) for no in the 'tenant agrees' column.  
If you put N, write your reason next to this.
- Sign and return the completed form and we will make a copy for you to keep.

If you notice something urgent please call us.



## 1.3 Things you need to pay

### Rental bond

A rental bond is a financial deposit paid by you to the Rental Bond Board via an online link and portal. The bond must be paid in full prior to signing your tenancy agreement.

## 1.4 Understanding your rent

In accordance with the NSW Ministerial Housing Guidelines, the amount of rent you pay will depend upon which program your property has been provided through.

Affordable housing rental is assessed in a couple of ways:

- 30% of gross household income
- 20-25% below market rental.

Link Wentworth assesses each applicant's individual circumstances according to the NSW Ministerial Affordable Housing Guidelines and the type and location of property.

### Different types of property offerings:

1. **State Environment Planning Act (SEPP)** – Your rent is either set at 20-25% less than similar properties in the private rental market in the area or at 30% of your net income.
2. **Local Councils** – Your rent is set at 20 to 25% below equivalent property market rentals. Many local councils have requirements to be a local worker or to be able to demonstrate significant connection to the local government area. Many local councils also have a 2-4 year maximum allowable lease period for each client.
3. **National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) funding** – The discount applied is at least 20-25 per cent below the market rent, regardless of the method used to set rent.
4. **Other market rentals** – As we operate as a licensed real estate office, we also offer some properties at market rent.

### How to pay your rent

There are a few ways you can pay your rent. Your Affordable Housing Manager will talk with you about this when you sign your lease.

Tenants who rent a home with Link Wentworth have a Tenant Reference Number (TRN). Your TRN is written on page 3 of this Handbook. You can also ask your Affordable Housing Manager to give this to you.

We ask that you use your TRN whenever you pay rent.

When you pay water charges to Link Wentworth, please note 'water' and 'your address' so we can identify your payment and allocate it correctly.

Remember to pay your rent in advance, two (2) weeks in advance is ideal.



Your Home

## 2.1 Keys for your home

When you sign a lease with Link Wentworth you will be given one full set of keys for every person who signs the lease for your new home.

If you lose a key from this set, you need to pay to replace it. You are welcome to get spare keys cut.

## 2.2 Helping you settle in

We will phone you and check in to see how you are going within two (2) weeks of signing your lease. This is followed by a routine inspection 12 weeks into your lease and then an annual routine inspection thereafter.

## 2.3 Repairs and maintenance

Link Wentworth is responsible for arranging repairs. Please report repairs to your Affordable Housing Manager or the Affordable Housing Team on 02 9412 5111 or email [enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:enquiries@linkwentworth.org.au) with information and photos. Emergency trade contacts are listed on your lease. If it is not an emergency, please request repairs with us. Please do not organise repairs yourself as you will be responsible to pay for them. We will work to resolve general repairs within five (5) days.

If your property is at 40 Civic Way, Rouse Hill or 207 Derby Street, Penrith or 11 Phillips Street, St Marys please call 02 4777 8000 and select option 1 for all repairs and maintenance.

## 2.4 Types of repairs and response times

The response times will depend on the type of problem you are having. See below for all repairs that are considered urgent and will be actioned as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours.

- Burst water service or a serious water service leak
- Blocked or broken toilet
- Serious roof leak
- Gas leak
- Electrical fault
- Flooding or serious flood damage
- Serious storm or fire damage
- Failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the property
- Failure or breakdown of the hot water service
- Failure or breakdown of the stove or oven
- Failure or breakdown of a heater or air conditioner
- Fault or damage which makes the property unsafe or not secure
- Smoke alarms must also be repaired urgently to ensure they are working.



# Have a say and get involved

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We appreciate hearing from our tenants.

Every time we hear from you – whether it is a compliment, a suggestion, or a complaint – it helps us serve you better. When you give us feedback, we will treat you with respect and we will protect your privacy by treating your information as confidential.

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Below we have included information about how you can have a say formally. This includes participating in our Tenant Advisory Groups, completing the annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey, letting us know you are happy with or concerned about something, making a complaint or appealing a decision.

### 3.1 Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey CHIA NSW

Each year the industry group for community housing called the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW conducts a satisfaction survey of all tenants living in community housing. Link Wentworth supports this survey by letting our tenants know how they can participate. The information you provide is collected by CHIA NSW and they provide feedback to Link Wentworth and let us know where we need to improve. This is an important way for you to have a say about your experiences as a tenant.

### 3.2 Compliments and suggestions

We love getting feedback about what works for you as much as we appreciate hearing about the things which you are not happy with.

If our staff have exceeded your expectations or you find a process helpful, let us know by telling your Affordable Housing Manager. It helps us to build on our strengths.

Link Wentworth's Affordable Housing Team



## 3.3 Complaints and appeals

We don't always get it right. You may be confused by our processes, upset about how we have communicated with you, or feel dissatisfied with how we have managed something to do with your home.

There is a process for letting us know if you are concerned about our service or about your home. You can see this summarised in the diagram below.



### Before making a complaint

We encourage our tenants to discuss any concerns or problems with their Affordable Housing Manager in the first instance.

If you aren't satisfied with the conversation you have with the Affordable Housing Manager or you are not comfortable talking with them, you can ask to speak with the Team Leader.

## **Make a complaint to Link Wentworth**

Once you have discussed your concerns with the Affordable Housing Manager or Team Leader you can make a complaint if you are still concerned.

### **Here's how to lodge a complaint**

- Fill out our online feedback form at [www.linkwentworth.org.au](http://www.linkwentworth.org.au)
- Email [feedback@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:feedback@linkwentworth.org.au)
- We can post you a form
- Post to PO Box 5124, Chatswood West NSW 2067
- Phone (02) 9412 5111 / (02) 4777 8000, or direct lines or mobile numbers
- Complete the feedback form at one of our offices
- At an off-site location (e.g., event)

Link Wentworth will acknowledge the complaint within two (2) working days of receiving it.

A team leader or manager will read your complaint and review any records we have about the matter.

The investigation will be completed within 15 working days and a written response will be provided.

If the matter is complex or requires more investigation, it may take longer but you will be notified of this within 15 working days. For more information see our Complaints and Feedback Policy on our website.

## **I'm not happy with the outcome of my complaint**

If you are not satisfied with the way the team has responded to your complaint you can seek to have the decision formally reviewed, some decisions can be appealed by lodging an appeal with Link Wentworth—see below for our appeals process. If your complaint is not an appealable decision, you can seek to have your complaint escalated for further review by a more senior staff member.

## **How to make an appeal to Link Wentworth**

You have the right to appeal if you believe that a decision made by Link Wentworth in relation to a tenancy, housing assistance or an application is unfair or incorrect. An appeal is different to a complaint.

### **Here's how to lodge an appeal**

- Fill out our online appeals form at [www.linkwentworth.org.au](http://www.linkwentworth.org.au)
- We can post you a form
- Post to PO Box 5124, Chatswood West NSW 2067
- Phone us on (02) 9412 5111 / (02) 4777 8000 and we can fill in the form on your behalf
- Complete the appeals form at one of our offices

There is a two-stage appeals process. The appeal is first reviewed internally by a senior staff member of Link Wentworth who was not involved in the original decision. They will review the original decision and look at our policy, your information, and any new information you may wish to present. You will be advised of the outcome. This is called a First Tier Appeal. For more information see our Appeals Policy on our website.



Link Wentworth will acknowledge the appeal within two (2) working days of receiving it. A senior member of staff will read your appeal and review any records we have about the matter. The investigation will be completed within 15 working days and a written response will be provided. If the matter is complex or requires more investigation, it may take longer but you will be notified of this within 15 working days.

If you don't agree with the outcome, you can have the matter reviewed externally by the independent NSW Housing Appeals Committee (HAC), this is a Second Tier Appeal. The HAC deals with appeals on decisions about services provided by community housing providers such as Link Wentworth. You can read more about HAC here: <https://www.hac.nsw.gov.au/>

If the matter relates to your tenancy, such as repairs and maintenance, you can make an application to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). NCAT is the main forum for resolving tenancy disputes between landlords and tenants in New South Wales. For more information:

- NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) call 1300 135 399 or visit [www.ncat.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au)
- Department of Fair Trading call 13 32 20 or fill out the online form at [www.cas.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/icmspublicweb/forms/Tenancy.html](http://www.cas.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/icmspublicweb/forms/Tenancy.html)

You can also ask for advocacy and support through the NSW Tenants Union and local services. Contact details are available on the Link Wentworth website or at our offices.



## 3.4 Get involved

Your experience as a tenant is very important to the team at Link Wentworth. Our purpose is to provide a range of housing solutions for people across New South Wales and it is those people – our clients and tenants – who are at the heart of our work. There are a few ways you can get involved, have a say and be part of our work and your community.

### Tenant Advisory Groups

The Link Wentworth Tenant Advisory Groups (TAG) are groups of volunteer tenants who meet to:

- review Link Wentworth's policies
- advocate for tenants
- work on community projects and events.

The TAGs are open to all tenants of Link Wentworth. We have regular meetings in the Blue Mountains, Chatswood, Hawkesbury and Penrith. If you are interested in joining on of our TAGs, please contact the Community Programs Team and Sustainable Communities at [communityengagement@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:communityengagement@linkwentworth.org.au)

### Tenant training

Link Wentworth offers training for tenants on advocacy, housing and other relevant topics such as reducing energy bills or skills for employment.

Link Wentworth also runs projects which support our tenants to achieve any goals they might have around further education, volunteering or employment.

### Community projects and events

Throughout the year Link Wentworth works with interested tenants to develop projects and events which include creative arts, employment and training, and health-related programs. If you are interested in receiving information regarding upcoming community events, email [communityengagement@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:communityengagement@linkwentworth.org.au)

## 3.5 Our tenant newsletter, *Community Connect*

One of the most important things to us is making sure you've got the information you need. Information about our TAGs, tenants, tenant training, community projects, events, services, as well as critical information about our service policies and operations is included in our tenant newsletter called *Community Connect*.

Our tenant newsletter provides our tenants with an update on recent activities. You will receive this every three months. If you have an email address you will receive the quarterly newsletter by email only. Email [communications@linkwentworth.org.au](mailto:communications@linkwentworth.org.au) if you would prefer to receive a hard copy of the newsletter to your mailing address.



# Moving out of your home

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If you move out of your home, here are some things you need to know.

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## 4.1 Ending your tenancy

Giving notice, means you write to us by letter or email, to let us know when you will move out. When we receive your notice, your Affordable Housing Manager will contact you and discuss what we need you to do before you leave. This will include a final inspection which we encourage you to attend.

## 4.2 What if I owe Link Wentworth money when I'm moving out?

When you move out, you will be asked to pay Link Wentworth any outstanding debt from your tenancy. You will also be asked to pay for repairs needed outside of fair wear and tear. If you can't pay the full outstanding debt, we will deduct the outstanding rental or repairs from your bond. Alternatively, we can organise a payment plan for you.

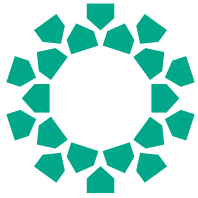






# Useful Contacts

Fire, Ambulance, Police	000
Poison Line	13 11 26
Crime Stoppers	1800 333 000
NSW Government Housing Contact Centre	1800 422 322
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)	13 14 50
Link2home	1800 152 152
Domestic Violence Line	1800 656 463
Child Protection Helpline	13 2111



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[linkwentworth.org.au](http://linkwentworth.org.au)