



Policy Manual
Policy 3.3

Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies
Matching Clients and Properties

Policy Title: Matching Clients and Properties (Allocations)
Policy Number: 3.3
Version Number: 3.3.1
Supercedes Number:

Approved by: Wentworth Board of Directors
Approval Date: October 2009
Effective Date: October 2009
Review Date: October 2011

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Wentworth understands its clients' housing needs and is able to identify properties within its portfolio that meet these needs.

2. Policy

2.1 Wentworth aims to promote a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching clients to properties. This means matching a client to a property that:

- Is large enough for the client's household
- Meets any special needs of the client so far as these are known
- Assists the client to access special support services that they need
- Encourages a sustainable tenancy
- Makes the best use of available housing stock

2.2 Clients eligible for Wentworth housing are listed on the waiting list. Clients approved for housing assistance under the following policies are housed ahead of other clients on the waiting list:

- Transfer Policy (priority transfers of existing tenants only),
- Relocation Policy

2.3 Where a vacancy occurs and there is no suitable client approved under one of these policies, Wentworth will allocate the property on a needs basis to the next appropriate person on the waiting list.

2.4 Wentworth aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those clients who need them. These features include:

- Properties that are suitable for older people
- Properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability
- In some areas, properties on the ground floor, properties with level access or properties with a yard/garden

2.5 Wentworth expects clients to provide accurate and up-to-date information about their needs so that clients can be matched to properties that meet their needs. This means that:

- Wentworth can ask clients to provide updated information at any time while they are on the waiting list. Wentworth will remove a client from the waiting list if they do not respond to requests from Wentworth to provide updated information.
- A client who is on the waiting list must tell Wentworth if anything in their situation that is relevant to their housing needs changes. This is so that Wentworth can update its information and match the client to a property that meets their new housing needs.

3. Responsibility

- Client Service Officers: to effectively manage the allocation of vacant properties
- Housing Services Manager: to monitor consistent and fair policy application in the allocation of properties
- Executive Services Manager: to prepare consolidated report on allocations to Executive Officer.
- Executive Officer: to provide reports to the Board.

4. Definitions and References

- Housing Act, 2001
- Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2000
- Related policy: Transfer Policy
Relocation Policy
Offers of Housing

5. Procedure

5.1 Matching a client to a property

- 5.1.1 When a property becomes available, Wentworth makes sure that both the client and the property information is up-to-date and then checks whether the property is suitable for clients with the highest priority on the waiting list.
- 5.1.2 When deciding if a property is suitable for a particular client, Wentworth considers whether the property is likely to address the client's housing needs and result in a sustainable tenancy. If the property is not suitable, Wentworth allocates the property to the next client on the waiting list whose housing needs would be met by the property.
- 5.1.3 Some properties will only be matched to clients with specific needs. The types of properties that are available and the restrictions that apply to them are list in the table below:

Property types

Type of Property		Client
General properties	Wentworth capital properties or headleased from the private rental market	Clients with needs that can be met by the type, size and location of the particular property
Local Allocation Strategy	Properties subject to a Local Allocation Strategy A Local Allocation Strategy (LAS) is a specific allocation approach for a local area. When there is a LAS in place, Wentworth considers the needs of the community living in the local area as well as making sure that the client is matched to a property that meets their needs. LASs are written down and regularly reviewed.	Clients who meet the household profile sought under the Local Allocation Strategy.

Type of Property		Client
Senior Communities	The properties in these complexes are specifically for older people.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who are 45 years of age or over Clients aged 55 years or over who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
Modified Property	Properties modified to cater for tenants with a disability	Clients who have a demonstrated need for a modified property
Ground floor property	Ground floor properties	Clients who have demonstrated a need for a ground floor property
Level access	Properties with level access	Clients who have demonstrated a need for a property with level access
Yards/Gardens	Properties with yards or gardens	Clients who have demonstrated a need for a backyard

5.2 Offering a Property

5.2.1 Once a suitable match has been identified, Wentworth will offer the property to a client in accordance with the Offers of Housing policy.

5.3 Assessment Criteria

5.3.1 Wentworth asks clients to provide information about their housing needs during the application process. Clients already on the waiting list can up-date the information they have given to Wentworth about their housing needs by filling out the Change of Circumstances form.

5.3.2 When Wentworth matches a client to a property it relies on:

- information about the client's housing needs that has been supplied by the client
- decisions made by Wentworth based on assessment of the information provided by the client.

5.4 Criteria used to match a client to a property

Basic criteria		Additional criteria that is considered when relevant
Location of property	Wentworth will match to the location/allocation zone (as per Wentworth's application form) requested by the client	Wentworth will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match to specific locations within an allocation zone when the client has demonstrated a need for this allocation zone • Not match a client to a property in an area covered by a Local Allocation Strategy unless the client's household meets the profile sought under the Strategy
Type of Property	Wentworth will match to a house, townhouse or unit according to availability	Wentworth will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match a client to a specific type of property if the client has demonstrated a need for this type of property • Match a client to properties with specific features (such as ground floor property, property with level access, modified property, property with a maximum number of stairs) if the client has demonstrated a need for this type of property. • Not match a client to properties that have specific features if the client has demonstrated that these features would make the property unsuitable for them. • Where possible, match households with young children to properties with yards, subject to availability.
Number of bedrooms in the property	<p>Wentworth will match to a bedroom allocation based on the client's household composition. The minimum bedroom entitlements used by Wentworth are set out in the Bedroom Entitlement table below.</p> <p>Wentworth may match a household to a property larger than their minimum entitlement. This will happen if Wentworth has a larger property available and Wentworth's operating procedures allow it to be allocated to the household.</p>	Wentworth will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to a property that has one more bedroom than the minimum bedroom entitlement for the household, if the client has requested this. • Wentworth has this policy in recognition of the family responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients can ask for an extra bedroom on their waiting list application or at any time while they are on the waiting list. • Match to a bedroom allocation above the minimum entitlement if the client has demonstrated a need for a property of this size. For example, Wentworth will allocate an additional room for a family member or carer to stay in if the client has demonstrated a need for this. • where possible, consider the future accommodation needs of children in the household.

5.5 Minimum Bedroom Entitlements

Household size	Bedroom Entitlement
Single	1
Couple	1
1 or 2 adults with 1 - 2 children	2
1 or 2 adults with 3 - 4 children	3
1 or 2 adults with 5 or more children	4
Two or more single adults	One bedroom per adult
Extended families	1 bedroom per single adult or couple and 1 - 2 children per bedroom

5.6 Accommodating children

5.6.1 Wentworth will consider the age and sex of any children in the household when it works out a household's bedroom entitlement. The principles applied by Wentworth when it does this are set out in the table below.

Situation		Wentworth response
Over 18 yrs	Children over 18 years of age	Considered to be an adult when calculating the minimum bedroom entitlement.
Shared bedrooms	Children expected to share a bedroom	Same sex children up to 18 years of age to share a bedroom Male and female children to share a bedroom until one of the children reaches 10 years of age.
Children can share a bedroom	Client has demonstrated a need for same sex children, or children under 10 years of age, to have separate bedrooms	Wentworth will allocate an additional bedroom. <i>Examples of situations where an extra bedroom could be appropriate include where there is a large age gap between the children or behavioural factors.</i>
Shared custody	Clients with shared custody of children	The child/children are considered to be part of the household if the client has substantiated shared custody of children for 3 days per week or more. Normal bedroom entitlements apply.
Access visits	Clients who need to accommodate access visits from children	The children are not considered to be part of the household if they visit for less than 3 days per week. The client must demonstrate a need for an extra bedroom to accommodate access visits. See Evidence Requirements for more information.
Future needs of children	Children will need separate bedrooms in 2 or 3 years time	Wentworth will take this into account when matching the client to a property if it can. Wentworth will make this decision on a case by case basis according to the size and type of housing that is available in the area.

5.7 Evidence Requirements

5.7.1 Wentworth will base its decisions about which properties are likely to be suitable for a specific client on the information it receives from the client. Wentworth will consider the merits of any information provided by the client before it uses it as the basis of a decision about the client's housing needs.

5.8 Information needed to substantiate housing needs

Situation		Information needed
Ground floor or Level access	Need for a ground floor property or a property with level access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Assessment Form completed by the client's doctor & substantiating the need for a ground floor property/ level access and/or letters or reports from relevant support providers
Modified property	Need for a property modified for people with a disability (eg. wheelchair access, modifications needed to make the property suitable for the client)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For minor modifications, Medical Assessment Form completed by the client's health care professional & substantiating the need for property modifications For major modifications, an Occupational Therapist report stating the type of modifications or property specifications needed
Specific property features are unsuitable	Need to show that the presence of certain features would make the property unsuitable (eg the number of stairs in the property, need for fencing, no carpet for health reasons, positioning of handles & locks, screen doors etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Assessment Form completed by the client's doctor & substantiating that certain property features would be unsuitable
Yards	Need for a yard (eg to house a client's guide dog, to accommodate physical therapy equipment, to address the health needs of a household member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation substantiating the need for a yard. Note: Stronger substantiation of the need for a yard is needed in allocation zones where there are few properties with yards. If the yard is needed for medical/health reasons - Medical Assessment Form completed by the client's doctor & substantiating the need for the yard and/or letters or reports from relevant support providers
Shared custody	Client has shared custody of children and needs a property large enough to accommodate them	Substantiation of the shared custody arrangement through information such as one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation from the Family Court Statutory declaration from the client Centrelink payment information Bank account details Letter from relevant support providers

Situation		Information needed
Extra bedroom Due to medical condition or disability	Need for an extra bedroom. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extra space for storage of medical equipment • room for family member or carer to stay when providing short term support due to hospitalisation or illness • separate room for partner if a disability, or routines associated with a disability, require the couple to sleep separately 	Documentation from the client's health care professional (eg doctor, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or psychiatrist) that supports the need for an extra bedroom
Extra bedroom Due to family reasons	Need for an extra bedroom. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to accommodate regular access visits from children • to accommodate weekend access visits from children • to accommodate regular visits from grandchildren for care or custody reasons 	Documentary evidence that access visits occur at least fortnightly or during school holidays, such as one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of part payment of Family Tax Benefit A or B • Statutory Declaration signed by the parent providing primary care • Family Court papers stating access arrangements • Letter from support worker or advocate. • In the case of care related visits from grandchildren, reasonable substantiation of the reason for the visits
	Need for an extra bedroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable regular care of aged parents 	Documentation such as a letter from the client's doctor, advocate or support worker that confirms care is required regularly (ie of several weeks duration, several times a year) and supports the need for an extra bedroom
	Need for an extra bedroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet extended family responsibilities 	Information demonstrating the need to meet extended family responsibilities. Wentworth will consider these requests on a case by case basis according to the specific circumstances of the situation.

5.9 Local allocation strategies

5.9.1 Wentworth may apply local allocation strategies which may vary these standard criteria, or give greater priority to certain applicants than would otherwise be the case in the following situations:

- there is a high concentration of community and/or public housing stock;
- there is a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic problems;
- there are existing tenancy management problems, or the potential for them to develop;
- existing problems will be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled;
- there is a mismatch of demand and supply making the property very desirable or hard to let.

5.9.2 The purpose of these localised strategies is to:

- minimise community problems;
- reduce transfer requests caused by inappropriate allocations;
- ensure co-location of certain tenants where this is beneficial to them or their access to services;
- ensure tenants who may cause nuisance and annoyance are located where the impact of anti-social behaviour would be minimal.

5.10 Appealing Decisions

5.10.1 If a client believes we have made a wrong decision they should ask for a formal review of the decision. To do this the client needs to complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. A Complaints and Appeals brochure and an Appeal Form are available from Wentworth's office and can also be downloaded from our website www.wentworth.org.au

5.10.2 If the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Internal Appeal process they can proceed to make an appeal to the independent Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). Wentworth will advise the appellant how to lodge an appeal with HAC. Alternatively, they may access the HAC on www.hac.nsw.gov.au or freecall on 1800 629 794. The HAC are an independent appeals agency for all NSW social housing clients.

5.10.3 Tenants can appeal the following decisions under this policy:

- 5.10.3.1 Housing Entitlement
- Number of bedrooms
 - Modification or special features of dwelling
 - Locational need

For more information on appeals refer to the [Appeals Policy](#)