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| Rental Charges Policy |
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Rental Charges Policy

Statement

Able Australia charges rent to clients living in Able Australia owned or rented supported shared homes and independent living units.

Rent does not cover any NDIS funded services/costs nor other accommodation costs such as utilities, food, general household consumable supplies, communal furnishings and whitegoods.

Able encourages all clients to pay their rent through the Centrepay billing service. Able lets clients know beforehand of rent increases, which occur each year in line with increases in the Disability Support Pension (DSP).

Scope

This policy applies to all clients living in Able Australia owned residential accommodation or where rent is not paid to a third party by the client.

Purpose

This policy outlines Able's approach to providing a clear and transparent framework for the setting and collection of rental charges.

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- Rental charges are applied consistently and equitably to all clients.
- Residents understand how the rental charges are calculated.
- Residents understand when the rental charges will be reviewed.
- Residents understand when rental charges are charged.
- Residents understand payment terms of rental charges.
- Appropriate processes are in place regarding the collection of rental charges, including the management of arrears and communication of any changes.
- Rental charges and rent collection practices will be financially sustainable for the organisation.
- Compliance with relevant Commonwealth and Victorian laws and regulations.

DEFINITIONS

- **Centrepay:** A service managed by Centrelink, where regular bills are deducted from Centrelink payments and made to a third party.
- **DSP:** Disability Support Pension
- **Rent:** the amount paid or payable at regular intervals by a person as a condition of occupying their principal home.
- **NDIA** – National Disability Insurance Agency, body managing the NDIS
- **NDIS** – National Disability Insurance Scheme, a government funded scheme supporting people with a disability.
- **SDA** - Specialist Disability Accommodation

POLICY DETAILS

1.1 Rental Calculation:

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| Doc Number: TBC | Name: Rental Charges Policy | Updated:10/23 | Version: 1.0 |
| Authorising Area: Corporate Services | | Document Owner: Property & Assets | |
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- Rental charges are applied to all residents every 28 days in advance.
- Rental charges will be in line with the NDIA’s Reasonable Rent Contribution Policy as outlined in the NDIS Pricing arrangements for SDA and must not exceed an amount that is:
 - 25 percent of the base standard rate of the DSP;
 - Plus: 25 per cent of the Pension Supplement;
 - Plus: 100 per cent of Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

Note, the “base standard rate of the DSP” is the amount under the Social Security Act 1991 that is the maximum basic rate for a person who is not under 21 and not a member of a couple.

Clients will be encouraged to enter into CentrePay arrangements with Able to minimise the level of administration required.

All clients will be advised of the rental charges prior to moving in.

1.2 Indexation

- Rental charges may be indexed annually by reference to the changes to the Disability Support Pension (DSP).
- The DSP is reviewed twice a year in March and September.
- Clients will be notified of rent increases in line with the provisions of the respective State or Territory Tenancy Acts.

1.3 Residents under 21 years of age

- Rent applying to clients who are under 21 years of age is linked to their base DSP.
- Rent increases for any clients because they turn 21 years of age during a calendar year will apply from the following indexation review.

1.4 Absences

Rental charges will continue to apply even if the client is absent from the accommodation.

1.5 Rental Arrears

If a client does not pay their rent on time, they are 'in arrears'. In this situation, Able will follow the processes outlined in the Rental and Accommodation Charges Arrears Policy.

1.6 Undue Financial Hardship

Able recognises that there are circumstances which may impact on a client’s capacity to meet their rent payments on schedule and, where appropriate, the client may apply to Able for a temporary rent reduction or suspension.

In circumstances where undue financial hardship is claimed, Able may request relevant evidence to demonstrate hardship, for example income statements and may, at its discretion, consider reducing rent payments for a set period.

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1.7 Responsibilities

These positions are responsible for implementation and compliance monitoring of the policy in their work areas:

- *National Manager, Property & Assets* - is responsible for the application of this policy and will monitor and review the level of rental charges to be applied and monitor compliance with the applicable laws and regulations under this policy.
- *Chief Financial Officer* - will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and aim to deliver continuous improvement.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring that the principles and components within this policy are applied in their daily work and that employees attend and participate in training and development in this area.
- Clients, families and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback to Able regarding its processes and practices to learn and improve on how it applies rental charges.

1.8 Employee Training and Development

There is no applicable employee training required for this policy.

1.9 Related policies and procedures

Accommodation Fee and Rental Charges Arrears Policy
Accommodation Fee Policy

2 Standards and Conventions

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
Specialist Disability Accommodation Module

- Rights and Responsibilities
- Conflict of Interest
- Service Agreements with clients
- Enrolment of SDA Properties
- Tenancy Management

NDIS Code of Conduct
Victorian Disability Worker Commission – Code of Conduct

2.1 Legislation

National Disability Insurance Scheme (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Rules 2020
The Relevant State and Territory Residential Tenancy Acts
Social Security Act 1991 – Cth