



Welcome Home Webinar 2 – Case Study 1

Gemma and Emily

Working with a tenant's support network

Gemma is 28 years old and uses a manual wheelchair for mobility. She lives in a 1 bedroom Fully Accessible SDA apartment. Gemma's Dad gave her lots of support to apply for the NDIS and consent to her SDA agreement, but Gemma now self-manages all aspects of her life including her tenancy.

One of Gemma's NDIS goals was to explore her sexuality and relationships. Since moving out of home she has started a relationship with Emily and they have decided to live together in Gemma's apartment.

Gemma's SDA agreement states that partners and family members are permitted to share her bedroom but this must be approved by the NDIA. Gemma approaches her tenancy manager to discuss the process and they say they will get back to her soon.

Two days later, Gemma's Dad calls to say he received a weird email from the tenancy manager stating: *"Gemma has asked if we will permit her to live with her girlfriend, Emily, in her apartment. Are you okay with this?"*

Gemma is annoyed. She never gave her permission for the tenancy manager to contact her father about her personal matters and she never would!

Q. What did Gemma need from the SDA provider in this situation?

A. An offer to meet with Gemma and Emily to discuss their options

A tenant should be an SDA provider's primary point of contact for addressing any tenancy matter. The tenancy manager should have had a discussion with Gemma about changing her living arrangements before involving any other parties.

For a complex matter such as establishing the tenancy conditions that apply to a household with SDA and non-SDA eligible tenants, the SDA provider should engage with all the parties involved, in this case Gemma and Emily, about their shared and individual rights, responsibilities, options and risks.

- Ensure a tenant understands their right to share their home (bedroom) with a non-SDA eligible person.
- Confirm the tenancy conditions for a tenant when they share their bedroom with a non-SDA eligible tenant (see [The Pricing Arrangements for SDA 2021 – 22](#) for detailed guidelines on setting maximum reasonable rental contributions and board payments for a tenant who shares their room).
- Negotiate tenancy conditions with a non-SDA eligible tenant (payments are not price regulated. See [The Pricing Arrangements for SDA 2021 – 22](#) and the [SDA Operational Guidelines](#) for more details).

B. A factsheet about the requirements and procedures for applying to the NDIA to share her bedroom

A tenant's understanding of their rights and responsibilities will be strengthened if an SDA provider is able to reinforce key information in a number of ways. Gemma's tenancy manager could support a conversation about her right to share her home with written material providing practical information such as:

Gemma's tenancy manager could support the conversation about Emily moving in with some information resources, such as:

- A summary of the process for applying to share a bedroom and the responsibilities of the tenant and the SDA provider.
- Links to additional information i.e. [SDA Operational Guidelines](#)

C. A check in to see if her preferred support people were still the same

An SDA provider should ensure they have a clear and up to date understanding of a tenant's preferences for involving members of their support network in tenancy matters.

Gemma's tenancy manager should have discussed who Gemma would like to have involved in any conversations about Emily moving in and updated their records about her support preferences. Good practices include:

- Regularly review a tenant's preferences for involving members of their support network in their tenancy and always check in with a person before you reach out to one of their supporters.
- Document details about formal supporters and the tenancy matters they have the legal authority to address.
- An SDA provider should not become actively involved as a decision maker for a tenant. If a person does not have adequate support to address tenancy matters, seek legal advice about their best advocacy options (See Module 2: Rights and Responsibilities for more information).
- Always ensure a tenant's confidentiality and privacy are respected in any communication with members of their support network.