

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Tenancy Strategy



A summary

January 2013

www.rbkc.gov.uk



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

What is a tenancy strategy and why do we have to have one?

In 2011, the Government introduced a new law called the Localism Act. The Act allows social housing providers (more commonly known as housing associations) to offer fixed term tenancies for **new** social housing tenants. In the past tenancies were for life – known as ‘lifetime’ tenancies.

The Act also says that local councils must produce a ‘tenancy strategy’. The tenancy strategy offers guidance to the housing associations in the area. It tells them how and when they should use these new fixed term tenancies.



How has the Localism Act changed social housing?

There are two main areas of change: rents and the length of tenancies. We look at both in our Tenancy Strategy and try to set some guiding principles for local housing providers.

There are now two types of rent:

- social rents, where the rent is worked out by a calculation set by Government; and
- Affordable Rents, where rent levels could be up to 80 per cent of a market rent. Market rent means the average rent in the area that someone would pay if they were renting the property from a private landlord.

There are also two types of tenancy:

- lifetime tenancies, which have been granted by councils and housing associations in the past; and
- flexible tenancies (sometimes known as fixed term tenancies) which are for a limited fixed term (generally for five years). At the end of the fixed term, the household's circumstances are reviewed and if they still need the accommodation, their tenancy can be renewed.

What does the Royal Borough's Tenancy Strategy say about the changes?

Our Tenancy Strategy outlines how we expect social housing providers to use five main areas as a guide when issuing new tenancies and setting rent levels:

- **Tackling housing need**

We have high levels of demand for affordable social housing in the borough and we want to ensure that social housing tenancies in the borough continue to help those in housing need. This means offering tenancies to those who need them most, but also giving people good information and advice about what happens at the end of a fixed term tenancy so they do not become homeless again.

- **Ensuring appropriate use of tenancies and tenancy options**

We want to ensure there is a consistency across the Royal Borough in how and when housing associations use these new fixed term tenancies. We have suggested five years as the minimum tenancy length to be used by all housing providers, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

- **Promoting affordable housing options**

The Government has introduced Affordable Rent, linked to private sector rent levels in the area. In our Tenancy Strategy we ask housing providers to make sure that the rents they set are affordable to those on benefits and low and middle income working households.

- **Promoting mobility and reducing under-occupation and overcrowding**

We see fixed term tenancies as providing the opportunity to move households from properties that are not suitable for their needs, for example in terms of size or the accessibility level of the property. This means that these properties can be given to those who need them most.

- **Supporting and incentivising work and training**

We recognise the importance of work to the economic and social well-being of individuals and families, as well as the community. As a council, we are making efforts to help social housing residents who are not working to find employment or training. Affordable Rent levels must not prohibit or prevent tenants or household members from looking for work. Tenancies should be re-issued to working households unless the household is earning above thresholds set nationally or defined in the housing provider's tenancy policy.

Our Tenancy Strategy also sets out how we will work with local housing associations to tackle social housing fraud and to make sure we can let as many properties as possible to households that need them.

How can I find out more?

A copy of our full Tenancy Strategy can be found on our website **www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing**

Whilst our tenancy strategy sets out the guidelines, if you are a tenant living in social housing, you can ask your landlord for a copy of their tenancy policy. This will tell you in detail how they will use fixed term tenancies and how they will review a household's circumstances at the end of the tenancy and decide if the tenancy should be renewed.



English

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance please use the contact details below.

Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

French

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Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.

Housingline

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