

Key information

This document provides answers to common questions about the council's overarching tenancy policy and approach to the allocation and management of social housing tenancies. While the policy applies across different tenancy types, the information below specifically focuses on the use, management, and review of secure fixed-term tenancies, including what current and prospective tenants can expect.

General

1. **What is this Tenancy Policy for?**

It explains the council's approach to allocating and managing social housing tenancies, including what types of tenancy we offer, when we use fixed-term tenancies, how we review tenancies, and the support available to help tenants sustain their tenancy.

2. **Who does this policy apply to?**

It applies to prospective tenants offered a council tenancy and to existing council tenants, including those whose current tenancy is a fixed-term tenancy that will be reviewed for renewal.

3. **What is the difference between a “tenant” and a “resident” in this policy?**

In this policy, “tenant” refers to the person (or people) with the legal tenancy. Other members of the tenant's household are referred to as “residents”.

Tenancy types

1. **What is a secure periodic (lifetime) tenancy?**

This is a tenancy for life, with no requirement for the tenant to undergo renewal reviews, provided the tenancy conditions are met. The vast majority of our tenants hold this tenancy type.

2. **When does the council use fixed-term tenancies?**

It is proposed that fixed-term tenancies will be used in limited circumstances, including for homes with four or more bedrooms and/or homes that are significantly adapted, because these homes are in very short supply and high demand.

3. **How long is a fixed-term tenancy?**

Under this policy, fixed-term tenancies will be granted for the property types above for a 5-year period, subject to a formal review before the end of the term.

4. **What counts as a “significantly adapted” property?**

Examples include (but are not limited to) ground floor extensions adding accessible bedrooms/bathrooms, wet rooms, through-floor lifts, widened doorways, low-level kitchens/bathrooms, and ceiling tracking/hoists. The council will indicate if a property is considered significantly adapted.

Existing tenants, moves and exceptions

1. I am a secure existing council tenant, will my tenancy type change?

- a) If your tenancy started before April 2012 or you held a secure tenancy with us or another landlord before this date, you are a secure periodic (lifetime) tenant, your tenancy remains unchanged.
- b) If you already hold a fixed-term council tenancy and your home is not a four-bedroom home and is not significantly adapted, the intention is that you will move to a secure lifetime tenancy.
- c) If you already hold a fixed-term council tenancy and your home is a four-bedroom home or is significantly adapted, the intention is that your tenancy remains unchanged.

2. Can I keep or be granted a secure lifetime tenancy if I move to a four-bedroom or significantly adapted property?

In general, moving to a four-bedroom or significantly adapted property will result in a 5-year fixed-term tenancy where the move is by choice rather than required by the council, and the option to retain a lifetime tenancy will not normally be available. However, there are specific exceptions set out in the policy. These include tenants whose tenancy began before 1 April 2012, certain cases involving domestic abuse where the council grants a new tenancy for reasons connected with that abuse, and permanent decants. In these circumstances, the council will offer a tenancy with no less security than the tenant already holds.

Support to sustain tenancies

1. What support is available to help me keep my tenancy?

The council takes a supportive approach to helping tenants settle into their home, claim benefits, manage household expenses, pay rent on time, keep a clear rent account, abide by the tenancy agreement, and be a good neighbour.

2. Will the council act early if there are problems?

Yes. The council aims to act promptly where it identifies issues that could threaten a tenancy and to provide or enable advice and assistance where needed.

Equality, accessibility and reasonable adjustments

1. How does the policy take account of equality and diversity?

The policy has been assessed to ensure that it is accessible to all in line with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Can I ask for information in a different format or language?

Yes. The council will make appropriate arrangements for customers with distinct communication needs. This may include providing communications in alternative languages or formats and providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

3. **What are “reasonable adjustments”?**

Reasonable adjustments are changes or additional support to remove barriers for disabled people or others who need extra help. The policy notes that officers may assist, for example by helping to complete paperwork or arranging translation services where required.

Monitoring, training and policy review

1. **How will the council monitor how the policy is working?**

The Head of Residents and Neighbourhoods will provide report to the HRA Operational Group covering key information such as tenancy types granted, numbers of fixed-term lettings and reviews, and available equality data.

2. **Will staff be trained on this policy?**

Yes. The policy states that staff responsible for implementing it will receive comprehensive training.

3. **How often will the policy be reviewed?**

The policy will be reviewed every five years, or sooner if needed to keep up to date with legislation, regulation, or best practice.