

Summary of what is proposed and why

This document explains how the council will offer and manage social housing tenancies. It sets out what type of tenancy people will get, when a tenancy might be reviewed, and how the council will make best use of homes that are in short supply.

What is being proposed?

- Most council homes will be let on a secure lifetime tenancy (sometimes called a “secure periodic” tenancy). This means the tenancy does not have a fixed end date and does not need to be renewed.
- Some homes will be let on a 5-year fixed-term tenancy because they are in very high demand and need to stay available for households who need them most. These are:
 - Homes with significant adaptations (for example wet rooms, through-floor lifts, widened doorways, accessible extensions, low-level kitchens, ceiling hoists); and
 - Homes with 4 or more bedrooms (including 3-bedroom “parlour” homes, which are treated as 4-bedroom for allocations).
- New tenants who do not already have a secure tenancy will usually start with a 1-year probationary tenancy. If things go well, they move onto the right longer tenancy for the home (usually lifetime, unless it is a 4+ bedroom or significantly adapted home).
- Fixed-term tenancies will be reviewed before they end. The council will carry out the review in the last year of the term and will give at least 6 months’ written notice of the decision. The review will look at:
 - How the tenancy has been managed (for example rent arrears or serious nuisance/anti-social behaviour); and
 - Whether the home is still suitable for the household (for example whether the household still needs an adapted home or a 4+ bedroom home).
- Where the council does not plan to renew a fixed-term tenancy, it will provide information about:
 - How to ask for a review of the decision; and
 - What advice and help is available to find another suitable home.

Who is affected?

- New council tenants (especially those starting on a probationary tenancy).
- Existing tenants on fixed-term tenancies when their tenancy comes up for renewal.
- People living in, or bidding for, 4+ bedroom family homes and significantly adapted properties.
- Existing secure or assured tenants with a tenancy that started before 1 April 2012 keep their existing statutory rights if they move within council or housing association housing (provided the tenancies follow on directly from one another).
- There are specific protections for victims of domestic abuse and for people who are permanently moved by the council. In these cases, the council will offer a tenancy with no less security than the person already has.

Why is this being proposed?

- To give most tenants long-term security. A stable home helps people plan their lives, support their family, and improve their circumstances.
- To make best use of a limited supply of properties. Larger family properties and adapted properties are scarce and in high demand.
- To keep specialist properties available for people who need them. Adaptations are expensive and demand is growing, so the council wants adapted homes to be occupied by households who need the adaptations.
- To help children and families. The policy aims to balance stability for households with children with the need to ensure larger homes go to families who need the space.
- To reduce tenancy fraud and protect public housing. The council will check identity at sign-up and may carry out tenancy audits, including unannounced visits, to make sure homes are occupied by the legal tenant.

What happens at the end of a 5-year fixed-term tenancy?

1. The council looks at two things: (a) tenancy conduct (for example rent arrears or serious nuisance/anti-social behaviour), and (b) whether the home is still suitable for the household (for example still needing adaptations or needing a 4+ bedroom home).
2. You get a decision in writing with at least 6 months' notice.
3. If the council renews, you will be offered a new tenancy in line with this policy.
4. If the council does not renew, the decision letter will explain how to ask for a review and what support is available to help you find another suitable home.
5. If you do not co-operate with the review (for example you do not keep appointments or do not provide evidence), a further tenancy may not be granted.

Your right to ask for a review (appeal)

You can ask the council to review certain decisions about your tenancy. This includes decisions about:

- What tenancy you are offered from the housing register.
- Whether a probationary tenancy is extended or ended.
- Whether a fixed-term tenancy is renewed or allowed to end.

Support, equality and accessibility

The council says it will consider people's needs when applying this policy. This includes making reasonable adjustments where needed, for example help to complete forms, and providing information in different formats or languages, with interpretation or transcription where appropriate.