

What is a Starter Tenancy?

A Starter tenancy is a trial tenancy which gives you the opportunity to show us that you can pay your rent, maintain your home and meet the terms of your tenancy agreement. Its aim is to help you and your family to understand the behaviour we expect from you from the start.

We offer starter tenancies, which are also known as assured shorthold tenancies, to people who have not had a tenancy agreement with a local council or another housing association before.

Before signing up for a starter tenancy, it is important that you understand it will give you fewer rights than other tenancies. For example, you will not have the right:

- to sub-let or take in lodgers
- to carry out a mutual exchange or transfer
- to assign (except through a court order)
- to buy or acquire your home
- to make improvements
- for succession to qualifying relatives

What will happen during the tenancy?

Your Housing Officer will carry out at least two formal reviews during your starter tenancy, one just after you move in and another nine months later. If you have met the terms of your agreement and paid your rent, your tenancy will convert to a fixed term tenancy on the anniversary of its start date.

If any issues have arisen, such as low-level rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, your starter tenancy will be extended by six months. As we can only extend the tenancy once, this would be your last chance to show you can meet the terms of your agreement.

If something more serious has happened and we feel you have not conducted your tenancy satisfactorily, we may decide to end the agreement and take steps to repossess the property. We will only do this where we have good reason, for example:

- your rent is in arrears and you have not worked with us to find ways to repay the debt
- you cannot maintain the tenancy for financial reasons
- you have not worked with us to try and resolve any complaints about anti-social behaviour

It is important to note that we can end starter tenancies at any time if any major problems occur by serving a legal notice. This would happen if the tenancy agreement had been breached or there was evidence that you could not maintain the agreement, despite being offered help and support.

If you do decide to end my tenancy, can I appeal?

Yes. You will be given full details about the appeals process and will have 14 days from when the notice is served to appeal against the decision.

Your appeal would be heard by our chief executive, and two members of our Designated Panel.

What if I decide to end the tenancy?

You can end the tenancy at any time by sending us written notice which has been signed and dated one full calendar month before you want to move out. A leaflet and form you can use to help you do this are available on our website or by contacting our office.

What shall I do if I'm finding it difficult to pay my rent?

Speak to your Income Management Officer or Housing Officer and they will be able to point you in the direction of an agency which can help if you are having trouble paying your rent.

Our aim is to keep you in your home, living in the terms of your tenancy agreement and paying your rent. We are here to help so please do get in touch if you are facing difficulties.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about your tenancy, please talk to your Housing Officer who will be happy to help.