



BCP COUNCIL TENANCY STRATEGY FOR REGISTERED PROVIDERS OF SOCIAL HOUSING 2024 - 2029

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Author: Seamus Doran
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1. Purpose Statement

1. 1 The council is required by Section 150 of the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy as part of their strategic role for their area.
1. 2 The Tenancy Strategy sets out the matters to which registered providers of social housing (housing associations) within its district are to have regard to when formulating policies relating to:
 - (a) the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - (b) the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - (c) where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
 - (d) the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.
1. 3 This strategy must also summarise these policies or explain where they may be found.
1. 4 As a local housing authority with retained council housing, the council is also a registered provider and must also have regard to the strategy when exercising its own housing management functions.
1. 5 The Localism Act introduced flexible fixed term tenancies with the aim of helping registered providers of social housing to make the best use of their homes and responding to changes in housing need. Flexible tenancies are for a fixed term of normally five years or more although in certain circumstances they may be granted for two years.
1. 6 Proposals to introduce mandatory fixed term tenancies were set out in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. However, these provisions within the Act have never been brought into force and the decision to use flexible fixed term tenancies remains at the discretion of providers and local councils.
1. 7 All registered providers of social housing are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and all local providers work closely with BCP Council.
1. 8 The Regulator of Social Housing sets out regulatory standards that contain specific expectations and the outcomes that registered providers are expected to achieve.
1. 9 The Tenancy Standard requires providers to publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies, preventing unnecessary evictions and tackling tenancy fraud.
1. 10 In outlining their approach to tenancy management, providers must set out what tenancies they will use and how any flexible fixed term tenancies will be managed.
1. 11 The aims of this Tenancy Strategy are to ensure that:
 - Registered Providers are aware of the council's approach within this strategy and that these are reflected in their own tenancy policies.
 - A consistent approach is taken towards the use of flexible fixed tenancies.

- Other stakeholders are aware of the council's approach to flexible fixed term tenancies.
- Registered providers tenancy policies do not have an adverse effect on homelessness and tenancy sustainment.
- Registered providers co-operate to make the best use of the social housing that is available.

1. 12 The council fulfils its legal duties under section 150 and 151 of the Localism Act 2011.

2. Who does the strategy apply to

2. 1 BCP Councillors and colleagues, and private registered providers of housing in the BCP Council area.

3. The strategy

3. 1 Tenancy types

3. 2 Before the introduction of the Localism Act, providers normally only offered either a lifetime secure or assured tenancy to social housing tenants which granted a home for life. Flexible fixed term tenancies were introduced to allow providers to make the best use of their homes and respond to changing demand.

3. 3 The types of tenancies that can be offered by providers are:

- Introductory tenancies – councils
- Probationary/starter tenancies – other providers
- Secure (Lifetime Tenancies) – councils
- Assured (lifetime Tenancies) – other providers.
- Secure Flexible tenancies (fixed term tenancies) - councils
- Assured Shorthold tenancies (fixed term tenancies) – other providers

3. 4 There are other forms of tenancies and agreements used for the provision of temporary homeless or supported accommodation that are not included within this strategy.

3. 5 Introductory tenancies

3. 6 The council recommends introductory or starter tenancies for all new tenants for an initial period of 12 months, except for those that have previously held a secure tenancy with any other council or housing action trust or an assured tenancy (but not an assured shorthold tenancy) with a private registered provider of social housing. Introductory tenancies can be extended by a further period of 18 months where there are breaches of the terms. All providers will set out the circumstances in which they will use these tenancies.

3. 7 Before the start of the introductory or starter tenancy, all tenants must be told what type of tenancy they will have at the end of the introductory or starter period and whether this will be a flexible fixed term tenancy.

3. 8 Where a provider decides to take action to end an introductory or starter tenancy they will provide the tenant with information to explain the decision and information on the processes for appealing or reviewing the decision.

3. 9 The council expects that appropriate support is put in place to help vulnerable tenants sustain tenancies and that legal action to end an introductory or starter tenancy is carefully considered.

3. 10 Flexible Fixed term tenancies

3. 11 BCP Council supports the use of lifetime tenancies to provide the most assurance to tenants. This will support families and individuals and help provide more sustainable communities. Other providers will also be encouraged to offer lifetime tenancies wherever possible.
3. 12 The council recognises that the use of flexible fixed term tenancies may be appropriate in some circumstances to make the best use of housing stock and meet housing need. This may include, but is not limited to, meeting short term housing need and temporary use of existing homes due to be redeveloped.
3. 13 Each provider, including the council, will set out in its Tenancy Management Policy the types of tenancies that it will use including the circumstances in which it will use flexible fixed term tenancies.
3. 14 To comply with the Tenancy Standard, providers who offer flexible fixed term tenancies will normally do so for a fixed term of five years and will set out the exceptional circumstances where they will grant a tenancy for a shorter term, but this must be for no less than two years.
3. 15 Each provider using flexible fixed term tenancies should have a process that allows tenants to request a review of the length of the tenancy term offered.
3. 16 Providers should set out how flexible fixed term tenancies will be reviewed and how often.
3. 17 While it is expected that most flexible fixed term tenancies will be renewed, providers should set out the circumstances in which tenancies may not be renewed and the process for tenants to request a review of any decision.
3. 18 Providers should give at least 6 months' notice to a tenant where there is an intention not to renew a flexible fixed term tenancy. The reason for ending the tenancy should be clearly set out and information provided to the tenant on how to request a review of the decision. The review process should be clearly publicised and be transparent.

3. 19 Preventing homelessness

3. 20 When ending any tenancy, providers should take steps to avoid homelessness by working with the council at the earliest opportunity, so that tenants understand their housing options and organisations act together to relieve homelessness before the tenancy comes to an end.

3. 21 Survivors of domestic abuse

3. 22 The Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018 received Royal Assent on 10 May 2018. This Act provides that when the mandatory fixed-term tenancies provisions in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 are brought into force, certain victims of domestic abuse will retain a right to a lifetime secure tenancy.
3. 23 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 replicates the 2018 Act by inserting a new section into part 4 of the Housing Act 1985 to place a duty on English councils to offer a secure tenancy which is not a flexible tenancy where:
- They are rehousing someone who holds or held (solely or jointly) a secure or assured lifetime tenancy.

- That person or a member of their household has been a victim of domestic violence.
- The new tenancy has been granted for reasons connected with the abuse.

3. 24 Review

3. 25 This strategy will be reviewed after 5 years or more frequently as required by changes to legislation, local housing need and national or local policies.

3. 26 Further information

3. 27 More information on the Tenancy Standard can be found on the Regulator of Social Housing website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing>.

3. 28 Details of tenancy management policies for local registered providers:

[Abri](#)

[Aster Group](#)

[Clarion Housing](#)

Housing21 –

- Initial starter tenancy offered that will convert to an assured lifetime tenancy.
- Secure tenants transferring to another property will be granted a secure tenancy.
- Assured tenants transferring to another property will be granted an assured tenancy.

[Sage Homes](#)

[Sandbourne Housing Association](#)

[Sovereign](#)

4. How is this strategy implemented and communicated?

4. 1 This strategy will be made publicly available on BCP Council's website.

4. 2 The strategy will also be publicised amongst colleagues.

4. 3 The strategy will be shared with private registered providers of housing who work in the BCP Council area.