



# City of Westminster

## TENANCY TYPES FACTSHEET

This factsheet explains the types of social housing tenancy you may be offered if you are on Westminster's housing register. There are two types of landlord providing homes: Westminster City Council and Housing Associations (sometimes called Registered Providers). Each offer different types of tenancy.

### WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL TENANCIES

#### **Introductory Tenancy**

Most new council tenants will start off with Introductory Tenancies. These are trial tenancies which normally last for 12 months. Introductory tenants have fewer rights than other council tenants and their tenancies can be ended more easily. After 12 months, as long as you have kept to your tenancy agreement, you will be offered one of the tenancy types below at the same property.

#### **Flexible Tenancy**

These tenancies last for a **fixed term** of five years, or very occasionally for two years. Normally you have the right to stay in your home until the end of the term, however sometimes the tenancy can be ended early by the Council with a court order. This could be where your estate or area is being improved and you need to move away for a temporary period, or because you have not kept to your tenancy agreement.

Towards the end of the tenancy your situation will be reviewed. In most cases you will be offered another five year tenancy. However this could be at a different property if your home is too large for you, or if it has disabled adaptations which are no longer needed. Occasionally the Council will not offer you another tenancy at any property, for example where you have not kept to your tenancy agreement in a serious way. This could be because you or a member of your household had been involved in anti social behaviour.

In most cases the rent for a flexible tenancy will be a social rent which is much lower than a market rent, but this could be increased if your income goes up.

#### **Secure Tenancies**

These tenancies will always be offered if you are already a Secure or Assured tenant and are moving to a council property. They will also be offered where you are a Secure tenant with the Council and need to move for a temporary period as your estate or area is being improved. Otherwise they will only be offered occasionally, for example if you are moving to Community Supportive (Sheltered) housing and are aged 60 or over.

Secure tenancies have no end date and normally you have the right to stay in your home for as long as you want. They can sometimes be brought to an end by the landlord with a court order. This could be where your estate or area is being improved and you need to move away for a temporary period, or where you have not kept to the terms of your tenancy agreement.

## **HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANCIES**

### **Starter Tenancy**

Many Housing Associations offer these trial tenancies for 12 months when you first become a tenant with them. Starter tenants have fewer rights than other Housing Association tenants and their tenancies can be ended more easily. After 12 months as long as you have kept to your tenancy agreement you will normally be offered one of the tenancy types below at the same property.

### **Assured Shorthold Tenancy**

This is a fixed-term tenancy that normally lasts for five years or occasionally for two years. Normally you have the right to stay in your home until the end of the term, however sometimes the tenancy can be ended early by the Housing Association with a court order. This could be because you have not kept to your tenancy agreement.

Towards the end of the tenancy your situation will be reviewed. Every Housing Association has a different policy on renewing tenancies so it is important to understand their policy before you move in.

The rent may either be a social rent, which is well below a market rent, or at a higher level. These higher level rents are still below market rents and are called Affordable Rent tenancies.

### **Assured Tenancy**

These tenancies have no end date and normally you can stay in your home for as long as you want. They can only be brought to an end by the Housing Association in some particular circumstances and with a court order. This could be where you have not kept to the terms of your tenancy agreement.

The rent may either be a social rent which is well below a market rent, or at a higher level. These higher level rents are still below market rents and are called Affordable Rent tenancies.

## **MORE INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

Each landlord will give you more information about your tenancy when you view a property or sign for it. If you are unhappy about your tenancy you should firstly contact your landlord. If after contacting your landlord you are still unhappy, further independent advice is available from **Westminster Citizens Advice, 21a Conduit Place, Paddington, W2 1HS. Telephone 08444 771 611** (please check their opening hours before you visit).