

# Solihull Council Tenancy Strategy 2025-2030



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under Section 150 of the Localism Act 2011, it is a requirement that all Local Authorities in England have a Tenancy Strategy. This sets out expectations for all social landlords and provides guidance on the Council's preferred approach to tenure and affordability.
- 1.2 This document updates and replaces Solihull Council's Tenancy Strategy 2013 and has been informed by its:
  - Housing Strategy 2023 - 2032
  - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029
  - Housing Allocations Scheme 2024
  - Council Plan 2020 – 2025
- 1.3 Council housing in Solihull is managed by Solihull Community Housing (SCH). SCH will have regard to this Strategy in exercising its housing management functions and will operate the accompanying Tenancy Policy on behalf of the Council.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of this Tenancy Strategy are to:
- 2.2 Support sustainable communities
  - Promote balanced and sustainable communities by offering appropriate tenancy types that reflect local housing need.
  - Encourage stability and prevent homelessness by ensuring vulnerable groups are supported with secure and appropriate housing.
- 2.3 Make best use of housing stock
  - Ensure that the allocation and management of tenancies maximise the efficient use of housing stock.
  - Ensure that properties are occupied by those in greatest need, while balancing long-term occupancy and the availability of housing for larger families.
- 2.4 Provide flexibility in tenancy management
  - Provide flexibility in the use of fixed-term tenancies where appropriate, ensuring that tenancies reflect changes to family size.
  - Promote a fair and consistent approach to tenancy management across SCH and registered providers.

### 3. Background and Changes

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the discretionary power to offer flexible tenancies on a fixed term to new tenants after 1 April 2012. It also allowed Registered Providers to offer fixed-term tenancies to new tenants.
- 3.2 In our previous tenancy strategy, we set out an objective to commence the use of flexible tenancies.
- 3.3 Following a review, the Council has concluded that from 2025 we will only use flexible tenancies in certain circumstances, including to make best use of our larger family homes.
- 3.4 The Council's preference is for new tenants to be offered introductory or starter tenancies which upon successful completion convert to lifetime tenancies.
- 3.5 The use of fixed-term or flexible tenancies should be limited to specific circumstances, where they can provide flexibility in relation to the intended purpose of the accommodation. Please see appendix A.

### 4. Registered Provider Tenancy Policies

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires Registered Providers (RPs) to publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management.
- 4.2 Since 1 April 2024, RPs are required under the Consumer Standards; Tenancy Standard, to:
  - Co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist local authorities to fulfil their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.
  - Offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock.
  - Allocate homes that are designated, designed, or adapted to meet specific needs in a way that is compatible with the purpose of the housing.
  - Develop and deliver services that seek to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes.

- Provide services that support tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence and prevent unnecessary evictions.
- 4.3 This strategy sets out broad aims and principles that RPs are expected to have regard to. We recognise that some RPs will want to continue to use fixed-term tenancies to make best use of their stock and we would encourage all housing providers to, where possible, offer the most secure form of tenure that is compatible with the purpose of the accommodation and the needs of the household.
- 4.4 A summary of different tenancy types and the Council's views on the circumstances in which they should be used is included in appendix A.

## 5. Affordable Rent

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 also brought in the use of 'Affordable Rent' for social housing tenants that are set at up to 80% of the local private rented market level.
- 5.1 In accordance with the Council's Local Plan policy P4A and as evidenced by the Council's latest assessment of housing needs, rented homes provided as part of section 106 agreements are expected to be provided as social rent indefinitely.
- 5.2 The Council recognises that new social housing may be funded through the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme. RPs should take a responsible view when determining when and how Affordable Rents (new build and conversions) will be used, and the Council expects that proposals are discussed with them at the earliest stage.
- 5.3 Most social tenant households are on relatively low incomes, and we therefore expect RPs to evaluate if a tenancy at an Affordable Rent level is a genuinely affordable and sustainable housing option for prospective tenants and that support is provided if affordability does become an issue.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 The strategy will be reviewed every five years, or sooner if required.
- 6.2 The review process will be conducted by Solihull Council and if any revisions are made which reflect a major change in policy, all relevant Registered Providers will be sent a draft copy and given a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals in accordance with Section 151 of the Localism Act.

## Appendix A: Tenancy Types

| Tenancy Type  | Circumstances determining the type of tenancy granted  |
|---|--|
| Non-secure tenancies (including licence agreements) | <p>People in temporary or emergency Council accommodation under homelessness legislation.</p> <p>Tenants that have been temporarily decanted from an existing tenancy.</p> <p>People living in supported housing schemes such as hostels</p>   |
| Introductory/Starter                                | All new tenants for 12 months, extendable by 6 months.   |
| Lifetime/Periodic Secure/Assured                    | <p>The Council's preferred option for all new general need tenants following successful completion of an introductory/starter tenancy, with some limited exceptions.</p> <p>Existing lifetime tenants transferring to another tenancy</p>  |
| Fixed-Term (Flexible/Assured)                       | <p>The Council will still use/support the use of a fixed-term tenancy in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large family homes (4+ bedroom) due to the severe shortage of these properties in comparison to demand</li> <li>• Tenancies which are let to people with a specific short-term housing or support need</li> <li>• Where a tenancy has been issued under Rent to Buy and the tenant has not purchased part or all the property</li> </ul> <p>The longest term should be provided as appropriate.</p> |
| Demoted   | A secure tenancy can be demoted to a 12-month introductory tenancy if the tenant has engaged in housing related anti-social behaviour by application to the Court.   |
| Assured shorthold tenancies                         | <p>People who are living in properties where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not intended to be a home for life (e.g. supported accommodation)</li> <li>• The landlord cannot grant a lifetime tenancy because the use of the property is time limited (e.g. because they lease the property or it is earmarked for demolition)</li> </ul>   |
| Other   | Defined in Tenancy Policies of individual RPs or permissible by law  |



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