

# Shropshire Rural Housing Association



**SHROPSHIRE  
RURAL HOUSING**  
ASSOCIATION

## TENANCY POLICY



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**Tenancy Policy**

**1. Purpose**

This policy details the types of tenancies that Shropshire Rural Housing Association will grant and the circumstances in which they will be used. In addition, the policy outlines SRHA's approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions, and tackling tenancy fraud.

**2. Tenancy Agreements**

SRHA will normally grant one of the following agreement types

- Assured Tenancies under the Housing Act 1988
- Starter Tenancies – a starter tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy agreement which converts to a full assured tenancy after a starter (probationary) period of 12 months (which can be extended in certain circumstances).

The circumstances in which we will grant tenancies of a particular type.

- Assured tenancies are lifetime tenancies and will be offered to existing SRHA assured tenants who are transferring to another property owned by SRHA and new tenants who do not meet the criteria for being offered starter tenancies.
- Starter tenancies. A starter tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy designed to be used as part of a co-ordinated approach to tenancy management. It is potentially a lifetime tenancy which includes a one year starter or probationary period during which possession can be sought more easily in connection with anti-social behaviour or other severe and/or sustained tenancy breach. Starter tenancies are normally used for new tenants but may not be used in all areas depending on the approach set out in the Local Allocations Strategy. Once the tenancy has been satisfactorily conducted for 12 months (or as extended) the tenancy normally converts to a full assured tenancy which is a lifetime tenancy.
- Assured tenants who move out of their property on a temporary basis to allow remedial or planned work to be undertaken will be given an equivalent level of security when they return to their original home. This includes tenants with protected assured and starter tenancy agreements.

### **3. Tenancy management**

SRHA is committed to the development of positive and supportive measures to establish good working relationships with all its tenants from the commencement of tenancy.

Tenancies are allocated through Shropshire HomePoint (the choice based lettings arrangements for registered providers in Shropshire).

Through Shropshire HomePoint, we take reasonable steps to establish that the prospective tenant is eligible for housing and has the right to reside and rent a property in the UK. Information from HomePoint on an applicant's eligibility is verified with the prospective tenant prior to the offer of a tenancy and is retained on the tenancy file to confirm the identity of the applicant.

Before an offer of a tenancy, we will also carry out an income assessment to ensure the tenancy can be sustained and to target money advice and other support services such as employment and training advice as required in order to maximise the chances of tenancy success.

We will support tenants to remain in their homes and offer advice to enable them to fulfil the conditions of their tenancy agreements, including liaison with and referral to support agencies and housing options services.

We will also offer a starter tenancy to new tenants moving to general needs homes. This will act as an incentive for new tenants to conduct their tenancies well and to speed up the legal process to end the tenancy in the event of severe and/or sustained breaches of tenancy conditions in the first 12 months of a new tenancy.

Should a decision be made to not convert a starter tenancy to an assured non-shorthold tenancy, the tenant will have a right of appeal to the Chief Executive within 14 days. Should the tenant be dissatisfied with the appeal decision and wish to make further representations, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Complaints Procedure (Stage 2).

SRHA will undertake its own investigation to verify that the tenancy is legally occupied. In addition we will work with local authority partners to recover unlawfully sublet homes and will take swift action on discovering that a property has been unlawfully sublet.

Effective tenancy management also requires a clear and fair tenancy agreement, and a suite of policies aimed at providing a balanced and consistent approach to matters such as anti-social behaviour, rent, pets, repairs and consultation. SRHA will ensure that through an ongoing process of review and development, our policies and procedures for tenancy management, facilitate effective management of tenancies.