



Tenancy & Neighbourhood Management Policy

Summarised Version (DRAFT)

Please note: This document is a summarised version of the full Policy and is intended to provide an overview of the key information in a clear and accessible format. It does not include all the details or procedural requirements. For complete information, please refer to the full policy document, which take precedence in the event of any discrepancy.

Summary

The Tenancy & Neighbourhood Management Policy sets out how Dover District Council manages tenancies, supports residents and maintains neighbourhoods. It promotes safe and secure homes, clear tenant responsibilities, strong community standards and support for residents to successfully maintain their tenancy.

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a clear framework for the management of tenancies and neighbourhoods, ensuring tenants can enjoy safe, secure and sustainable homes while supporting clean, well-managed communities and effective use of Council housing resources.

2.0 Tenancies granted

2.1 Introductory tenancies

- Most new tenants are granted an Introductory Tenancy.
- This usually lasts for 12 months but may be extended by up to 6 months if there are concerns about how the tenancy is being managed.
- Support is provided to help tenants settle into their home.
- If the tenancy is managed successfully, it will normally become a Secure Tenancy.
- Introductory tenants have fewer rights than Secure Tenants, including no right to buy their home, exchange homes, take in lodgers or carry out alterations without permission.

2.2 Secure tenancies

- Offer long-term housing security.
- Allow tenants to remain in their home indefinitely, provided they comply with their tenancy agreement and no legal grounds exist for the tenancy to end.
- Provide important legal rights, including the Right to Buy (where eligible), succession rights, and the right to apply for a mutual exchange.

3.0 Tenancy management

3.1 Tenant responsibilities

Tenant responsibilities are set out in the tenancy agreement. In general, tenants are expected to:

- Pay rent and other housing charges on time.
- Use the property as their main home.
- Look after their home, garden and any fixtures provided.
- Respect neighbours and wider community.
- Ensure visitors and household members behave appropriately.
- Report repairs and safety concerns promptly.

3.2 Mutual exchange, Succession and Assignment

The Council recognises that people's circumstances can change over time and provides options, where allowed by law, to help tenants remain suitably housed.

- **Mutual Exchange** - eligible tenants can swap homes with another council or housing association tenant, subject to approval.
- **Succession** - in some circumstances, an eligible family member, partner or household member may be able to take over a tenancy after a tenant dies.
- **Assignment** - a tenancy can sometimes be transferred to another eligible person in specific situations.

The Council will assess all requests in line with legislation, the tenancy agreement and local policy, ensuring homes are used effectively while supporting tenants and their families to maintain suitable housing.

3.3 Support to sustain your tenancy

We will:

- Help if you are struggling with rent payments or other financial difficulties.
- Provide support and advice to help you maintain your tenancy.
- Work with other organisations to support residents who need additional help.
- Try to prevent tenancy breakdown and homelessness wherever possible.

3.4 Moving homes

Tenants may be able to:

- Apply for a mutual exchange with another eligible social housing tenant.
- Seek assistance if their home no longer meets their needs due to overcrowding, under-occupation, disability or changing circumstances.
- Receive support with a temporary or permanent move where major works, safety concerns or exceptional circumstances require this.
- Access rehousing options where appropriate, including support for residents affected by domestic abuse.

4.0 Rent and charges

Tenants are responsible for paying rent and any other housing charges on time. We will provide support and advice to anyone experiencing financial difficulties and work with tenants to prevent rent arrears from increasing.

5.0 Neighbourhood management

The Council is committed to creating neighbourhoods that are safe, clean and welcoming places to live. We will:

- Help keep neighbourhoods clean, safe and well maintained.
- Tackle environmental issues, nuisance and other concerns that affect residents' quality of life.
- Work in partnership with residents, communities and local agencies to improve neighbourhoods.
- Support strong, inclusive communities where residents feel safe, respected and connected.

6.0 Antisocial Behaviour

In line with our Antisocial Behaviour Policy (including hate crime), the Council takes action to address:

- Harassment, intimidation and threatening behaviour
- Noise nuisance
- Criminal or illegal activity
- Vandalism and damage to property
- Fly-tipping and environmental nuisance.

Where appropriate, the Council works with the Police and other agencies to resolve issues.

7.0 Domestic Abuse

In line with our Domestic Abuse Policy, the Council is committed to supporting anyone affected by domestic abuse and can:

- Provide advice and assistance.
- Signpost residents to specialist support services.
- Work with partner agencies where appropriate.
- Consider housing options to help keep residents safe.

Where appropriate, the Council works with the Police and other agencies to support victims of domestic abuse.

8.0 Pets

We support responsible pet ownership while balancing the needs of tenants, residents and the wider community to ensure neighbourhoods remain safe and enjoyable places to live.

- You must obtain our permission before keeping a pet or animal in your home.
- We will not give permission for any pet or animal that is prohibited by law.
- When considering a request, we will take into account a range of factors, including the type, breed and size of the animal, the type and size of the property, and the number of people and pets already living there.
- We may place a limit on the number of pets that can be kept at a property.
- Pets must be kept responsibly and must not cause nuisance, damage, annoyance, safety concerns or risks to others.
- Pet owners are responsible for the welfare, behaviour and control of their animals always.
- Permission may be withdrawn if the conditions of the permission or the terms of the tenancy agreement are breached.
- We may require you to remove a pet or animal from your home if permission has not been granted, if the animal is unsuitable for the property, or if it causes nuisance, annoyance, damage or poses a risk to the safety of others.

9.0 Gardens, communal areas and the environment

Everyone has a role to play in keeping neighbourhoods clean, safe and attractive. Tenants are responsible for:

- Keeping their gardens reasonably tidy and free from hazards.
- Disposing of household waste and recycling correctly.

- Keeping communal areas free from personal belongings, obstructions and rubbish.

The Council is responsible for:

- Maintaining communal areas and shared facilities that it owns.
- Carrying out communal grounds maintenance and environmental improvements, where applicable.
- Taking action to address environmental issues that affect the safety, appearance or enjoyment of our neighbourhoods.

10.0. Access to your home

The Council may require access to:

- Carry out repairs and maintenance.
- Complete safety inspections and compliance checks.
- Respond to emergencies or urgent issues.
- Investigate tenancy-related matters.

We will normally give at least 24 hours' notice before requesting access. However, immediate access may be required in emergency situations.

11.0 Tackling tenancy fraud

We take tenancy fraud seriously as it reduces the number of council homes available for people in genuine housing need and can result in longer waiting times for housing.

- We investigate tenancy fraud to ensure council homes are available for those who need them most.
- Tenancy fraud includes unlawful subletting, providing false information, unauthorised mutual exchanges, and claiming a property as your main home when you live elsewhere.
- We use checks, tenancy reviews, home visits and data verification to prevent and detect fraud.
- We investigate reports of suspected fraud and may take legal action where appropriate.
- Tenants found to have committed tenancy fraud may lose their tenancy and future access to council housing.

12.0 Right to Buy

Some secure tenants may have the legal Right to Buy their home, subject to eligibility criteria. Information and advice are available for tenants who wish to explore this option.

13.0 Disabled adaptations

We will work with tenants and partner agencies to consider requests for adaptations that help residents with disabilities or long-term health conditions remain safe and independent in their home.

14.0 Mobility Scooters and Electric Vehicles

To help keep residents, shared areas and neighbourhoods safe:

- Tenants must obtain permission before storing or charging mobility aids, such as mobility scooters or e-scooters, in your home or in shared areas.
- Tenants must obtain permission before installing an electric vehicle charging point at the home.
- Electric vehicles must not be charged using your home's electricity supply and should only be charged at approved charging points.

15.0 Temporary Moves

In some circumstances, tenants and households may need to move temporarily to allow essential works to be completed or where there are significant health and safety concerns. We will provide support throughout the process.

16.0 Supporting Vulnerable Residents

In line with our Vulnerable Tenant Policy, we are committed to supporting tenants who may be vulnerable or require additional assistance to maintain their tenancy. We will work with residents and partner organisations to help people access appropriate support.

17.0 Resident involvement

We are committed to listening to tenants and involving them in decisions that affect their homes, neighbourhoods and housing services.

- We work with tenants and resident groups to help shape services, set standards and improve neighbourhoods.

- We seek tenant views on proposed changes, projects and improvements that affect local communities.
- We regularly gather feedback through surveys and other engagement activities.
- We use tenant feedback and satisfaction information to review and improve our services.

18.0 Monitoring and Review

The Council will regularly review this Policy to ensure it remains effective, meets legal requirements and reflects the needs of residents and communities.

19.0 Equality and Inclusion

The Council is committed to providing fair, inclusive and accessible services for all residents. We will:

- Treat all residents with fairness, dignity and respect.
- Ensure services are accessible and free from discrimination.
- Consider individual needs, circumstances and support requirements.
- Make reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Meet our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.