



Tenancy Strategy 2027 – 2032

Summarised Version (DRAFT)

Summary

The Tenancy Strategy 2027-2032 promotes the use of secure, long-term tenancies, supports tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention, encourages effective use of social housing stock, and sets clear expectations for social landlords operating in Dover District. Its overall aim is to ensure residents have access to stable, affordable housing while supporting strong and sustainable communities.

1.0 Purpose of the Strategy

The Tenancy Strategy sets out Dover District Council's expectations of social housing landlords operating within the district. It aims to ensure that social housing tenancies are managed fairly, consistently and in a way that meets local housing needs.

The Strategy is required under the Localism Act 2011 and provides guidance on:

- The types of tenancies that should be offered.
- When different tenancy types should be used.
- The length of fixed-term tenancies.
- Circumstances in which tenancies should be renewed.
- Good practice in tenancy management and homelessness prevention.

2.0 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

The Strategy reflects key housing legislation and regulatory requirements, including:

- Localism Act 2011
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 1996
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Renters' Rights Act 2025

Social landlords are expected to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including the Tenancy Standard.

3.0 Local Housing Context

Demand for social housing in Dover District continues to exceed the available supply. Key factors include:

- Nearly 2,000 households are registered on the housing waiting list.
- Around half of applicants are families, while over 40% are single people.
- Almost half of applicants require one-bedroom accommodation.
- Average waiting times for social housing remain significant across all property types.

Social housing represents approximately 14% of the district's housing stock and remains an important source of affordable housing for residents in need.

4.0 Expectations of Social Landlords

The Council expects social landlords to:

- Operate fair, transparent and accessible tenancy policies.
- Offer tenancies that provide stability and security.
- Support tenants to sustain their tenancies.
- Consider the needs of vulnerable households.
- Make efficient use of housing stock.
- Tackle tenancy fraud.
- Comply with all applicable housing legislation and regulations, including the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Standards for Landlords.
- Work with the Council to prevent homelessness and meet local housing needs.

5.0 Types of Tenancy

Introductory or Starter Tenancies

These are typically offered to new tenants and normally last 12 months. During this period tenants receive support and their tenancy conduct is monitored.

Following successful completion, tenants should normally move to the landlord's main tenancy type.

Lifetime Tenancies

The Council considers lifetime tenancies to be the preferred tenancy type for most social housing.

Lifetime tenancies provide long-term security and stability for tenants and communities. The Council encourages all landlords to offer the highest level of security available wherever appropriate.

Flexible Tenancies (Fixed-Term Tenancies)

The Council no longer grants fixed-term tenancies and returned to lifetime tenancies in 2021.

However, some social landlords may continue to use fixed-term tenancies, particularly for:

- Affordable rent homes.
- Supported or move-on accommodation.
- Regeneration schemes.

Where used, the Council expects:

- A minimum term of five years in most cases.
- Early and transparent tenancy reviews.
- Renewal of the tenancy unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so.
- Appropriate support and rehousing advice where a tenancy is ending.

Demoted Tenancies

Demoted tenancies may be used as a proportionate response to serious or persistent antisocial behaviour where other interventions have failed.

6.0 Other Key Expectations

Mutual Exchanges

The Council supports mutual exchange as a way of helping tenants move to accommodation that better meets their needs. Social landlords should have clear mutual exchange procedures and apply them fairly. Tenants should receive clear advice about any impact on their tenancy rights or rent.

Succession

Social landlords should have clear succession procedures and apply them fairly. Where a property becomes larger than required following succession, alternative housing options should be considered sensitively.

Domestic Abuse

Victims and survivors of domestic abuse should not lose tenancy security because they need to move for safety reasons. Landlords are expected to support victims and work closely with partner agencies.

Tenancy Sustainment

Social social landlords should provide appropriate support, advice and early intervention to help tenants maintain their tenancy and avoid eviction wherever possible.

Tenancy Fraud

The Council expects social landlords to actively prevent, detect and investigate tenancy fraud, including:

- Unlawful subletting.
- False housing applications.
- Abandoned properties.
- Fraudulent succession claims.

Tackling tenancy fraud ensures social housing is available to households who genuinely need it.

Homelessness Prevention

Social landlords should work proactively with the Council to prevent homelessness, identify tenancy risks early and support households before a crisis develops.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

The Council will keep the Strategy under review and formally review it at least every five years.

The Strategy will be monitored through engagement with social landlords and consideration of tenancy outcomes, tenancy sustainment, homelessness prevention activity and tenancy fraud investigations.

8.0 Equality and Inclusion

The Council and social landlords must have regard to the Equality Act 2010 when making tenancy-related decisions. Services and policies should be fair, accessible and free from discrimination. An Equality Impact Assessment will be maintained and reviewed alongside the Strategy.