

Women's Pioneer Housing Tenure and Starter Tenancy Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines WPH's approach to starter tenancies and is supported by the following tenancy management procedures:
- Starter tenancy procedure

2. Purpose of this document

- 2.1. This policy outlines the approach to tenancy management for general needs and sheltered housing.¹
- 2.2. The policy covers our approach to granting tenancies.

3. Our policy

- 3.1. WPH will issue the following tenancy types:
- Starter
 - Assured
 - Assured shorthold
 - Secure

4. The types of tenancies WPH currently grant and in which circumstances Starter (assured shorthold) tenancy

- 4.1. Starter tenancies (periodic assured shorthold tenancies) lasting 12 months are offered to all new tenants, apart from new lets at 25 Collingham Gardens.
- 4.2. Starter tenancies are used to confirm the suitability of the property and neighbourhood for the tenant, as well ensuring that the tenancy agreement can be adhered to.
- 4.3. In exceptional circumstances a starter tenancy may be granted to an existing tenant with a starter tenancy who needs to move, for example to avoid risk of harm.

¹ For leasehold and market rent see Leaseholder Management Policy and WPH Homes Tenancy Management Policy respectively.

- 4.4. Criteria to convert a starter tenancy to an assured tenancy is:
- Rent and service charges paid up to date
 - No ASB reported or ASB cases resolved
 - No other tenancy breach
 - A starter tenancy visit has been conducted
 - For two and three bedroom properties that the household is not underoccupying the property
 - Right to rent checks are passed – right to rent must be indefinite to transition to an assured tenancy
- 4.5. We may extend a starter tenancy by six months if:
- There is evidence to confirm a breach of tenancy but the issue is not serious enough to warrant possession action and more time is needed to enable the tenant to remedy the breach and we feel there is a reasonable prospect of the tenant doing so.
 - Allegations have been made and more time is needed to investigate them
 - There are rent arrears and more time is needed to enable the tenant to catch up with payments/claim benefit – only applicable where there is a good prospect of the arrears being reduced as a result of the extension.
 - Right to rent check is not passed but a process is in place which means the tenant may have indefinite right to rent within the extension
- Should an extension be offered this must be decided and the tenant notified, no later than 10 months into the tenancy.
- 4.6. Should the starter tenancy be ended without conversion to an assured tenancy the tenant should be notified no later 10 months into the tenancy.
- 4.7. Before taking action to terminate a starter tenancy, WPH must ensure that:
- The appropriate policies and procedures have been followed
 - Reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the issues
 - There is clear supporting evidence
 - Possession is considered to be the most appropriate action and is in the best interests of the organisation and/or the community in which the tenant lives
 - There is a record of who has taken this decision, why and when.
- 4.8. Tenants have the right to appeal our decision as outlined in our Starter Tenancy Procedure.
- 4.9. Should the starter tenancy be converted to an assured tenancy a new tenancy agreement must be signed and dated on the 12 month anniversary of the start of the starter tenancy or on the date of the end of the extension.
- Fixed term tenancies**
- 4.10. Existing fixed term tenants will be offered a conversion to an assured tenancy providing there is no ongoing court action.
- 4.11. WPH no longer grant new fixed term tenancies.

- 4.12. Assured tenancies will be granted following successful completion of a starter tenancy.

Secure tenancies

- 4.13. Secure tenancies are not offered to new tenants.

Assured shorthold tenancy

- 4.14. We grant assured shorthold tenancies at 25 Collingham Gardens without a preceding starter tenancy.