



**LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL**  
*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

## **Council Housing Services**

# **Welcome to your Introductory Tenancy**

This leaflet can be made available in  
large print, on tape, in Braille  
and in other languages



# WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

As a Lancaster City Council tenant you have rights and responsibilities.

Your new tenancy agreement describes all the rules.

We have these rules to make sure you can enjoy all the benefits of a council tenancy. We believe that all tenants have the right to enjoy living in their property and to feel happy with their environment. By keeping to the tenancy agreement the Council and its tenants can help to make sure these objectives are met.

All new tenants have a trial period that normally lasts 12 months to show they can keep to the tenancy agreement, look after their home and not be a nuisance to neighbours.

**This trial period is called an Introductory Tenancy.**

## INTRODUCTORY TENANCY

There are three kinds of council tenancy:

- Introductory
- Secure
- Demoted

You are starting as an Introductory Tenant. This means you have fewer legal rights than a secure tenant.

As a new tenant you must sign an Introductory Tenancy agreement before you move into your council home. If there have been no problems at the end of your introductory tenancy you automatically become a Secure Tenant - giving you all the rights of a Lancaster City Council Secure Tenancy.

However, an Introductory Tenancy can be quickly and easily brought to an end if the tenancy agreement is broken.

**We hope your introductory tenancy period will be problem-free.**

## TENANCY RIGHTS

As a tenant you have rights and responsibilities.

As an Introductory Tenant, the law **does not** give you the right to: buy your council home; take in lodgers; sub-let part of the property; make improvements; exchange your home with another tenant; or transfer to another landlord. But, although you do not have automatic legal right to do these things (as a secure tenant has), you can apply to your Estate Manager to take in lodgers, improve your home or exchange. Your Estate Manager will decide if you can go ahead.

## IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS

Most people will pass smoothly from their Introductory Tenancy to a Secure Tenancy. But we will act quickly against anyone who breaks their tenancy agreement. We will always investigate first to see if things can be sorted out - but if the problem is serious, or if the tenant won't co-operate with our efforts to find a solution, we will take swift legal action.

This could include:

- Extending your trial period, or
- Involve bringing your tenancy to an end.

## RENT

Your tenancy agreement says that you must pay your rent, and that you must pay on time. If you are two weeks behind, we will contact you. We'll check you're getting the right benefits and let you make an agreement to pay off the money in regular amounts on top of your weekly rent. But we'll take legal action to evict you if the arrears reach five weeks - or even sooner in some cases. We'll also take action if you are persistently late paying or if you won't keep to a repayment arrangements.

## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We will protect your community and council property. So if someone tells us that you've been acting in an anti-social way, we will investigate the complaint thoroughly by collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses and talking to the police. If this shows that the complaint is justified we will take action.

**It is important to remember that you are not only responsible for your own behaviour ...**

We will take action against you if the anti-social culprit is someone living with you, or a visitor to your home. And it doesn't matter where the nuisance happens - in your home, outside it or anywhere in the locality.

## OTHER REASONS FOR TAKING ACTION

There may be other circumstances when we would want to take action against an introductory tenant - for not using their council property as their main home for instance. Your tenancy agreement describes all these situations.

It is also possible that we will need to move you out of your home because it needs major building repair or because it has to be demolished. But in this situation we will offer you another suitable home.

## TAKING ACTION

If we want to evict a secure tenant (because of non payment of rent, or nuisance to neighbours for example) they have the opportunity to present their side of the story to the court. It is then up to a judge to decide if the eviction can go ahead.

An introductory tenant does not have this opportunity to present their case to a court, but only has the right to their case being reviewed by senior officers of the Council.

## REVIEW

We will inform you in writing by serving a Notice of Extension of your tenancy if we are going to extend the trial period, or a Notice to Terminate your tenancy if we are going to apply to the court to evict you. You can ask for a review of the case, but you must do this within 14 days. The Head of Council Housing Services and/or designated senior officers of the Council will look at the situation again to see if everything has been done correctly. They will not have been involved in the case before.

If they agree that matters have been dealt with properly then the Council will apply the extension or apply for a possession order to repossess your home. There are no further rights to appeal to anyone else.

In the case of eviction, although we still have to ask a court to give the final permission for eviction, the eviction happens automatically as long as we've followed the procedure properly.

**If we have to take action like this, you can get advice from a citizens' advice bureau, law centre housing advice centre or a solicitor.**

## **BECOMING A SECURE TENANT**

If there have been no problems during your introductory tenancy you will automatically become a secure tenant on the date written on the front of your tenancy agreement.

If there are problems of anti-social behaviour as a secure tenant, the Council may choose to seek a Demotion Order. Upon granting of the order by the County Court, the tenancy is replaced with a less secure form of tenancy – a demoted tenancy. A demoted tenancy is very similar to an introductory tenancy.

## **HERE TO HELP**

If you have any worries at all about your tenancy, or any part of the housing service, contact your local housing management team straight away.


We are here to help you.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Council Housing Services


38 Cable Street  
LANCASTER  
LA1 1HH

 01524 582929

 councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk

Our office hours are 8.45 am to 5.15 pm weekdays  
(10.00 am to 5.15 pm Wednesdays)

In an emergency ring the Council's Central Control Centre,  
which is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The number to call is  01524 67099

Calls may be recorded  
to help improve our standard of service and accuracy of information