

Tenancy types explained

If the Council offers you a tenancy, the offer letter will provide details (type and length) of the tenancy offered and this will be in line with the Council's Tenancy Policy. There are four types of tenancy that can be offered for council properties:

- introductory tenancy;
- secure periodic tenancy (called a "secure tenancy" in the Council's Tenancy Conditions booklet);
- flexible fixed term tenancy (called a "flexible tenancy" in the Council's Tenancy Conditions booklet);
- non-secure tenancy.

Most applicants offered Wandsworth Council properties will be offered an introductory tenancy (which usually lasts for a year) followed by a secure periodic tenancy.

Introductory tenancies

In most instances, you will start your tenancy as an 'introductory tenant'. Introductory tenancies normally last for one year but your introductory tenancy may be shorter if you were a housing association tenant with an assured shorthold tenancy immediately before we made the offer.

As long as you comply with the tenancy conditions (including paying your rent) during your introductory tenancy period you will, at the end of this time, a secure periodic tenant.

However, if you breach the tenancy conditions during your introductory tenancy we may decide to extend the introductory tenancy for a further six months or start legal action to end the tenancy. You will be notified of our decision and have the right to request a review.

During your introductory tenancy, you will not have all of the legal rights that you will have during your secure periodic tenancy. You will not be able to:

- apply to buy your property (but the introductory tenancy period will count towards the discount you are entitled to if you apply for the right to buy once you have a flexible fixed term tenancy or secure periodic tenancy);
- vote for a change of landlord;
- sub-let part of the property or take in a lodger; or
- exchange your tenancy.

Secure periodic tenancies

If you are granted a secure periodic tenancy you will have the right to stay in the property for an indefinite period of time. We will not interfere with this right unless we have to take action because of reasons given in the Housing Act 1985 or any future law. If you break any of the tenancy conditions (by, for example, engaging in anti-social behaviour or not paying your rent) we may take action but you cannot be evicted unless we can prove grounds to a court and the court agrees to evict you.

Flexible tenancies

Flexible tenancies last for a fixed period of time (normally five years but can, in exceptional circumstances, be as short as two years). These may be offered in exceptional circumstances, for example for larger properties which are in short supply. During the flexible fixed term tenancy, tenants will have many of the same rights that secure periodic tenants have and if they break any of the

tenancy conditions (by, for example, engaging in anti-social behaviour or not paying your rent) we may take action and apply to the court for eviction.

When your flexible fixed term tenancy ends, in most circumstances and there are no issues, the tenancy will continue as a secure periodic tenancy.

Non-secure tenancies

You may be offered a non-secure tenancy if a property is let to you temporarily (for example, under homelessness legislation or if you are required to temporarily leave your home at the request of the council because of the need to carry out major works or essential repairs).

Where to get further advice

A full description of your tenancy rights and obligations including the Council's legal repairing obligations is set out in the Council's Tenancy Conditions booklet. You should read the Tenancy Conditions booklet carefully so you know what your obligations are as well as your legal rights. For further information and advice about the tenancy you have and / or the tenancy you have been offered, contact the housing department. For independent advice, contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau, a solicitor, Law Centre or Housing Advice Centre.

The Council's Tenancy Policy is on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk) and copies will be provided free of charge on request.

If you have any questions about the type and length of tenancy you have been offered, or if you need it in an alternative format (for example, large print or audio tape) contact the Housing Department on 020 8871 6161.