



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL
PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY)**

Case Reference : **CHI/21UC/MNR/2022/0099**

Property : **5 Wellington Court
Seaside
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 7RG**

Applicant Tenant : **Ms A W Bozek**

Representative : **None**

Respondent Landlord : **Home Select Finance (No 3) Limited**

Representative : **Mainstay Residential Limited**

Type of Application : **Determination of a Market Rent sections
13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**

Tribunal Members : **Mr I R Perry BSc FRICS
Mr C M Davies FRICS ACI Arb
Mr N I Robinson FRICS**

Date of Inspection : **None. Paper determination**

Date of Decision : **26th October 2022**

DECISION

Summary of Decision

1. On 26th October 2022 the Tribunal determined a market rent of £775 per month to take effect from 15th September 2022.

Background

2. The case concerned the determination of a market rent for the subject property following a referral of the Landlord's notice of increase of rent by the Tenant pursuant to sections 13 and 14 Housing Act 1988.
3. On 5th August 2022 the Landlord's Agent served a notice under Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £819.21 per month in place of the existing rent of £732.75 per month to take effect from 15th September 2022. The notice complied with the legal requirements.
4. On 17th August 2022 the Tribunal received an application from the Tenant under Section 13(4) (a) of the Housing Act 1988.
5. The Coronavirus pandemic and considerations of health have caused a suspension of inspections and Tribunal hearings in person until further notice.
6. The Tribunal issued directions on 23rd September 2022 informing the parties that, unless either party objected, the Tribunal intended to determine the rent based on written representations. The parties were invited to make submissions which could include photographs or videos.
7. Neither party made any further submissions and neither party objected to the matter being determined without an oral hearing, so the Tribunal determined the case on 26th October 2022 based on the written representations received.

The Property

8. From the information given in the papers and available on the internet the property comprises a second floor flat within a purpose-built block of flats in Eastbourne, about 500 yards from the beach. There is a full range of amenities within the town.
9. The accommodation includes a Living Room, Kitchen, two Bedrooms, Bathroom and has access to some communal gardens. There is also a shed with the property.

Submissions

10. The initial tenancy began on 15th March 2019 at a rent of £675 per month.
11. The Energy Performance Certificate for the property is an 'E' rating. Heating is from electrical appliances, and it is stated that there is full double glazing.
12. The letter from the Landlord's Agent to the Tenant dated 5th August 2022 seeks to increase the rent in line with the Retail Price Index. No evidence of rents paid for comparable properties was supplied.

The Law

S14 Determination of Rent by First-tier Tribunal

- (1) Where, under subsection (4) (a) of section 13 above, a tenant refers to a First-tier Tribunal a notice under subsection (2) of that section, the Tribunal shall determine the rent at which, subject to subsections (2) and (4) below, the Tribunal consider that the dwelling-house concerned might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing landlord under an assured tenancy-
 - (a) which is a periodic tenancy having the same periods as those of the tenancy to which the notice relates;
 - (b) which begins at the beginning of the new period specified in the notice;
 - (c) the terms of which (other than relating to the amount of the rent) are the same as those of the tenancy to which the notice relates; and
 - (d) in respect of which the same notices, if any, have been given under any of Grounds 1 to 5 of Schedule 2 to this Act, as have been given (or have effect as if given) in relation to the tenancy to which the notice relates.
- (2) In making a determination under this section, there shall be disregarded-
 - (a) any effect on the rent attributable to the granting of a tenancy to a sitting tenant;
 - (b) any increase in the value of the dwelling-house attributable to a relevant improvement carried out by a person who at the time it was carried out was the tenant, if the improvement-
 - (i) was carried out otherwise than in pursuance of an obligation to his immediate landlord, or
 - (ii) was carried out pursuant to an obligation to his immediate landlord being an obligation which did not relate to the specific improvement concerned but arose by reference to consent given to the carrying out of that improvement; and
 - (c) any reduction in the value of the dwelling-house attributable to a failure by the tenant to comply with any terms of the tenancy.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b) above, in relation to a notice which is referred by a tenant as mentioned in subsection (1) above, an improvement is a relevant improvement if either it was carried out during the tenancy to which the notice relates, or the following conditions are satisfied, namely-
 - (a) that it was carried out not more than twenty-one years before the date of service of the notice; and
 - (b) that, at all times during the period beginning when the improvement was carried out and ending on the date of service of the notice, the dwelling-house has been let under an assured tenancy; and

- (c) that, on the coming to an end of an assured tenancy at any time during that period, the tenant (or, in the case of joint tenants, at least one of them) did not quit.
- (4) In this section "rent" does not include any service charge, within the meaning of section 18 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, but, subject to that, includes any sums payable by the tenant to the landlord on account of the use of furniture, in respect of council tax or for any of the matters referred to in subsection (1) (a) of that section, whether or not those sums are separate from the sums payable for the occupation.

Consideration and Valuation

13. The Tribunal first considered whether it felt able to reasonably and fairly decide this case based on the papers submitted only with no oral hearing. Having read and considered the papers it decided that it could do so.
14. The Tribunal noted that the Landlord's Agent had suggested a rent increase in line with the increase in the Retail Price Index since the previous rent had been agreed.
15. The Agent will know that The Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the subject property might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market at today's date by a willing Landlord under an assured tenancy.
16. In the absence of any market evidence from the parties the Tribunal could only rely on its own judgement and knowledge of rental values in Eastbourne. The Tribunal decided that the market rent for the subject property if let today in a condition that was usual for such an open market letting would be £775 per month.
17. There was no evidence that the Tribunal should adjust or vary from this open market rent.
18. The Tenant made no representation that the starting date for the new rent specified in the Landlord's notice would cause the Tenant undue hardship.

Determination

19. The Tribunal therefore decided that the rent at which the subject property might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing Landlord under the terms of this assured tenancy was £775 per month.
20. The Tribunal directed that the new rent of £775 per month should take effect from 15th September 2022, this being the date specified in the Notice.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL

1. A person wishing to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) must seek permission to do so by making written application to the First-tier

Tribunal at the Regional office which has been dealing with the case. Where possible you should send your application for permission to appeal by email to rpsouthern@justice.gov.uk as this will enable the First-tier Tribunal Regional office to deal with it more efficiently.

2. The application must arrive at the Tribunal within 28 days after the Tribunal sends to the person making the application written reasons for the decision.
3. If the person wishing to appeal does not comply with the 28-day time limit, the person shall include with the application for permission to appeal a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28-day time limit; the Tribunal will then decide whether to extend time or not to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed.
4. The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the Tribunal to which it relates, state the grounds of appeal, and state the result the party making the application is seeking.