



Regulator of  
Social Housing

# Rent Standard

April 2026



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# 1. Required outcome

- 1.1 Registered providers must comply with all the requirements and expectations set out in this Rent Standard and the Rent Policy Statement from 1 April 2026.

# 2. Exceptions from this Rent Standard

- 2.1 This Rent Standard applies, subject to the exceptions in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5, to low cost rental accommodation.
- 2.2 This Rent Standard does not apply to the following categories of property, as defined in Chapter 5 of the Rent Policy Statement:
- Shared ownership low cost rental accommodation
  - Intermediate rent accommodation
  - Specialised supported housing
  - Relevant local authority accommodation
  - Student accommodation
  - PFI social housing
  - Temporary social housing
  - Care homes
- 2.3 Paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6 and paragraphs 3.8 to 3.13 of this Rent Standard do not apply in relation to the rent of tenants who are high income social tenants. This exception will end where the tenant no longer fits the definition of high income social tenant, or where there is no longer a tenant.
- 2.4 The regulator may, in relation to a private registered provider, grant an exemption from or vary a requirement of this Rent Standard if the regulator considers that complying with the requirement would jeopardise the financial viability of the provider.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arrangements for formal applications from local authority providers to disapply government rent policy are set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of the Rent Policy Statement.

- 2.5 In a situation (such as an insolvency) where there is a mortgagee in possession, or receiver in place, or where the registered provider's stock is sold to a non-registered landlord following intervention by the regulator, neither the mortgagee in possession, nor the receiver, nor the landlord to whom the stock is sold will be bound by this Rent Standard. Where a Housing Administration Order applies to a registered provider, the Rent Standard will continue to apply to that provider unless an exemption has been granted by the regulator to that provider.

### 3. Specific expectations

#### Social rent housing

- 3.1 When setting initial rent for a new tenant of social rent housing, and subject to the rent cap requirement, the maximum weekly rent (exclusive of service charges) is formula rent with an upwards tolerance of:
- If the accommodation is supported housing, up to 10% of formula rent; or
  - If the accommodation is not supported housing, up to 5% of formula rent.
- 3.2 When a tenancy of social rent housing is granted to an existing tenant, the rent must not be re-set.
- 3.3 For rent increases applied in the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027, and subject to the rent cap requirement, the weekly rent of an existing tenant of social rent housing may only be increased by up to CPI+1% in any year, unless the following condition applies:
- If the weekly rent when increased by CPI+1% exceeds the rent flexibility level for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI.
- 3.4 For rent increases applied in the period from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2028, and subject to the rent cap requirement, the weekly rent of an existing tenant of social rent housing may only be increased by up to CPI+1% in any year, unless one of the following conditions applies:
- If the weekly rent when increased by CPI+1% exceeds the rent flexibility level for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI.

- If the weekly rent when increased by CPI+1% is below formula rent for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI+1% plus £1. However, if the weekly rent when increased by up to CPI+1% plus £1 exceeds formula rent for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI+1% plus the relevant amount that brings it to the level of formula rent for the year in which the rent increase will apply.

3.5 For rent increases applied from 1 April 2028, and subject to the rent cap requirement, the weekly rent of an existing tenant of social rent housing may only be increased by up to CPI+1% in any year, unless one of the following conditions applies:

- If the weekly rent when increased by CPI+1% exceeds the rent flexibility level for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI.
- If the weekly rent when increased by CPI+1% is below formula rent for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI+1% plus £2. However, if the weekly rent when increased by up to CPI+1% plus £2 exceeds formula rent for the year in which the rent increase will apply, weekly rent may only be increased by up to CPI+1% plus the relevant amount that brings it to the level of formula rent for the year in which the rent increase will apply.

3.6 A registered provider must not charge a tenant of social rent housing a weekly rent (exclusive of service charges) that is more than the rent cap.

3.7 Properties currently or previously let as social rent housing must not be converted (including on re-let) to:

- Affordable rent housing
- Market rent (other than in the circumstances set out in Chapter 4 of the Rent Policy Statement); or
- Other forms of low cost rental accommodation set out in Chapter 5 of the Rent Policy Statement (unless that accommodation is relevant local authority accommodation as defined in paragraph 5.7 of the Rent Policy Statement).

- 3.8 In the case of tenancies subject to fair rent protection, the maximum weekly rent is the lower of the fair rent set by the Rent Officer, and the rent that is permissible under paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6.
- 3.9 Registered providers may not increase the rent of a tenant with fair rent protection by more than the maximum in any year permitted by paragraphs 3.3 to 3.6 (even if the tenant's rent is below the formula rent level and the maximum fair rent is increased by more than that amount).
- 3.10 On re-let of a property where a tenant previously had fair rent protection, rent should be charged in accordance with paragraphs 3.1 and 3.6.

### Affordable rent housing

- 3.11 When setting initial rent for a new tenant of affordable rent housing, the maximum weekly gross rent is the higher of:
- 80% of the weekly gross market rent for the accommodation, and
  - The social rent for the accommodation.
- 3.12 When a tenancy of affordable rent housing is granted to an existing tenant, the rent must not be re-set.
- 3.13 The weekly gross rent of an existing tenant of affordable rent housing may only be increased by up to CPI+1% in any year.
- 3.14 Properties currently or previously let as affordable rent housing must not be converted (including on re-let) to:
- Market rent (other than in the circumstances set out in Chapter 4 of the Rent Policy Statement); or
  - Forms of low cost rental accommodation set out in Chapter 5 of the Rent Policy Statement (unless that accommodation is relevant local authority accommodation as defined in paragraph 5.7 of the Rent Policy Statement).
- 3.15 Affordable rent may be charged where the property has been acquired by a registered provider and was affordable rent housing when it was acquired.

## Local authority information requirements

- 3.16 Local authority registered providers shall communicate with the regulator in an accurate and timely manner. This includes all data and information required by the regulator in respect of compliance with this Rent Standard. Where material issues that relate to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with this Rent Standard are identified by local authorities, they are expected to communicate these to the regulator promptly.

## 4. Definitions used in this Rent Standard

- 4.1 Any terms used in this Rent Standard which are not defined below have the same meaning as in the Rent Policy Statement.
- 4.2 'Affordable rent housing' is accommodation (excluding accommodation to which the Rent Standard does not apply under paragraph 2.2) which satisfies either a) or b) below:
- a) The accommodation is:
    - i) Provided by a registered provider pursuant to a housing supply delivery agreement between that provider and the Homes and Communities Agency (now known as Homes England) or the Greater London Authority and the accommodation is permitted by that agreement to be let at an affordable rent; or
    - ii) Provided pursuant to an agreement between a local authority and the Secretary of State and the accommodation is permitted by that agreement to be let at an affordable rent; or
    - iii) Provided by a local authority, and the Secretary of State, Homes England or the Greater London Authority has agreed that it is appropriate for the accommodation to be let at an affordable rent.
  - b) A provider chooses to let the accommodation with the rent charged in accordance with paragraphs 3.11 to 3.13, and the accommodation has not been converted from social rent housing.
- 4.3 'CPI' means the general index of consumer prices (for all items) published by the Office for National Statistics or, if that index is not published for any month, any substituted index or index figures published by that Office; and where this Rent Standard refers to CPI this is a reference to the percentage

change in the CPI in the 12 months to the September falling in the preceding financial year.

- 4.4 'Existing tenant' means, in relation to particular accommodation, a tenant who is not a new tenant. Further details are provided in 2.30, 2.31, 3.19 and 3.20 of the Rent Policy Statement.
- 4.5 'Financial year' means a year beginning on 1 April.
- 4.6 'Formula rent' means the amount calculated in accordance with the method set out in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.12 and 2.20 to 2.26 of the Rent Policy Statement.
- 4.7 'Gross rent' means the rent inclusive of all service charges.
- 4.8 'High income social tenant' means the tenant of a household that had a total household income of £60,000 or more in the relevant tax year, where—
  - a) 'total household income' means, in relation to accommodation—
    - i) if there is one resident, the income of that resident,
    - ii) if there are two residents, the sum of the residents' incomes, and
    - iii) if there are more than two residents, the sum of the two highest incomes of the residents;
  - b) 'resident' means—
    - i) any person who is the tenant or a joint tenant, and
    - ii) any person who resides at the accommodation and is the spouse, civil partner or partner of the tenant or of a joint tenant;
  - c) 'income' has the same meaning as 'total income' as described in section 23 of the Income Tax Act 2007;
  - d) 'partner', except in the expression 'civil partner', means a person who—
    - i) is not married to, or a civil partner of, the tenant or a joint tenant, and
    - ii) lives with the tenant or joint tenant in the accommodation as if they were married or in a civil partnership;

- e) 'relevant tax year' means the tax year ending on the 5th April which falls in the financial year prior to the financial year in which the rent is reviewed.
- 4.9 'Low cost rental accommodation' is as defined by section 69 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
- 4.10 'Gross market rent' means, in relation to accommodation, an estimate of its market rent inclusive of all service charges at the time the tenancy is granted that is based on a valuation in accordance with a method recognised by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
- 4.11 'New tenant' means, in relation to particular accommodation, a tenant who is granted a tenancy of that accommodation for the first time. Further details are provided in 2.8 and 3.18 of the Rent Policy Statement.
- 4.12 'Rent' includes payments under a licence to occupy accommodation.
- 4.13 'Rent cap' means, in relation to accommodation, the amount calculated in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 12 of Appendix A to the Rent Policy Statement, for the financial year in which rent is being set or increased.
- 4.14 'Rent cap requirement' is the requirement in paragraph 3.6.
- 4.15 'Rent flexibility level' means:
- a) 105% of formula rent, or
  - b) If the accommodation is supported housing, 110% of formula rent.
- 4.16 'Rent Policy Statement' means the Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 28 January 2026.<sup>2</sup>
- 4.17 'Social rent' means, in relation to accommodation, the amount of rent that a new tenant of the accommodation could be charged under paragraphs 3.1 and 3.6 if the accommodation were social rent housing (and the exception in paragraph 2.3 did not apply).
- 4.18 'Social rent housing' is low cost rental accommodation that is not affordable rent housing (excluding accommodation to which the Rent Standard does not apply under paragraph 2.2).

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<sup>2</sup> [Policy statement on rents for social housing](#)

- 4.19 'Tenancies' and 'tenants' should be read as also referring to licences and licensees (as applicable).



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