

	FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)
Case Reference	MAN/00EF/MNR/2025/1078
Property	Flat 3A, 20 Westbourne Street, Stockton-On-Tees, TS1 83EH
Tenant	Mr P Doidge
Tenant's Representative	
Landlord	AA Progressive Properties Ltd
Landlord's Address	32 Front Street, Pity Me, Durham DH1 5EE
Landlord's Representative	
Date of Application	17 December 2025
Type of Application	Determination of a Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988
Tribunal Members	J A Platt FRICS – Chairman J Gittus MRICS
Date of Decision	19 March 2026
Rent Determined	£295.00 per calendar month
Date the new rent takes effect	1 January 2026

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 29 November 2025, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £450.00 per calendar month (pcm) in place of the existing rent of £380.00 pcm to take effect from 1 January 2026.
2. On 17 December 2025, under Section 13(4)(a) of the Housing Act 1988, the Tenant referred the Landlord's notice proposing a new rent to the Tribunal for determination of a market rent.
3. The assured tenancy commenced on 1 December 2011. No tenancy agreement was provided to the Tribunal but the rental period is agreed to be monthly.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant.

4. As per section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Services Charges or furniture provided by Landlord (other than carpets and curtain and white goods specified below) and the costs relating to the same.

5. £Nil

Liability for Council Tax

6. The Tenant is responsible for the payment of Council Tax in respect of the Property. The rent determined is exclusive of Council Tax.

Any other terms of the tenancy taken into consideration in determining the rent.

7. None

Inspection/Hearing

8. A hearing was held on 19 March 2026 at Teesside Magistrates' Court. The Tribunal has considered this case on the basis of an inspection, an oral hearing, the papers provided by the parties and its own knowledge and specialist expertise.

The Property

9. The Tribunal carried out an inspection of the Property on 19 March 2026 in the presence of the Tenant. The Landlord was notified of the inspection but did not attend.
10. The Property is a second-floor (top) flat forming part of a converted three storey terraced house, offering the following accommodation:

Hall, open plan kitchen/lounge, one bedroom, and shower room / wc.

The Property benefits from electric heating by way of two wall heaters.

The Property is situated in a street of similar properties within the Central Stockton-upon-Tees Selective Licensing Area.

Evidence

11. The Tenant returned the Tribunal's Reply forms. No response was received from the Landlord who did not attend the inspection nor the hearing.

The Tenant.

12. The Tenant made the following comments in his written submissions and / or within his oral submissions at the hearing:
 - a) Very little maintenance has been carried out during his occupation which commenced in 2011. During that period there have been several changes of landlord. When the current landlord bought the property (c. Oct 2024) he increased the rent by £85 per month from £295 and promised to undertake all necessary repairs.
 - b) The window to the bedroom is rotten with visible gaps between what remains of the frame and the glazing; which is visibly in danger of falling out.
 - c) The window in the lounge is rotten.
 - d) The property suffers from penetrating damp in the rear sloping roof. Black mould is evident but has been painted over with white emulsion paint by the landlord within the last few weeks. No attempt has been made by the landlord to fix the underlying fault.

- e) There is sign of penetrating damp in the sloping roof in the living room. There is a large hole in this roof which the landlord has cosmetically fixed by screwing a piece of timber over.
 - f) The heating system which comprises only 2 wall mounted electric fires is inadequate. The property suffers from excess cold.
 - g) The tenant is unsure the communal fire alarm system is working. It has several red fault lights displayed and there is no evidence of any regular testing. That is of particular concern to the tenant as the Property is situated at the head of the only staircase with no other means of escape.
 - h) That there are high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour within the area.
13. The tenant provided no evidence of market rent levels in the area but he did assert that his rent should not increase, and indeed should not have increased in 2024, until / unless the landlord has completed all necessary repairs to put the property in good order.

The Landlord

14. No evidence was received from the Landlord who did not attend the hearing and did not respond to any of the Tribunal's correspondence.

The inspection

15. During the inspection the Tribunal noted all the elements of disrepair highlighted by the tenant.
16. Although it is not for the Tribunal to undertake a housing, health and safety rating scheme assessment (that is for others), were such an assessment to be undertaken the Tribunal considers the property likely suffers from Category 1 or Category 2 hazards in respect of excess cold and black mould and damp. The heating system is inadequate, the single glazed windows are in very poor condition with visible gaps around the glazing which is in significant danger of falling out.
17. The Tribunal noted evidence of at least one slipped ridge tile to the front of the property and grass growth in the rear gutter. An inspection of the rear elevation / roof was not possible due to lack of access.

18. There were no signs of the communal fire safety system having been regularly tested. A testing schedule template was displayed on the notice board but that was in pristine condition, was totally blank and was in the name of the previous landlord (prior to October 2024). On the balance of probabilities, the Tribunal determines that the system is not currently working and has likely not been regularly tested.

Determination and Valuation

19. Having received no evidence of comparable lettings the Tribunal relied on its own expert, general knowledge of rental values in the area. The property is situated within the Central Stockton Selective Licencing Area. That implies that the area suffers from one or more of: low demand, high levels of deprivation, high levels of crime, significant problems caused by antisocial behaviour. Having regard to the location, the Tribunal considers that the market rental value of the subject Property modernised and in good order would be in the order of £400.00 pcm.
20. Having regard to the overall condition of the property and the tenant referencing requirements of the selective licencing scheme, the Tribunal considers that there would be a very limited market of potential tenants for the property in its current condition.
21. The Tribunal has, therefore, made adjustments to the above level of achievable for the following:
- a) Requirement for refurbishment / general upgrade
 - b) Inadequate heating system.
 - c) Rotten window to living room
 - d) Rotten window to bedroom
 - e) Signs of penetrating damp
 - f) Black mould
 - g) Hole in sloping ceiling
 - h) Ridge tile displaced at front of property
 - i) Vegetation growth in rear gutter
 - j) Fire safety system not working
 - k) Lack of regular testing of communal fire safety system

The full valuation is shown below:

Starting Rent (per calendar month) £400.00

Less

a) Items under a) to j) above @ £10.00 per item £100.00
b) Item k at £5.00 £ 5.00

Total deductions £105.00

Market rent (per calendar month) £295.00

Decision

12. The Tribunal determines the market rent at £295.00 per calendar month with effect from 1 January 2026 (the date in the Landlord's notice).

APPEAL PROVISIONS

If either party is dissatisfied with this decision, they may apply for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) on any point of law arising from this Decision. Prior to making such an appeal, an application must be made, in writing, to this Tribunal for permission to appeal. Any such application must be made within 28 days of the issue of this statement of reasons (regulation 52 (2) of The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rules 2013) stating the grounds upon which it is intended to rely in the appeal.