

	FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)
Case Reference	CAM/38UE/MNR/2026/0035
Property	7 Ham Corner, Harwell, Didcot, Oxfordshire. OX11 0FT
Tenant	Ms A Golonka
Tenant's Representative	
Landlord	Sovereign Network Group
Landlord's Address	Sovereign House, Basing View, Basingstoke, RG21 4FA
Landlord's Representative	
Date of Application	07 March 2026
Type of Application	Determination of a Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988
Tribunal Members	Mr A Parkinson MRICS Ms S Allen
Date of Decision	06 June 2026
Rent Determined	£284.42 per week
Date the new rent takes effect	6 April 2026

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 17 February 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £287.63 per week in place of the existing rent of £274.46 per week to take effect from 6 April 2026.
2. On 07 March 2026, 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 property was subject to a mutual exchange. The original tenancy entered into with the previous tenant commenced on 16 November 2018. This was assigned to Ms Golonka on 01 May 2023. The original assured tenancy commenced on 16 November 2018 for a term of six years. The rental period is weekly.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant.

4. As per section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
5. The Tenant is responsible for internal decoration and for some minor repairs as well as for providing furniture, white goods, floor coverings and window coverings.

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

6. Service charges are not payable for the property.

Liability for Council Tax

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

Inspection/Hearing

8. Neither party requested an oral hearing. The Tribunal has considered this case on the basis of the papers provided by the parties and its own knowledge and specialist expertise.

The Property

The Property is a modern three bedroom terraced house comprising a sitting room, kitchen, two bathrooms and three bedrooms.

Outside: Rear garden and allocated parking.

The Property benefits from double glazing and central heating.

The Property is situated in Harwell village which is located approximately 2.5 miles west of Didcot.

Evidence

9. Both the Tenant and the Landlord returned the Tribunal's Reply forms.

The Tenant.

10. The Tenant made the following comments:

- a) The Tenant refers to a number of defects within the property relating to damp and mould.
- b) The Tenant submitted an Expert Witness Report for Housing Disrepair prepared by N Brend MRICS dated 06 February 2025. In his report Mr Brend has set out details of a number of defects causing moisture and mould to multiple rooms due to issues with insulation in window and door reveals and insulation within the loft space and a further issue with the extract fans which are resulting in excessive moisture to the bathroom ceiling. Mr Brend estimated that it would cost approximately £3,925 including VAT for the works required to resolve the current issues outlined in his report with an estimated 2-3 week period to undertake the works.
- c) The Tenant states that the proposed rent increase would cause financial hardship as she is a single working parent with three children in full time education. The Tenant states that the mould has increased household costs including water consumption due to constant cleaning to manage the mould.

11. In terms of rental evidence, the Tenant had provided screenshots of the following properties listed on the Home Swapper website:

- a) A three bedroom semi-detached house in Harwell OX11 6FB listed for direct swap at £1,095 per month.

- b) A further three bedroom semi-detached house in Harwell OX11 6FB listed for direct swap at £1,095 per month, although it was not clear if this was a separate property or duplication of a) above.
- c) A three bedroom semi-detached house in Blewbury OX11 9NR listed for direct swap at £133 per week.

The Landlord

12. The Landlord made the following comment:

- a) The Tenant has not proposed a different rent but is disputing the annual rent increase due to the ongoing disrepair claim. The rent prior to the increase of £274.46 reflects a previous tribunal determination made in 2025. The new proposed rent from April '26 is the amount increased by CPI + 1%.

Determination and Valuation

- 13. It is acknowledged that screenshots of listings have been provided by the Tenant. The Tribunal is grateful to the Tenant for providing these examples but they are not considered to be suitable comparable evidence as these properties are housing association rent rather than open market rents. The Tribunal is required to consider open market rents for the purpose of establishing rental values.
- 14. Relying on its own expert, general knowledge of open market rental values in the area, the Tribunal considers that the market rental of the subject Property modernised and in good order would be in the order of £1,450 per calendar month which equates to £334.62 per week. This is the rent we would expect the property to let for in the open market if it was in good tenable condition on typical lease terms.
- 15. From this level of rent, the Tribunal has made adjustments in relation to the following:
 - a) The Tenant is responsible for internal decoration and for some minor repairs as well as for providing furniture, white goods, floor coverings and window coverings.
 - b) Condition due to the moisture and associated damp.

The valuation is shown below:

Starting Rent	<u>£334.61</u> per week
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Less

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| a) | Items given under a) above | | |
| b) | Items given under b) above | Total 15% | <u>£50.19</u> |

Market rent £284.42 per week

Undue hardship

16. The new rent takes effect from the date specified in the Landlord's Notice of Increase unless that would cause undue hardship to the tenant. In cases of undue hardship, the Tribunal has a discretion to fix a later starting date up to the date a Tribunal makes its determination.
17. The Tenant has asked the Tribunal to fix a later starting date in this case due to low income and increased costs as a result of the moisture in the property.
18. The Tribunal considers the increase taking effect from the date in the Landlord's Notice would not cause undue hardship and accordingly sets the starting date for the new rent as 6 April 2026.

Decision

19. Therefore, the Tribunal determines the market rent at £284.42 per week with effect from 6 April 2026.

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.