

	FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)
Case Reference	CAM-42-UD-MRA-2026-0010
Property	3 Westholme, Ipswich IP1 4HH
Tenant	Aurika Meskavska
Tenant's Representative	Egija Meskavska
Landlord	Sukhwinder Kaur
Landlord's Address	50 Cedar Drive, Southwater, RH13 9UW
Landlord's Representative	Dilip Singh
Date of Application	14 June 2026
Type of Application	Determination of an Open-Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988
Tribunal Members	Judge A. Arul Patrick McGreal MRICS
Date of Decision	25 August 2026
Rent Determined	£1,350 per calendar month
Date of Valuation	25 August 2026
Date the new rent takes effect	16 September 2026

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 4 June 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13 (2) (as amended) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £1,350 per calendar month (pcm) in place of the existing rent of £1,300 pcm to take effect from 16 August 2026.
2. On 14 June 2026, under Section 14 (A3) of the Housing Act 1988, the Tenant referred the Landlord's notice proposing a new rent to the Tribunal for determination of an open-market rent.
3. The tenancy commenced on 16 May 2022. The rental period is monthly. The last rent increase to £1,300 pcm took place in or around November 2024.

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. N/A

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. N/A.

Hearing

8. The Tenant requested an oral hearing however this request was refused by the decision of a Legal Officer on 21 July 2026 for the reasons stated therein. 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

9. The Property is a semi-detached two storey house of traditional cavity brickwork under a tile covered roof construction, offering the following accommodation:

The Property comprises six useable rooms (presently used as 4 bedrooms together with living areas), kitchen and bathroom.

Outside: rear and front gardens and garage.

The Property is situated in the town of Ipswich, a little over a mile and a half from the town's mainline railway station and central amenities.

Evidence

10. The parties completed the relevant MR1 (Tenant) and MR2 (Landlord) forms however no MR3 (Tenant's reply) was submitted.

The Tenant

11. The Tenant considered the proposed rent increase to be excessive and made the following allegations about the condition of the Property and the Landlord's conduct:
- a. The first-floor carpets were over 10 years old and had not been replaced despite the Landlord promising to change them when the tenancy began.
 - b. The flooring in two rooms and in the kitchen had been replaced at the Tenant's expense because the original carpeting and wooden flooring was in poor condition.
 - c. All the walls and ceilings in the Property were re-painted by the Tenant. The Landlord provided two 10 litre tins of paint, which proved inadequate, so the Tenant met the cost of the remaining paint.
 - d. The Landlord promised to replace the windows, because of their age and poor condition. Some windows were replaced but others remain defective, for example they cannot be opened because they may fall out. One ground floor window suffers from condensation.
 - e. The Landlord requested the Tenant to find their own engineers to fix a boiler defect.

- f. The Landlord requested the Tenant to arrange for an Energy Performance Certificate following expiry of the previous certificate.
 - g. There are gaps between bricks outside the kitchen (which the Tribunal noted seemed to be lacking of a skirting board), causing water penetration and damage to the kitchen floor and wall.
12. The Tenant did not provide comparable rental evidence.

The Landlord

13. The Landlord disagreed with the Tenant's proposed rent of £1,300 pcm, commenting that the rent has remained at £1,300 pcm since November 2024.
14. The Landlord denied the allegations of disrepair and the suggestion that they had required the Tenant to undertake works, including at their own cost. They pointed to an inventory which was signed by both parties and showed agreement over certain works from commencement of the tenancy in consideration for a lower initial rent.
15. The Landlord noted that the Tenant uses the front reception room as a fourth bedroom, further increasing the utility of the Property.
16. The following comparables were provided by the Landlord:
- a. 76 Westholme Road - A 3-bedroom semi-detached house advertised for £1,499 pcm and said to be the agreed rent. It is in the same street and of the same style as the subject Property although there are no floor plans to assess whether it is comparable size. The property lacks a garage, but the entire front garden has been paved for off-street parking. The particulars indicate the condition of this comparable property shows signs of wear and tear.
 - b. Ashcroft Road - A 3-bedroom semi-detached house advertised for £1,300 pcm. It is located 0.5 miles from the Property. It is of the same style and age as the subject Property although generally smaller including every bedroom.
 - c. Cecil Road - A 3-bedroom semi-detached house advertised for £1,300 pcm. It is located 0.7 miles from the Property. It is of the same style and age as the subject Property although there are no floor plans to assess whether it is comparable size.
 - d. Wallace Road - A 3-bedroom semi-detached house advertised for £1,100 pcm. It is located 0.6 miles from the Property. The particulars are very limited and do not show the style of the property. The room sizes are much smaller than

the subject Property and there is no indication from the pictures that it has any parking.

- e. Burke Road - A 3-bedroom semi-detached house advertised for £1,350 pcm. This is set out in a different style to the subject Property and other comparators, likely having been constructed post Second World War. It has an additional bathroom. It is located 1.2 miles from the Property. There are no floor plans to assess whether it is a comparable size.
- f. Wren Avenue - A 3-bedroom semi-detached house advertised for £1,350 pcm. It is located 1.8 miles from the Property. The room sizes are much smaller than the subject Property and there is no indication from the pictures but it does have parking and a garage.

Determination and Valuation

- 17. Under section 14(1) of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended), the Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the Property might reasonably be expected to let in the open market by a willing Landlord at the beginning of the new period specified in the Landlord's notice. Relevant Tenant improvements or failure of the Tenant to comply with the terms of the tenancy are to be disregarded. Historic issues relating to the tenancy or the personal circumstances of the Landlord are not taken into account. The personal circumstances of the Tenant are only considered if an application for hardship has been made.
- 18. The Tenant has made several claims centred around perceived dissatisfaction with the Landlord's conduct. The Landlord has spent considerable time refuting these claims. The Tribunal's role is to determine the market rent of the Property and not to adjudicate or pass judgement on past Landlord and Tenant actions or inactions. Whilst the considerable representations concerning past matters have been noted they have little relevance to the Tribunal's task.
- 19. For the avoidance of doubt, the Tribunal noted that the commencement rent appeared to be at a very low level based on current market rents in the area and the passage of only four years. This was consistent with the Landlord's position, supported by the inventory which appeared to be signed for both parties, that there had been agreements for certain decorative works to be carried out by the Tenant in return for discounted rent or a deferred period before any increase. It appeared from the papers that requests relating to electrical works and the EPC were not seeking for the Tenant to bear the cost but merely looking for local recommendations. The Tribunal did not consider that any of the complaints by the Tenant as listed above related to the condition of the Property insofar as assessing market rent was concerned.

20. The Tribunal took the view, based on its appearance and its knowledge of the area, that the Property is likely to have been constructed almost a hundred years ago and is not in pristine condition nor is it claimed to be. The Tribunal found the condition to be commensurate with its age and style. The Landlord has brought to the Tribunal's attention properties of a similar age and style and none were said to be modernised in or superior decorative order. It is probable they are in similar condition to the subject Property based on the brief particulars which the Tribunal had before it.
21. The Tenant has not referred to any comparables to justify a market rent of £1,300 pcm. The Landlord's six comparables range in asking rent from £1,100 pcm to £1,499 pcm. They vary in size and specification as well as location. None are a perfect comparable. 76 Westholme Road was of particular note because it is in the same street as the subject Property (albeit on the opposite side of the road) and was built at the same time and in the same style. Whilst there are differences, the Tribunal considered it the most reliable guide to value. Its asking rent is the highest of the comparisons by £150 pcm and the Tribunal considered that this is likely a result of the market distinguishing between locations and the market considering Westholme Road more valuable than the roads where the other comparables are located. The other comparables were consistent with a rent of £1,300-£1,350 but all smaller overall and further away from the Property. Wallace Road appeared to be somewhat of an outlier at £1,100 pcm, however it can be distinguished by not only its smaller size but also the absence of a garage or side parking. Those features justified a lower market rent to that of the subject Property.
22. Relying on its own expertise and general knowledge of rental values in the area, the evidence from both parties, and the comparables provided by the Landlord, the Tribunal considers that the market rent of the subject Property would be in the order of £1,350 pcm.

Open-Market Rent

£1,350 pcm

Undue hardship

23. The new rent takes effect from the date which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination 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 two months after it makes its determination.
24. The Tenant has asked the Tribunal to fix a later starting date in this case. The Tenant asserts that they are elderly and maintain the house themselves and even a £50 increase would be high for them. There is no evidence given in support

and, in particular of the specific impact of a higher rent. For example, it appears from the application that the Tenant and their co-tenant were still of working age, but no details of income or outgoings was provided.

25. On the basis of the evidence provided, the Tribunal considers that for the increase to take effect from the date the Tribunal makes its determination would not cause undue hardship and does not fix a later starting date.
26. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £1,350 per calendar month with effect from 16 September 2026, which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination.

Decision

27. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £1,350 per calendar month with effect from 16 September 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 after 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.