	**FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL** **PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**
Case Reference	**CAM/26UK/MRA/2026/0048**
Property	**95 Queens Road, Watford, WD17 2QL**
Tenant	**Riaz Mansuralli**
Tenant's Representative	**None**
Landlord	**Peter Mac Sherry**
Landlord's Address	**Ye Jolly Gardeners, Pleasant Place, Rickmansworth, WD3 9WZ**
Landlord's Representative	**None**
Date of Application	**28 July 2026**
Type of Application	**Determination of an Open-Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**
Tribunal Members	**Judge Alice Holtom** **Patrick McGreal MRICS**
Date of Decision	**16 October 2026**
Rent Determined	**£750 per calendar month**
Date of Valuation	**1 September 2026**
Date the new rent takes effect	**1 November 2026**

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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 24 June 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13 (2) (as amended) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £750 per calendar month(pcm) in place of the existing rent of £700 pcm to take effect from 1 September 2026.

2. On 28 July 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 commencement date is disputed. The Tenant states that the tenancy commenced on 1 June 2016, whereas the section 13 notice records a commencement date of 1 January 2026. No tenancy agreement was provided. The rental period is 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. The landlord provides a bed, a table and a wardrobe. Utilities are included in the tenancy.

Liability for Council Tax

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

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

7. None

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

9. The Property is a basement room within a House of Multiple Occupation offering:

   Property: Private bedroom and shared use of communal bathroom and kitchen.

   Outside: Communal garden

   The parties agree that the property comprises a room within a house in multiple occupation with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities and access to a communal garden. Certain aspects of the accommodation, including the heating and glazing, were disputed.

   The Property is situated in Watford, which is a commuter town with a number of transport links into London.

Evidence

10. The parties completed the relevant MR1 (tenant) and MR2 (landlord).

The Tenant

11. The Tenant made the following comments:

    a) The proposed increase was unaffordable, and he had considered moving out as a result.

    b) The Tenant subsequently confirmed to the Tribunal that he wished to continue the application because he was not currently in a position to move out of the premises.

12. The Tenant did not provide comparable rental evidence.

The Landlord

13. The Landlord made the following comments:

    a) The increase followed more than two years without a rent increase.

b) The tenant has given notice to terminate the tenancy.

c) The landlord disputed aspects of the tenant's description of the property and tenancy including that:
   i. the property has central heating and double glazing
   ii. the property has a garden and
   iii. the premises and garden are maintained.

d) The proposed rent remained below market rent and a higher rent, potentially £850 pcm or more, could be achieved on reletting.

14. The landlord relied upon an AI-generated rental assessment which suggested that comparable room lettings in central Watford attracted higher rents and estimated a rental value of between £850 and £1150 pcm with utility bills included.

Determination and Valuation

15. 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.

16. The Tribunal has considered the disputed tenancy start date. Although the Tribunal has no evidence enabling it to determine the precise commencement date of the tenancy, the parties agree that the tenancy periods commence on the first day of each month. The Tribunal is therefore able to determine the appropriate effective date of the rent determined under the statutory scheme.

17. The Tribunal was not provided with comparable rental evidence by either party. The Landlord relied upon an AI-generated response obtained using the search term "rent for a large room in WD17 2QL". The Tribunal has considered that evidence but attached limited weight to it. The response does not identify the comparable properties relied upon, disclose the underlying data sources, or explain the methodology by which the suggested rental figure was reached. The Tribunal is therefore unable to test its reliability in the manner it could assess conventional comparable rental evidence.

18. The Tribunal notes that the section 13 notice records the current rent of £700 per calendar month as having taken effect on 1 June 2024. This is broadly consistent with the Tenant's evidence that the rent has remained unchanged for two years. In those circumstances, the Tribunal is satisfied that the current rent has remained unchanged since June 2024 and considers that it provides some limited evidence of the market value of the accommodation. Whilst the Tribunal accepts that rental values may have changed since June 2024, the evidence before it supports only a modest increase from the current rent.

19. The Tribunal has also had regard to its findings concerning the nature of the accommodation, including that the letting comprises a room within a shared house and the terms of the occupation as found by the Tribunal. Having considered all of the evidence, the Tribunal is satisfied that the market rent is higher than the current rent of £700 pcm. However, given the absence of reliable comparable evidence from either party, the Tribunal's assessment must be cautious. Drawing upon its expertise as a specialist tribunal and taking account of the nature of the accommodation and the terms of the tenancy, the Tribunal determines that the open market rent is £750 pcm.

Undue hardship

20. 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.

21. The Tenant has asked the Tribunal to fix a later starting date in this case. The Tenant said that they would suffer undue hardship because the proposed rent increase exceeds the increase in their wages.

22. The Landlord opposed any hardship postponement and contended that continuing to charge below-market rent affected the viability of letting the room.

23. The threshold for demonstrating undue hardship is high. The Tenant has produced no evidence to support his submissions. 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.

24. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £750 per calendar month with effect from 1 November 2026, being the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy commencing on or after the date of the determination.

Decision

25. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £750 per calendar month with effect from 1 November 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.