



Accent

Tenancy Policy

Accent Housing: Tenancy Policy 100724 v1.2
ACCENTGROUP.ORG

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1.0	Customer Experience Committee (CEC) 20/04/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2025	Creation of Policy	Louise Graham-Smith
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1.2	N/A	10/07/2024	27/03/2027	Updated template to include Exceptions section	Fi Whitworth

Purpose: This policy explains for customers, colleagues and local authorities the types of tenancies that will be offered in properties owned and managed by Accent Group LTD (Accent) to utilise its housing stock. It applies to all Accent rented accommodation including: general needs (social and affordable rent), Intermediate market rent, independent living, and temporary housing.

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1. Introduction

As a Registered Provider of homes, we recognise the need to balance our responsibilities to support and manage tenants/licensees with our responsibilities to our wider customer base. We will provide a flexible, effective and efficient tenancy/license management service that reflects best practice, complies with legislation and recognises the rights of our tenants/ licensees. This policy gives general guidance on the tenancies that will typically be offered by Accent.

2. Scope

This policy will set out:

- The type of tenancies Accent will grant
- Where tenancies are granted on a fixed term, the length of the term and other such relevant matters regarding their use

3. References

- Decant policy
- End of tenancy policy
- Joint tenancies – sole to joint policy
- Joint tenancies – joint to sole policy
- Notice to Quit (dwellings) policy
- Starter tenancy policy
- Succession policy
- Tenancy fraud policy

4. Requirements

The primary legislation regarding the tenancies utilised by Accent is the Housing Act 1985 (as amended).

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England sets out the specific standards that providers of social and affordable housing, such as Accent, must meet. Within this Framework, the Tenancy Standard and the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard places a number of requirements on registered providers, which includes publishing clear and accessible policies, which outline our approach to tenancy management.

5. Starter Tenancies

Accent tenants living within our 'general needs' stock will be granted a starter tenancy. This includes any person who has previously held an Accent tenancy but there has been a break in tenure.

A starter tenancy is a trial tenancy that lasts for 12-months. Where starter tenants successfully complete the 12-month trial period, the tenancy will become an assured lifetime tenancy.

Starter tenancies can be extended by six months if there have been breaches to the tenancy agreement. The introductory tenant has a right to request a review of the decision to extend the tenancy.

Starter tenants have fewer rights than assured lifetime tenants. The following rights are not included in a starter tenancy:

- Right to assign
- Right to exchange
- Right to buy
- Right to sublet or take in a lodger
- Right to improve their property

6. Assured Tenancies

After successful completion of the starter tenancy, the tenant will be granted a lifetime tenancy. Lifetime tenancies are assured tenancies where, with some limited exceptions, if tenants do not breach the conditions of their tenancy agreement, their tenancy will last as long as the tenant would like it to.

Assured tenants have the following rights:

- Right to repair
- Right to improve their property and be compensated
- Right to assign
- Right to succeed
- Right to sublet or take in a lodger
- Right to exchange
- Right to information
- Right to be consulted

7. Assured Short-hold Tenancies

Assured Short-hold Tenancies (ASTs) are offered as monthly tenancies that do not have a fixed term but are periodic. ASTs will be used within our self-contained temporary accommodation as well as our market rental products including intermediate market rent.

Assured short-hold tenants have fewer rights than assured lifetime tenants. The following rights are not included in an assured short-hold tenancy:

- Right to assign
- Right to exchange
- Right to buy
- Right to sublet or take in a lodger
- Right to improve their properties

8. License Agreements

A license agreement is an agreement for use and occupation of a property where the occupant does not have exclusive use of that property. Accent will grant excluded licenses in these circumstances which are excluded from the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

An excluded license agreement will also be granted to households being temporarily decanted into alternative accommodation whilst they still hold a tenancy within an Accent tenancy.

9. Secure Tenancies

Accent does not grant secure tenancies; however, we do have customers who hold a secure tenancy from historical stock transfers or where a tenancy has been granted before 15th January 1989.

10. Exceptions

There may be certain circumstances under which the terms of this policy may be reconsidered. Colleagues should be mindful of customer vulnerabilities and their specific needs. Extenuating circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and exceptions may be applied that require empathy and flexibility, to ensure that customers are treated fairly, compassionately and with respect.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 Tenancy Types

[A breakdown of the types of tenancy Accent offer]

Tenancy Types Table

Tenancy Type	When granted	Review / Termination
Starter Tenancy	Used at the commencement of a general needs let for an initial 12-month period. They can be extended up to 18 months where there have been breaches of tenancy. Extra-care scheme customers will not have a starter tenancy period.	They may be ended by serving a valid Notice Requiring Possession (s.21 HA 1988) with two months' notice of intention to terminate. This is mandatory possession and not at the discretion of the court. Or Notice of Seeking Possession Housing Act 1988 (amended) Sch. 2 Grounds for Possession. If the tenancy is not ended by the serving of the relevant notice towards the end of the probationary period, it will be converted to an Assured (non-short hold) tenancy.
Assured Tenancy	Used where; i) A general needs tenant has successfully completed their starter tenancy period ii) All extra care lets from commencement of tenancy iii) a current tenant of Accent or another social landlord who holds an Assured tenancy and is transferring to into an Accent property through mutual exchange iv) for a current tenant whose Assured tenancy started before 1 April 2012 who is exchanging with another tenant with a fixed term tenancy;	The tenancy can only be brought to an end on the grounds specified in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988(as amended) after serving a valid Notice of Seeking Possession and securing a valid outright possession order from a court. Accent may use the mandatory grounds for possession for rent arrears and certain criminal ASB.

Assured Short-hold Tenancy (AST)	Used for; i) intermediate rent ii) properties approved for disposal to let on a short-term basis; iii) guarantors for minors,	ASTs can be brought to an end only after the initial 6 months by serving a valid Notice Requiring Possession (s.21 HA 1988) with two months' notice of intention to terminate or at any point from the start of the tenancy if there are breaches of tenancy, by serving a Notice of Seeking Possession Housing Act 1988 (amended) Sch. 2 Grounds for Possession and obtaining a Possession Order from the court.
Secure Tenancy	Accent do not grant new secure tenancies. This tenure is most likely found in our stock that has historically been transferred from a local authority as part of a large stock transfer.	A secure tenancy can only be brought to an end on the grounds specified in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended) after serving a valid Notice of Seeking Possession and securing a valid outright possession order from a court. The mandatory Ground 8 cannot be used on Secure tenancies.
Excluded License Agreement / License to occupy	Used where; i) occupation of a property where the occupant does not have exclusive use of that property (excluded license agreement) ii) the intention is only to allow occupation on a temporary basis e.g. temporary accommodation or a decanted property where the occupant holds a tenancy elsewhere (license to occupy) iii) non-residential accommodation such as garages	Licenses can be brought to an end by serving a Notice to Quit (in the prescribed form) giving 28 days' notice to the licensee. If a licensee does not vacate the accommodation when the notice expires, valid possession order must be obtained from the court. For Excluded licenses, a Notice to Quit (NTQ) is not a legal requirement and the licensee can be excluded from the property without a court order, but the landlords' notice period must be reasonable. Accent will normally serve NTQs of not less than 28 days unless there is a risk of violence or security when the Head of Specialist Housing can authorise notice of less than 28 days.