



# Glossary of Terms



Better Homes • Stronger Communities

### ABC Acceptable Behaviour Contract

**Definition:** A written agreement between a person, the police and North Lincolnshire Homes. In an ABC, the person agrees to stop committing acts of anti-social behaviour.

### AGM Annual General Meeting

**Definition:** An Annual General Meeting is held by an organisation at approximately the same time every year. At the meeting, the work the organisation has carried out and the organisation's accounts are presented and new members of the committee are elected.

### Allocations

**Definition:** This is the term used by social landlords to describe the process of identifying properties and letting them to people, who then become their tenants.

### Allocations Policy

**Definition:** An Allocations Policy sets down the rules for allocating (i.e. offering) housing, and should ensure that those most in need get offered a home first.

### Arrears

**Definition:** See Rent Arrears.

### ASBO Anti-Social Behaviour Order

**Definition:** An ASBO is an injunction taken out against individuals who have been causing persistent acts of anti social behaviour. The ASBO might ban them from entering a particular area (such as an estate or district). Local Authorities, housing associations and police can issue ASBO's against any individual over ten years old.

### Assignment

**Definition:** An agreement between a landlord and tenant that a friend or relative of the tenant can take over the tenancy - providing the assignee has resided in the property for at least 12 months (and can prove it).

### Assured Shorthold Tenancy

**Definition:** Assured Shorthold Tenancies give the tenant the right to occupy a property for a fixed period of time, provided that they keep to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. At the end of the fixed period of time (often 12 months), the landlord or the tenant has the right to terminate the tenancy.

### Assured Tenancy

**Definition:** Since January 1989 all new tenants of housing associations have assured tenancies.

### Audit Commission

**Definition:** See Housing Inspectorate.

### Best Value

**Definition:** A duty to deliver services to clear standards – covering both cost and quality – by the most economic, efficient and effective means available.

### BME

**Definition:** Black & Minority Ethnic. Sometimes written as BEM (Black and Ethnic Minority).

### Board Member

**Definition:** The term used to refer to a member of the Board of Management of a housing association.

### Board of Management

**Definition:** Group of people who have volunteered or been elected to control the affairs of a housing association. They can come from all walks of life but must have some interest or experience which relates to the work that the housing association does and the community it serves. It may also be called a Management Committee, Management Board, Board, or Board of Trustees.

### Capital Expenditure

**Definition:** The money that landlords spend on buying land, or building and improving housing.

### Capital Programme

**Definition:** A plan, usually over at least one year, for building and improving housing.

### Charitable Status

**Definition:** Many housing associations are charities. Charitable status gives housing associations certain privileges (e.g. tax advantages) but limits the objectives and activities the association can carry out. These have to be for 'charitable purposes'.

### Charity Commission

**Definition:** Organisation responsible for the regulation and registration of charities in England and Wales.

### Choice Based Lettings

**Definition:** Choice Based Lettings are based on the Dutch style of advertising and letting homes and aim to give a more customer focused approach to the letting of social housing.

### Common Parts / Communal Areas

**Definition:** These are the areas that are shared by more than one property, such as the entrance halls and staircases to blocks of flats.

### Compact / Compacts

**Definition:** See Tenant Participation Compacts.

### Compensation

**Definition:** Something given as a redress to loss, injury etc. Secure tenants have a right to compensation for certain improvements, which gives reimbursement of an amount of money, when a tenancy ends.

## Council Housing Transfer / Large Scale Voluntary Transfer / Stock Transfer

**Definition:** The process by which a Local Authority (Council) transfers the ownership and management of its housing stock to a not-for-profit Registered Social Landlord. The Local Authority continues to manage all non-housing related services (such as refuse collection, street lighting etc).

## Cyclical Maintenance

**Definition:** See Planned Maintenance.

## Data Protection / Data Protection Act

**Definition:** Under the Data Protection Act (1998), individuals have certain rights to access information that is being held about them by organisations and companies.

## Decent Homes Standard

**Definition:** The Decent Homes Standard is a target set by Government for all social housing providers to meet set standards of design for their homes by 2010. In brief, a decent home will have to pass four tests:

- 1 It has to meet the current statutory minimum standards for housing.
- 2 It needs to be in a reasonable state of repair.
- 3 It needs to have reasonably modern facilities and services.
- 4 It needs to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

### Demoted Tenancy / Demotion Order

**Definition:** Landlords can apply for a court order to demote a tenancy from an assured tenancy to an assured shorthold or “starter” tenancy. This has the effect of putting the tenant on probation and if further breaches of the tenancy occur the landlord can obtain a court order to end their tenancy.

### Equal Opportunities

**Definition:** Means treating all people equally, and not being prejudiced or discriminating against someone because of their ethnic origin, religion, sexuality, disability, gender or age.

### Equal Opportunities Policy

**Definition:** A written agreement by an organisation which sets out how it will go about treating all people equally and fairly.

### Estate Agreement

**Definition:** An Estate Agreement is a yearly agreement negotiated between the landlord and all tenants on an estate. The agreement sets out issues such as: priorities for action, standards of service for the estate, how tenants will be kept informed and consulted, how service standards will be monitored etc.

### Eviction

**Definition:** Being removed from your property by a bailiff following the serving of a Possession Order.

### Exclusion Order

**Definition:** A court order banning a person from a specific area. Exclusion orders often form parts of an ASBO.

### Federation / Tenants' Federation

**Definition:** A tenants' federation is a group of tenants' associations who have decided to work together in the interests of all tenants in an area.

### Grounds for Possession

**Definition:** Landlords can only apply for possession of a secure or assured tenancy for certain reasons – called grounds. These grounds for possession are set out in the Housing Act and we have set out the ones that apply to North Lincolnshire Homes in our Tenancy Agreements.

### Homeless / Homelessness

**Definition:** Someone who does not have any permanent accommodation is described as being homeless

### Housing Association (HA)

**Definition:** A non-profit making organisation which provides homes either for people who cannot afford to buy their own or who need special types of housing, for example elderly people.

### Housing Benefit

**Definition:** Extra money paid to people on income support or low incomes to cover housing costs.

## Housing Inspectorate

**Definition:** Under the Best Value regime all Local Authority and housing association's housing services will be inspected to check they are showing continuous improvement and providing value for money. This external inspection is carried out by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate team.

## Housing Officer

**Definition:** Person employed by a Local Authority or housing association to carry out a range of Housing Management duties.

## Housing Ombudsman Service

**Definition:** In charge of investigating complaints made about housing associations. Before the HOS can be called in to investigate, the person making the complaint must have been through the housing association's own complaints procedure.

## Injunctions

**Definition:** A court order that instructs a person to either stop doing something (such as playing loud music) or instructs them to do something (such as remove rubbish from their home or garden).

## Joint Tenancy

**Definition:** Where two or more people share a property and the Tenancy Agreement for the property.

## Leaseholder

**Definition:** A person who does not own the land their home is built on, and pays a ground rent for a fixed number of years. Tenants who live in flats and buy them from their landlord are called leaseholders.

## Legislation

**Definition:** Law.

## Mediation

**Definition:** A method of resolving disputes between two parties using a third, external party, known as a 'Mediator'.

## Mutual Exchange

**Definition:** The name given when two (or more) secure or assured tenants swap tenancies (and homes) with each other.

## Mystery Shopping

**Definition:** A form of market research which uses customers to assess service standards.

## Owner Occupier

**Definition:** Someone who has purchased their home.

## Periodic Tenancy

**Definition:** A tenancy that is not set for a period of time (such as six months or a year). The assured tenancies offered by North Lincolnshire Homes are periodic tenancies and these will continue from week to week unless either the tenant or North Lincolnshire Homes ends the tenancy.

### Permitted Number

**Definition:** It is an offence to allow a property to be overcrowded. The number of persons the law allows to live in a property is called the permitted number.

### Planned Maintenance

**Definition:** A system of repairs and maintenance carried out by a housing association that has been decided in advance, and accounted for in the yearly budget. Planned maintenance is often carried out on a cyclical basis (e.g. every ten years).

### Possession Order

**Definition:** A legal document obtained from a court by a landlord to gain possession of a property from a tenant.

### Quiet Enjoyment

**Definition:** All secure, assured and assured shorthold tenants have a statutory Right to Quiet Enjoyment. This does not refer to noise or anti-social behaviour, as the phrase might imply, but to the possession and enjoyment of the property without undue disturbance from the landlord.

### Rechargeable Repairs

**Definition:** Repairs that are a tenants responsibility, but a landlord carries out. A tenant must pay for the cost of the repair work this instance.

## Refurbishment

**Definition:** The renovation and improvement of a property.

## Registered Social Landlords – RSLs

**Definition:** A term describing not-for-profit organisations that provide social housing and are registered with the Tenant Services Authority. Examples include housing associations, housing trusts, housing co-operatives etc.

## Regulations

**Definition:** Detailed rules issued by the Government on how laws are carried out.

## Rent

**Definition:** Money paid to a landlord by a tenant in exchange for occupying a property.

## Rent Arrears

**Definition:** If you fall behind with your rent payments (whether paid by Housing Benefit or yourself), you are said to be in rent arrears. Being in arrears is a breach of the Tenancy Agreement and can lead to eviction.

## Rent Reform / Social Rent Reform

**Definition:** The Government has introduced guidelines for social landlords that set out how social housing rents are to be changed so that they are all calculated to the same standard by 2012.

## Repairs

**Definition:** Mending something that is broken, inside or outside of your home e.g. a blocked drainpipe or a dripping tap.

### Resident Involvement

**Definition:** A two way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where residents are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening.

### Right to Acquire

**Definition:** Scheme giving eligible tenants of Registered Social Landlords the right to buy the home they currently live in.

### Right to Buy

**Definition:** Housing Association tenants have the legal right to buy their home at a price lower than the full market value, if they have been living there for more than two years.

### Right to Repair

**Definition:** North Lincolnshire Homes is obliged to carry out certain small, urgent repairs which are likely to affect a tenants' health, safety or security, within a prescribed time limit. This is known as a tenant's Right to Repair.

### Secure Tenancy

**Definition:** The vast majority of Local Authority tenants, and housing association tenants whose tenancies began before 15 January 1989, are secure tenants and have a range of additional rights covered in the Housing Act 1985.

### Security of Tenure

**Definition:** A tenant's right to remain in their home indefinitely provided that they keep to the conditions of their Tenancy Agreement.

### Service Charge

**Definition:** The money tenants and leaseholders pay for services such as Support Officers, common rooms and cleaning, lighting and maintenance of common parts.

### Shared Ownership

**Definition:** Scheme which allows tenants to part buy / part rent a property.

### Sheltered Housing

**Definition:** Special housing for elderly or vulnerable people who may need additional support to maintain independent living.

### Social Housing

**Definition:** Housing of an adequate standard which is cheaper than that which is generally available in the local housing market.

### Social Landlord

**Definition:** Provider of Social Housing such as a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord.

### Special General Meeting

**Definition:** 'Emergency' meeting of a group that occurs outside of usual group meeting times.

### Starter Tenancies

**Definition:** The Housing Association term for Introductory Tenancies.

### Stock (Housing Stock)

**Definition:** Property owned by a particular landlord is often referred to as their 'housing stock'.

### Stock Transfer

**Definition:** See Council Housing Transfer.

### Sub-Letting

**Definition:** When a tenant rents out a room or rooms in their home to another person. North Lincolnshire Homes does not allow its tenants to sub-let the whole of their home.

### Succession / Right of Succession

**Definition:** The right to automatically transfer the tenancy of a property on the death of a tenant. For example, if a husband and wife lived together in the property and the husband was the tenant, upon his death the wife would automatically take over the tenancy.

### Supported Housing

**Definition:** Accommodation for people with specific care needs (such as elderly people, and people with special needs). Residents are 'supported' in their accommodation by paid staff.

## Supporting People

**Definition:** A Government programme that came into place in April 2003. 'Supporting People' changes the way that supported housing is managed and financed in the social housing sector.

## TA - Tenants' Association

**Definition:** A voluntary group made up of people who live in a particular area or scheme, who have got together to have their say on local issues, improve their area or organise social events. Can also be called a Tenants' and Residents' Association, Residents' Association, Tenants' and Leaseholders' Association etc.

## Tenancy Agreement

**Definition:** A signed contract between a landlord and a tenant. A Tenancy Agreement sets out what is expected of each party, and what rights each have.

## Tenant

**Definition:** A person, or persons, who agree to occupy a property owned by someone else in exchange for payment (i.e. rent).

## Tenant Consultation

**Definition:** Refers to arrangements for involving tenants in decisions on housing policy and practice that goes beyond information provision but does not include actual housing management.

## Tenant Inspectors

**Definition:** Tenants working voluntarily with North Lincolnshire Homes to provide a tenant's viewpoint on the quality of housing services provided by us.



### Tenant Participation Compacts (TP Compacts)

**Definition:** Locally-negotiated agreements between a social landlord and its tenants, setting out how tenants will be involved collectively in taking local decisions on housing issues which affect them.

### Tenant's Handbook

**Definition:** Handbook given to new tenants. It contains useful information about the tenancy and the landlord.

### Tenants' Panel

**Definition:** A consultative body made up of tenants and others, selected or elected from the local community, to discuss housing issues and issues relevant to tenants.

## Under Occupation

**Definition:** Occurs when the tenants in a property are not fully occupying it. An example might be a couple in a 3-bedroom house, whose children have left home.

## Voids

**Definition:** Empty homes usually waiting for some work to be done or someone to move in.





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