WILLOW TREE

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Tenancy Policy

Version:	**v2**
Responsibility for the Policy	**Head of Housing and Customer Experience**
Date approved by Executive	**October 2026**
Tenant Consultation (Yes/No)	**Yes – November 2026**
Date approved by Board (if applicable)	**Yes – Outstanding**
Date due for review:	**October 2027**

1. Statement of Intent

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) aims to give tenants the most secure form of tenure bearing in mind the purpose of the housing, the sustainability of the community and any other requirements consistent with the regulatory framework.

2. Policy Objectives

This policy applies to all prospective and current tenants.

We will give residents with different tenancies broadly similar terms except for any that reflect the purpose of the tenancy or its legal status.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 is expected to change the assured tenancy framework for social housing provided by private registered providers from October 2027. WTHP will review and update this policy, its tenancy agreements and related procedures before those provisions come into force.

2.1. Starter tenancies

All applicants, except for those who are moving from an existing assured or secure social housing or Rentplus tenancy, will be offered a starter tenancy. This will be in the form of an assured shorthold tenancy for a 12-month period.

Starter tenancies will be reviewed at month 9. If there have been no significant tenancy breaches, the tenancy will convert to an assured tenancy at the end of the 12-month starter period. If breaches are identified, WTHP may extend the starter period by up to six months or take action to end the tenancy, subject to the tenancy agreement, applicable law and any required notice, review or appeal process.

2.2. Assured tenancies

Sometimes also referred to as periodic assured non-shorthold or lifetime tenancies, assured tenancies will be granted to applicants (excluding those applying for Rentplus properties) who have an existing assured or secure tenancy with WTHP or any other provider.

2.3. Secure tenancies

Some WTHP tenancies that began before the Housing Act 1988 came into force on 15 January 1989 may remain secure tenancies. The rights attached to an individual secure tenancy depend on the applicable legislation and the tenancy history and may include rights relating to rent, succession, assignment, and purchasing the home.

Secure tenancies are no longer issued to new tenants, however, WTHP tenants with an existing secure tenancy will retain their secure status should they move to another WTHP social rented home.

2.4. Fixed term tenancies

WTHP no longer offers Fixed Term Tenancies for social housing. Residents who

have an existing Fixed Term tenancy will be offered an assured tenancy when their fixed term tenancy comes to an end.

2.5. Rentplus tenancies

Rentplus properties are part of the Rentplus scheme for an Agreed Period of 5, 10, 15 or 20 years. At the end of each 5 year period there is a break. Where the property has come to the end of its Agreed Period the property will be sold, either to the existing tenant, to WTHP or on the open market.

In most cases the term of a Rentplus fixed term tenancy will be 5 years except:

a) The final fixed term tenancy will be a tenancy of 4 years and 11 months, to end one month before the end of the Agreed Period.
b) Where a property is relet more than two years before the next break, in which case the fixed term tenancy will end at the next break.
c) Where the property is relet less than two years before the next break, in which case the fixed term tenancy will end at the next break but one.
d) Where a property is relet and the fixed term would be less than 2 years then an Assured Shorthold tenancy will be offered, or the property sold under the terms of the Rentplus Collaboration Agreement and/or individual property lease. The exceptional reason for the term of the tenancies being less than 5 years is the Rentplus scheme design.

When a tenancy reaches the end of the fixed term it may be renewed and the tenant offered another 5 year fixed term tenancy, provided that the property has not reached the end of its Agreed Period. Where the property has reached the end of the Agreed Period it will be sold to the existing tenant, WTHP or on the open market.

The terms of a Rentplus tenancy may be different from other tenancies where this is dictated by the needs of the Rentplus scheme.

2.6. Mutual Exchange, Succession and Assignment

All residents except tenants with a starter tenancy and Rentplus tenants have the right to exchange their tenancy with another social housing tenant either in law or by virtue of their tenancy agreement subject to meeting defined conditions.

Rights to succession and assignment for assured, fixed-term and secure tenants are governed by the applicable legislation and the relevant tenancy agreement. Eligibility may depend on factors including the tenancy type, when it began, whether a previous succession or assignment has occurred and the circumstances of the proposed transfer.

Rentplus tenants have the right to succession and assignment based on their tenancy conditions.

Rentplus tenants have no right to mutual exchange.

3. Performance Standards

WTHP conducts internal compliance audit assurance annually.

4. Reference Documents

External

- The Housing Act 1985, Housing Act 1988 and Housing Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Regulatory Standards from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) including the Tenancy Standard published in April 2024.

Internal

- Tenancy Procedure
- Fraud, Corruption, Money Laundering Policy
- Allocations and Lettings Policy and Procedure
- Rentplus Allocations Procedure

When setting policy, Willow Tree Housing Partnership will ensure a golden thread of best practice runs through all aspects of our operations in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion. We will seek to minimise adverse environmental impacts arising because of our work. This approach and all policies will be reviewed on their anniversary date or as new guidance or legislation is introduced, whichever occurs sooner.