



Rent Review Policy

May 2025

Version	Date	Annual Review Date
1	11 May 2026	10 May 2026

Introduction

This Policy sets out how and when rent reviews will be carried out. It ensures that rent increases are fair, transparent, lawful, and compliant with the Renters' Rights Act 2026, which limits rent increases to once per year and requires the use of a formal Section 13 Notice.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All assured periodic tenancies
- All Private Rented Sector properties managed or owned by Quercus Housing
- All tenants, including those receiving benefits

Principles

- Rent increases must be fair, reasonable, and evidence based
- Rent can only be increased once every 12 months
- All increases must follow the Section 13 Notice statutory process
- Tenants must be given at least 2 months' written notice
- Tenants have the right to challenge increases at the First Tier Tribunal
- Rent reviews must be transparent and clearly communicated

Rent Review Process

Annual Review Cycle

Quercus Housing will review rents once per year. The review will consider:

- Local market rent levels
- Local Housing Allowance rates
- Property condition and improvements
- Inflation and operating costs
- Affordability and fairness

A rent increase is not automatic; it must be justified.

Evidence and Benchmarking

Before proposing an increase, Quercus Housing will gather evidence, including:

- Comparable rents for similar properties in the local area
- Market data from recognised sources
- Internal financial assessments

All evidence must be documented and retained.

Notice Requirements

If an increase is proposed:

- A Section 13 Notice must be issued
- Tenants must receive 2 months' notice
- The notice must state:
 - Current rent
 - Proposed new rent
 - Date the new rent will take effect
 - Tenant's right to challenge the increase

Tenant Right to Challenge

Tenants may refer the increase to the First Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) if they believe it is above the market rate.

Quercus Housing will:

- Provide evidence supporting the increase
- Cooperate fully with the First Tier Tribunal process
- Accept the First Tier Tribunal's decision as final

Restrictions on Rent Increases

Under the Renters' Rights Act, the Quercus Housing must not:

- Increase rent more than once in any 12-month period
- Use rent increases to force a tenant to leave
- Increase rent outside the Section 13 Notice process
- Demand rent above the advertised price when letting a property
- Use rent increases as retaliation for complaints

Special Circumstances

Improvements to the Property

Where significant improvements have been made, Quercus Housing may consider a higher increase, provided the:

- Improvements are documented
- Increase remains within local market levels and Local Housing Allowance rates
- Section 13 Notice process is followed

Financial Hardship

If a tenant reports financial difficulty:

- The Quercus Housing will signpost support services
- Payment plans may be considered for arrears
- Rent increases will still follow statutory rules

Communication Standards

All communication about rent reviews must be:

- Clear and written in plain language
- Provided in accessible formats if required
- Delivered with reasonable notice
- Respectful and non threatening

Record Keeping

Quercus Housing will keep records of:

- Evidence used to justify increases
- Copies of Section 13 Notices
- Tenant correspondence
- First Tier Tribunal decisions
- Annual rent review outcomes

Records must be retained in line with Data Retention Policies.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- First Tier Tribunal decisions affect practice
- Internal audits identify improvements



Rent Review Procedure May 2025

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Purpose

This procedure sets out the step by step process for reviewing and increasing rent in a fair, transparent, and legally compliant way.

It ensures all rent reviews follow the Renters' Rights Act 2026, including the requirement to use a Section 13 Notice and the limit of 1 increase per 12 months.

Scope

This procedure applies to all:

- Assured periodic tenancies
- Properties owned or managed by Quercus Housing
- Tenants, including those receiving benefits

Overview of Rent Review Process

1. Check eligibility (has 12 months passed since last increase)
2. Gather evidence (market comparisons, Local Housing Allowance rates, property condition, costs)
3. Decide whether an increase is justified
4. Calculate proposed rent
5. Prepare and issue Section 13 Notice
6. Give 2 months' notice
7. Respond to tenant queries or challenges
8. Update records and systems

Detailed Procedure

Step 1 – Check Eligibility

Before starting a rent review, confirm:

- At least 12 months have passed since the last increase
- The tenancy is an assured periodic tenancy
- No legal restrictions apply (eg First Tier Tribunal decision within last 12 months)

Step 2 – Gather Evidence

Collect objective evidence to justify any proposed increase, including:

- Local market rent comparisons for similar properties
- Local Housing Allowance rates for the Sevenoaks district
- Data from reputable sources (eg property portals, local agents)
- Property improvements completed in the last year
- Inflation and operating cost changes

All evidence must be documented and stored.

Step 3 – Assess Whether an Increase Is Justified

Consider:

- Market conditions
- Affordability and fairness
- Property condition
- Tenant history and vulnerability

A rent increase is not automatic. If evidence does not support an increase, maintain current rent.

Step 4 – Calculate the Proposed Rent

Ensure the proposed rent:

- Reflects local market levels
- Is reasonable and proportionate
- Is not being used to force a tenant to leave
- Complies with the Renters' Rights Act

Step 5 – Prepare the Section 13 Notice

The Section 13 Notice must include:

- Current rent
- Proposed new rent
- Date the new rent will take effect
- Tenant's right to challenge the increase
- Required statutory wording

The Notice must be completed accurately and served correctly.

Step 6 – Serve the Notice

Serve the Section 13 Notice using 1 of the following:

- Post
- Hand delivery
- Email (if agreed in writing)

Tenants must receive at least 2 months' notice before the new rent starts.

Record the date and method of service.

Step 7 – Respond to Tenant Queries

If the tenant contacts you:

- Explain the evidence supporting the increase
- Provide copies of market comparisons if requested
- Discuss affordability concerns
- Consider reasonable adjustments if the tenant is vulnerable

If the tenant challenges the increase at the First Tier Tribunal:

- Provide all evidence promptly
- Cooperate fully
- Accept the First Tier Tribunal's decision as final

Step 8 – Update Records

Once the notice period ends:

- Update rent amounts in all systems
- Confirm the new rent in writing
- Store all documents (notice, evidence, correspondence)

Restrictions and Compliance Requirements

Under the Renters' Rights Act, landlords must not:

- Increase rent more than once every 12 months
- Increase rent outside the Section 13 Notice process
- Use rent increases as retaliation
- Advertise 1 rent price and then charge more
- Increase rent to pressure a tenant to leave

Vulnerability and Support

If a tenant reports financial hardship:

- Signpost to support services
- Consider payment plans for arrears
- Maintain the statutory rent review process

Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- First Tier Tribunal decisions affect practice



Tenant Rent Review Frequently Asked Questions

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What is a Rent Review

A rent review is when your landlord looks at your current rent and decides whether to increase it. Under the Renters' Rights Act from 1 May 2026, rent reviews follow strict rules to make them fair and predictable.

How often can my landlord increase my rent

Your landlord can only increase your rent once every 12 months. They cannot raise it more frequently, even if your tenancy agreement says otherwise.

How much notice must my landlord give me

You must receive at least 2 months' written notice before the new rent starts.

What form must the landlord use

All rent increases must be done using a Section 13 Notice. If your landlord does not use this form, the increase is not valid.

Can my landlord increase the rent by any amount

No, the increase must be reasonable and in line with local market rents. You can challenge an increase that seems too high.

Can I challenge a rent increase

Yes, if you think the new rent is above the market rate, you can challenge it at the First Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber). The First Tier Tribunal will decide what a fair rent should be.

What happens if I challenge the increase

- Your rent stays at the current level until the First Tier Tribunal makes a decision
- The First Tier Tribunal may set the rent lower, higher, or the same as the proposed amount
- The landlord must accept the First Tier Tribunal's decision

Can my landlord increase the rent to force me out

No, using rent increases to pressure a tenant to leave is illegal under the Renters' Rights Act.

Can my landlord raise the rent if I complain about repairs

No, retaliatory rent increases are not allowed. If you report repairs, your landlord cannot punish you by raising the rent.

Does my tenancy type matter

From 1 May 2026, all private tenancies become assured periodic tenancy(rolling). Rent reviews work the same for all periodic tenancies.

What if I am struggling to afford the increase

Tell your landlord as soon as possible. They may:

- Review the increase
- Offer a payment plan for arrears
- Signpost you to support services

But the legal rent review process still applies.

Can my landlord increase rent at the start of a new tenancy

No, they must advertise the rent at the price they intend to charge. “Rent bidding wars” are banned.

What should I do when I receive a rent increase notice

- Check the date it was served
- Check it's a valid Section 13 Notice
- Compare the new rent with similar properties
- Decide whether to accept or challenge it
- Contact your landlord if you need clarification

What if my landlord doesn't follow the rules

If the landlord:

- Does not use a Section 13 Notice
- Gives less than 2 months' notice
- Raises rent more than once a year
- Uses rent increases as retaliation

...then the increase is invalid.

You can write to them explaining why or seek advice from a Local Authority Housing Options and Solutions service.