



Policy Statement

Residential Letting Policy

The National Trust is the largest conservation charity in Europe. Our purpose is to look after places of historic interest or natural beauty for everyone, for ever. We do this largely through the ownership and management of special places and we care for nearly 250,000 hectares of land in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our properties include over 25,000 buildings of which over 3,000 are let on short-term residential occupancy agreements.

This policy applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England and Northern Ireland we refer to tenants and in Wales we refer to contract holders.

The Trust's objectives for housing:

- To safeguard the physical contribution our houses and cottages make to the historic built environment;
- To provide our tenants and contract holders with warm, comfortable, and safe homes;
- To generate rental income to support the Trust's charitable purpose;
- To minimise the environmental impact of our cottages, whilst retaining their historic construction and character.

General management principles for housing

All National Trust properties are different and each has its own character and setting. The Trust celebrates, and aims to protect, this diversity and local distinctiveness through its conservation work.

As landlords we aim to be fair and reasonable and to build good relationships with our tenants and contract holders. We are committed to carrying out the repairs and maintenance for which we are responsible as efficiently as possible. We recognise that our properties are not just buildings but also homes that provide security, comfort and stability for our tenants and contract holders.

As a charity we are bound by the Charities Act to let property on the best terms reasonably obtainable for the furtherance of our core purpose – which is to look after places of historic interest or natural beauty for the nation. This means that, in most cases, we will let our houses and cottages at an open market rent, both at the start and throughout the tenancy.

Selection of tenants / contract holders

We recognise that our tenancies / occupation contracts are in high demand. When selecting residential tenants or contract holders, the Trust takes a range of factors into account. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- **Compliance with legislative requirements:** for example, ensuring that occupation of the property would not result in overcrowding or breach housing regulations.

- **Ability to meet tenancy obligations:** including the applicant's ability to pay rent and meet ongoing running costs (assessed through a credit check or similar).
- **Respect for the property and its setting:** the need for tenants / contract holders to be sympathetic to the nature and location of the property and support the Trust's aim of preserving character and heritage.
- **Local connections:** such as existing links to the local area or community, where relevant to the Trust's objectives.
- **Primary residence:** the Trust operates a presumption against letting houses or cottages for use as second or holiday homes.

Where, for any particular letting, the Trust has a choice of prospective tenants, a local decision will be made as to which person is offered the tenancy.

Relationships with tenants / contract holders

The Trust values the role of its tenants / contract holders in the care of the buildings they occupy, and we want to build lasting relationships with good tenants / contract holders. This will reduce the turnover of occupiers and be of benefit to the property, the tenant / contract holders, and the community. We are proud that we provide long-term homes to many of our tenants / contract holders.

We readily accept a responsibility to be a fair and reasonable landlord. We will adopt a fair approach to the management of our residential property. We will maintain clear and consistent processes encouraging the provision of information to tenants / contract holders and provide mechanisms for feedback and any formal complaints. Should tenants / contract holders encounter any problems, we have a formal tenant complaints process which can be found [here](#) on our National Trust website.

We aim to provide decent homes for people to live in and we may need to make repairs or improvements to a property throughout the term of a tenancy. We are committed to completing the compliance, repairs and maintenance for which we're responsible as efficiently as we can and we ask that tenants / contract holders work with us to report necessary repairs and provide access at appropriate times.

Rents

The market rent that we apply to our tenancies will reflect the condition of the property and any inherent disadvantages or benefits, and the terms of the tenancy. We review rents regularly and in accordance with any statutory requirements for the tenancy type.

Where a proposed increase to market rent appears particularly high due to the current rent being below the appropriate market rent, the increase will be discussed with the tenant / contract holder on a case-by-case basis and reflect the specific situation and the statutory rent review provisions for the tenancy type.