



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 now care for nearly 250,000 ha of land in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our properties include over 25,000 buildings of which 3,000 are let on short term residential occupancy agreements.

Many of our houses and cottages have been acquired as part of larger rural estates. This has often included estate villages where dwellings were historically provided to house estate workers however, we are not a social housing provider.

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 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, each has its own character and setting. This is the very diversity and local distinctiveness that the Trust celebrates and protects through its conservation work. We strive to maintain high standards of repair and compliance and a professional approach to the management of our let houses and cottages.

As a charity we are obliged to make the best use of our assets for the furtherance of our core purpose – which is to provide public benefit through our conservation work. We therefore adopt the general presumption that houses and cottages will be let at an open market rent, both at the start and throughout the tenancy.

Selection of tenants

We recognise that our properties and tenancies are in high demand. The Trust will take the following factors into account in selecting tenants for all lettings:

- the compatibility of the tenant with the nature of the property, for example its location, size, number of rooms, accessibility, garage/parking, garden;
- the need for tenants to be sympathetic to the nature and situation of the property and the Trust's aims to protect its character;

- the ability of the person to pay the rent and afford the running costs of the property (determined through financial references and a credit check);
- The Trust has a presumption against letting houses and cottages for second homes or for commercial use.

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

In some circumstances we will let property to our National Trust staff.

Note that in Wales all residential tenants are referred to as Contract Holders.

Relationships with tenants

The Trust values the role of its tenants in the care of the buildings they occupy and we want to build lasting relationships with good tenants. This will reduce turnover of occupiers, minimise the number of empty cottages and be of benefit to the property, the tenant, and the community. We recognise that we are viewed by tenants as providing long term homes and so greater security to tenants when compared to some other private Landlords.

We readily accept a responsibility to be a fair and reasonable landlord and we will review the terms and conditions of our standard tenancy agreements as practices change to ensure that they reflect an equitable balance of rights and obligations. We will adopt an open approach to the management of our residential property. We will maintain clear and consistent processes for the letting of vacant houses and cottages, encourage the provision of information to tenants and provide mechanisms for feedback and any formal complaints.

We aim to provide decent homes for people to live in and we may need to make repair or improvements to a property throughout the term of a tenancy.

We have a formal tenant complaints process which can be found [here](#) on our National Trust website.

Rents

The market rent that we apply to our tenancies will reflect any inherent disadvantages or benefits of the property, and the terms of the tenancy. Rent reviews will be undertaken every two years and in accordance with the terms of individual tenancies.

Where a proposed increase to market rent appears particularly high due to the current rent being well below the appropriate market rent, the increase may be stepped in order to reduce the impact on the tenant. The period and phasing of the steps will be negotiated to reflect the circumstances of the letting.