

Need more help?

For more information and advice on Localism and Housing please contact the Strategic Housing team.

Stacey Sleeman

Phone: 01872 224436

Email: stacey.sleeman@cornwall.gov.uk

Cathy Hadfield

Phone: 07528 983435

Email: cathy.hadfield@cornwall.gov.uk

Bitesize guides in this series

Localism Act:

- Housing
- Planning
- Neighbourhood plans
- Community right to challenge
- Assets of community value
- Freedoms, flexibility, transparency and governance

Prepared by:

Cornwall Council

Chief Executive's Department

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If you would like this information in another format please contact:

Cornwall Council
County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro TR1 3AY

Telephone: **0300 1234 100**

Email: enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk

www.cornwall.gov.uk

Localism Act Housing

A bitesize guide

Introduction

The Localism Bill proposes reforms that will mean more decisions about housing are taken locally, and make the system fairer and more effective.

The Localism Act and Housing

The Bill offers significant new freedoms and flexibilities and sets out the government's proposals including:

- To reform social housing.
- To give local authorities the powers to manage their waiting lists.
- Develop a national home swap programme for social tenants.
- Enable local authorities to fully discharge a homelessness duty by arranging an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Reform of social housing regulation.
- Replace the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system with a transparent, self-financing regime.

What does the Localism Act mean for you?

The Bill presents a number of challenges to the local authority at a strategic level and as a provider of social housing:

- A new duty to produce a Strategic Tenancy Policy to set out the factors social housing providers should have regard to in formulating their own tenancy policies.
- A new 'affordable rent' product allowing social landlords to charge up to 80% of market rents, as part of investment agreements for funding new affordable housing.
- The impact of affordable rents on tenants who work and are not in receipt of full Housing Benefit due to welfare reform changes planned from 2013.
- Greater freedom to set the policies about who should qualify to go on the register for social housing, although reasonable preference arrangements will remain in force.
- Ability to use private sector options to end a homeless duty, freeing up valuable social homes.

Myth buster

Existing social housing tenants will not lose their security of tenure as a result of tenure reform, including if they transfer or exchange.

There is no upper limit on the length of tenancy that can be offered.

Not all new tenancies will be 'for life' - minimum tenancy length will be five years - unless there are exceptional circumstances which may allow a lesser term.

Useful Links

[Plain English guide to the Localism Act:](#)