



## **Lewisham housing justice charter**

*The following proposals are being put forward by the Lewisham branch of the London Renters Union to all candidates in the upcoming Lewisham council elections. We're asking all candidates to commit publicly to supporting these proposals.*

### **1. Hold landlords accountable**

Landlords provide unsafe housing, refuse repairs and carry out illegal evictions because Lewisham Council are letting them get away with it. Lewisham Council should:

#### **Take a zero tolerance approach to landlords who deny us our rights.**

- Publish targets on increasing the number of fines and legal actions taken against landlords who deny us our rights.

#### **Landlord licensing with teeth: expand and inspect**

- Complete expansion of licensing borough-wide and inspect homes to make sure they meet legal standards before giving landlords a licence. Support tenants when enforcement action is taken against landlords.

#### **Guarantee no borders in housing.**

- Pledge that there will be no collaboration between their work enforcing housing standards and the Home Office or Border Force. No one should have their right to safe and decent housing at risk because of their immigration status.

#### **Stop illegal evictions.**

- Take action against landlords that carry out illegal evictions, including prosecution, and ensure adequate support for tenants. Properly fund tenancy relations teams to investigate landlord offences.
- Ensure police do not help landlords carry out illegal evictions. The police are not above the law.

### **2. Bring the rents down**

Rising rents are leaving people fighting to survive, with little left for food or other essentials, and are forcing people away from their communities. Lewisham Council should add its voice to the movement for rent controls and:

- Pass a motion calling for effective rent controls that bring the rents down
- Put pressure on the Labour party to push for rent regulation in parliament
- Collect and publish data on rent levels
- Ensure that 'affordable' rents in new developments are genuinely affordable

### **3. High quality social housing for Lewisham**

Lewisham Council can make sure that we all have an affordable and secure place to call home by building social housing. We're asking the council to:

#### **Build 2000 more social rent homes by 2026**

- Lewisham Council should, at a minimum, match Southwark's plans for house building - they are aiming for 11,000 new homes over 20 years, borrowing as much as possible against the Housing Revenue Account.
- Set out clear quality standards, especially on insulation and build quality

#### **Accountability and standards**

- Set out steps to improve the process for social housing maintenance and repairs.

#### **Disability justice**

- Ensure all social housing is pre-adapted or easily adaptable for disabled people and their carers

#### **Tackle the climate crisis**

- All new homes built by the council or with the council's support should meet high environmental standards
- The council should set out targets for fitting solar panels on new homes.

### **4. Stop forcing people out of Lewisham**

Everyone has the right to stay in their community and with their families and support networks. Lewisham Council must:

- Offer all people living in temporary accommodation the opportunity to be re-housed within Lewisham unless they choose otherwise.
- Stop pushing people living in temporary accommodation into private housing, and declaring them 'intentionally homeless' if they refuse an offer.
  - The Localism Act 2011 amends Pt 7 of the Housing Act 1996 - which gave councils increased power to offer homeless people private accommodation in 'certain limited circumstances'. We demand Lewisham stop using this as common practice .