



Lewisham Housing Justice Charter

Lewisham's housing system is broken. Landlords make big profits but rents are too high and our homes are often unsafe. This housing crisis makes our lives harder and has a big impact on our mental well-being and our physical health. Councils hold key powers in our housing system but are letting renters down. We're asking Lewisham Council to work with us to make big changes to the housing system so it works for us, not private profit.

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; and targets for increasing the number of tenancy relations officers.

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, including data sharing. 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.
- Adapt current stock to meet the needs of tenants e.g. with large families
- 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.
- Take urgent action to address disrepair at Milford Towers in Catford.

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.