

Greater Manchester Good Landlord Charter Private Rented Sector Membership Assessment Framework

Overview

The Charter's criteria, grouped into 7 categories, exceed the legal minimums to promote responsible and ethical property management. Membership with the Charter strengthens tenant protections and improves the overall quality of the renting experience for both landlords and tenants. It provides recognition to landlords who go above and beyond for their tenants.

The Charter was developed through significant engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the public. The Implemented Unit was established to further develop this assessment framework, which has been done in partnership with wider stakeholders, the Governing Board, and signed off by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

This document sets out the criteria which a Private Rented Sector landlord will need to meet to become a Member of the Good Landlord Charter. The criteria for membership have been set deliberately high; the Charter is not about minimum standards; it is about recognising that Good Landlords will deliver housing and services which are above the legal minimum.

The requirements of the Charter, detailed in this document, is the responsibility of any persons involved with the management of the property, including landlords themselves and any letting agent or property management agencies who have delegated responsibility to act on the landlord's behalf.

We do not expect that any landlord will move immediately from being a Supporter to becoming a full Member of the Charter. We will want the Supporter Landlord to undertake a self-assessment against the Good Landlord Charter criteria and then draw up an Action Plan to enable them in due course to make an application for full Member status.

The Implementation Unit will provide advice, support, and guidance to landlord to achieve each of the criteria via casework, template policies, training, and learning and networking events.

The Good Landlord Charter Implementation Unit will produce a comprehensive Guide for tenants of Greater Manchester Good Landlord Charter Members, which will detail how their Good Landlord has agreed to comply with all of the standards.

The details outlined in this document are subject to change following review of its implementation, any changes will be clearly and explicitly communicated to landlords, tenants, and relevant stakeholders.

Affordable

1. Clear and fair rent review or setting process

Explanation:

Landlords will ensure that their rent setting and review process is transparent and has a clear rationale for calculating rents.

Rent reviews resulting in an increase will only be implemented once every 12 months, and the tenant/s will be provided with 3 months written notice.

When there is an in tenancy rent increase, this should not exceed CPI + 1%, unless reasonably justified. Relevant calculation and rationale for any rent increase must be clearly communicated to tenant/s, when the written notice is provided, and shared with The Implementation Unit. The tenant/s will also be provided with guidance on how they can appeal rent increases to the First Tier Tribunal.

Requirement:

A Rent Policy statement that details:

- The asking rent price, with a rationale for this.
- Approach to rent increases:
 - In tenancy increases will only be applied once in a 12-month period, with 3-months written notice.
 - An assumption that any in tenancy rent increases will be kept below CPI + 1% unless reasonably justified.
 - Relevant calculation and rationale for making a rent increases will be clearly communicated to tenant/s and shared with The Implementation Unit.
 - Advice to tenant/s on their rights to challenge rent increases directly with landlord/agent, and then if not resolved, at the First Tier Tribunal.

2. Giving a fair amount of time to tenants who struggle to pay their rent

Explanation:

Landlords will act with empathy to tenant/s experiencing financial difficulty, by having a transparent, communicative, and supportive approach to rent arrears. Their approach will focus on preventing escalation of rent arrears at the earliest stage.

Requirement:

A Rent Arrears Policy Statement which details:

- Landlords will contact tenant/s from the first missed payment.
- Landlords will seek to work with tenant/s in arrears to agree a sustainable arrears repayment plan.
- Landlords will provide signposting advice and guidance on budgeting and financial support services.
- Landlords will be understanding that some groups have higher living costs than others (e.g. those with additional costs associated with a disability).
- Landlords will commit to consideration of tenant/s's individual circumstances during periods of sickness or unemployment, encouraging tenants to share DWP evidence regarding payments.

This will form the Greater Manchester PreAction Protocol.

3. Properties meet EPC C as a minimum within achievable timescales

Explanation:

Member landlords must ensure all homes currently meet EPC D as a minimum and should meet EPC C by 2028, with a clear and funded improvement programme to meet that deadline. Homes should be energy efficient to cut bills for tenant/s.

Requirement:

An Energy Performance Plan detailing:

- Evidence of EPC C or EPC D with a commitment to achieve EPC C by 2028, including projected costs and timeline of work.
- Commitment to access any retrofit funding they are eligible for.
- Commitment not to delay reasonably achievable improvements.
- Commitment to implementing additional measures to lower bills for tenant/s (e.g. accepting requests for installation of smart meters).

If property is exempt, as per government classification, then the Exemptions Register will be noted and evidenced, with reviews taking place accordingly. Where exemptions are in place, signposting towards small measures to lower bills for tenant/s will be provided.

Inclusive

4. Make or facilitate reasonable adaptations to properties, where needed by the tenant, and where applicable join adaptations register

Explanation:

Landlords must review all requests for adaptations in their properties. The process for requesting adaptations will be communicated clearly to tenants. Landlords will engage with tenants and local authorities to access and utilise the Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations funding. Any current adaptations will be communicated to prospective tenant/s.

Requirement:

An Adaptations Policy Statement that details:

- Landlord's commitment to engage with tenants and local authorities to access and utilise the Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations funding.
- Process for tenants requesting adaptations and how these will be reviewed by the landlord, with responses fed back to tenant/s and the Implementation Unit.
- List of any current adaptations (relevant to each property).
- Where the property already has adaptations, this information is included in any advertising.

When possible, this information will be published on an Adaptations Register.

5. Make a demonstrable commitment to accepting tenants from any background

Explanation:

Landlords will agree not to exclude any prospective tenant/s based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Landlords will acknowledge that discrimination is not always overt; indirect exclusion can occur through practices, assumptions, or criteria that unintentionally disadvantage individuals from protected groups. To address this, landlords will commit to recognising and challenging unconscious bias in their decision making processes. They will not have blanket exclusions for any tenant/s due to being in receipt of benefits. They should not exclude tenants with children unless there is a valid reason why the property is not suitable for such households (e.g. child at height risk).

Requirement:

An Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement that details:

- Commitment to not discriminate against tenants based on the nine Protected Characteristics.
 - Evidence that they have undergone Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training and/or networking events covering each of the nine protected characteristics.
 - Commitment to not directly or indirectly exclude prospective tenants due to being in receipt of benefits or those with children, and willingness to learn more about accepting these tenant/s.
 - Approach to equitable advertising practices.
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Private & Secure

6. Tenants are able to make reasonable changes to their home

Explanation:

Landlords will accept requests for reasonable alterations to their properties. The scope for and process for requesting alterations will be communicated clearly to tenants.

Requirement:

An Alterations Policy Statement that details:

- Scope for alterations (relevant to each property).
 - Process for requesting alterations and how responses will be fed back to tenants.
 - A commitment to not act unreasonably when considering requests.
 - A commitment to consider whether tenant/s might be reimbursed for works they carry out.
 - In each case, whether there is a requirement on the tenant/s to restore the property to its original condition when leaving – the length of tenancy should be a factor in this requirement.
 - Any agreement is clearly communicated in writing to the tenant/s.
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7. Access to a tenant's home should be by agreement except in an emergency

Explanation:

For non emergency visits, landlords will only attend properties by mutual agreement with the tenant/s.

Requirement:

An Access to Property Statement that details:

- Scope for access (non-emergency and emergency visits, including what is considered an emergency).
- Commitment to only access property at a time agreed by the tenant/s in non-emergency situations.
- Process for requesting and mutually agreeing non-emergency visits.

Responsive

8. Published, timely, target response times

Explanation:

Landlords will clearly communicate reasonable response times for different requests for service, including types of repairs.

Requirement:

A Repairs Statement that details:

- Scope for repairs.
 - Process for notifying the landlord of repairs.
 - Target response times for each type of report (emergency, urgent, routine repairs, health & safety, antisocial behaviour, and safeguarding).
 - What level of compensation will be provided to tenants for loss of service/amenity.
 - An explanation that in some cases these timescales may be missed because of access issues or awaiting spare parts.
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9. Clear complaints policy with an independent stage

Explanation:

Landlords will adopt a complaints policy that communicates clearly the process for tenant/s to raise and escalate complaints.

Requirement:

A Complaints Policy that details:

- Scope of complaints.
- Process for raising complaints.
- Target response times for each type of complaint.
- How tenants can escalate complaints to an independent agency that the landlord has membership with.

Safe & Decent

10. Effective approach to property inspection

Explanation:

Landlords must commit to annual inspections at mutually agreed times with tenants, with results shared with tenants. Additionally, every 6 months tenants will be sent a voluntary property inspection form to complete.

Requirement:

An Inspection Statement that details:

- Commitment to carry out inspections at a pre-arranged time with tenants.
 - Scope of inspections.
 - Commitment to carry out an inventory and accompanying action plan, where needed.
 - All reports of inspections, whether completed by landlord or external contractor, should be shared with the tenant in an accessible format.
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11. Fit and Proper person check

Explanation:

Landlords must make sufficient and reasonable enquiries to satisfy themselves that any persons involved with the management of the house, including themselves, are “fit and proper persons.” They should have a safeguarding policy detailing how safety and dignity will be upheld and how any incidents would be reported.

Requirement:

Landlords must self certify and consent to a third-party check to assess whether there has been any:

- Offences involving fraud, dishonesty, violence, or drugs, or any offence listed in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offenders Act 2003.
- Unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, or disability.
- Breaches of housing or landlord and tenant law.
- Confirmation that if the landlord’s property requires a licence (HMO or selective licensing scheme), the licence has been obtained and is valid.

12. Any works/repairs done by qualified or competent person

Explanation:

There is an expectation that repairs will be undertaken by qualified tradespersons.

Requirement:

Landlords must confirm that any works are undertaken by qualified persons and maintain a repairs logbook setting out who has undertaken works to the property, with evidence of competence. Evidence of qualifications must be provided for specialised jobs.

13. Adopt standards on what should happen at the start of a tenancy

Explanation:

Landlords will communicate their approach to completing remedial work or amendments prior to the tenancy commencing.

Requirement:

A published Remedial Works Statement that details:

- Scope of remedial works.
- Commitment to complete works within a mutually agreed timeframe with tenant/s.

- Process for requesting remedial works prior to tenancy commencement.
- Agreed timeframes for completion.
- Approach to inventory, which includes being cosigned by tenant/s and landlord.

14. Space standards and amenities

Explanation:

Landlords must ensure properties meet the new Decent Homes Standard. Once the standard is published the framework will align, until then the Implementation Unit will use the current proposed standard This includes:

- No Category 1 Hazards at the start of tenancy.
- Home in a reasonable state of repair with safe and functional facilities
- Adequate insulation and soundproofing.
- Adequate size and layout for household need.
- Reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- Free from damp and mould
- Communal areas safe, clean, accessible, secure, and maintained to the standard present when tenancy commenced.

Requirement:

A policy statement detailing commitment to maintain the property and communal areas to the Decent Homes Standard. Evidence may include tenant consent for surveys, reactive inspections, photographs, and a repairs logbook. Landlords will commit that their properties meet the Decent Homes Standard, and each tenant/s inspection will include a question on space standards and amenities.

Supportive

15. 'Commitment to Refer' tenants at risk of homelessness to council

Explanation:

Landlords will provide advice and guidance to tenant/s at risk of homelessness, and where granted permission by the tenant/s, refer them to the local authority.

Requirement:

A Commitment to Refer Statement that details:

- Commitment to provide tenant/s with advice and guidance at risk of homelessness.
- Commitment to learn more about homelessness in Greater Manchester, whether through Good Landlord Charter training or introductions/signposting to local organisations.
- Landlords will share signposting resources for local services (based on borough) with tenant/s.

16. Transparent, easy to understand contracts

Explanation:

Landlords will ensure all contracts are easy to understand and transparent. This will include an additional summary document to accompany the contract.

Requirement:

The tenancy agreement should be easy to understand and transparent, covering:

- Tenant name, landlord's name, and the address of the property being let.
- The date the tenancy began.
- Details of whether other people are allowed the use of the property and, if so, which rooms.
- The duration of the tenancy.
- The amount of rent payable, how often and when it should be paid, and how often and when it can be increased.
- What the rent includes (e.g. council tax or fuel).
- Whether the landlord will provide any services (e.g. laundry, maintenance of common parts, meals) and whether there are service charges for these.
- The notice period tenant and landlord need to give to end the tenancy – depending on tenancy type.

Additionally, landlords will provide a summary document that accompanies the contract, which can be translated and is accessible.

17. Adopting advertising / viewing standards

Explanation:

Landlords will have an empathetic approach to viewings specific to the individual needs of both prospective tenant/s and sitting tenant/s. Adverts should be true and reflective of the property, with all material information made available.

Requirement:

A Viewings Policy/Statement that details:

- Commitment to take into consideration the individual needs of both the prospective tenant/s and sitting tenant/s.
- Commitment to change the method and mode of the viewing based on the accessibility needs of the prospective tenant/s.
- All material information should be shared in the advert, including:
 - All charges and costs.
 - Property characteristics (information that could change a tenant's decision should not be omitted).
 - Property condition.
 - Any restrictions on the property.
 - Any requirements to use third-party suppliers (e.g. certain energy providers).
 - Any adaptations at the property.

18. Providing/signposting tenants to useful information

Explanation:

Landlords will provide advice and guidance to tenant/s on an array of matters, including those specifically relevant to the property or location.

Requirement:

An Advice, Support and Guidance Statement that details:

- Commitment to provide tenant/s with advice and guidance on key issues.
 - Advice relevant to specific property/location (e.g. flood risk area).
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Well Managed

19. Landlords must be able to demonstrate accreditation or training, or use an accredited managing agent

Explanation:

Landlords must be able to demonstrate accreditation or training or use an accredited managing agent.

Requirement:

Landlords must demonstrate one of the following:

- Membership with a reputable accreditation scheme, which includes training.
- 10 hours of continuing professional development training on landlord responsibilities.
- Use of an accredited managing agent.

Additionally, landlords must commit to ongoing continuous professional development.

20. Clear start and end of tenancy process

Explanation:

Landlords will have a Start and End of Tenancy checklist and action plan process to clearly communicate the process to tenant/s.

Requirement:

A Start and End of Tenancy checklist and action plan provided to prospective and sitting tenant/s.