



## **Item 7.1: Questions from Members of the Public**

### **Full Council – 6 July 2026**

**1. Question from Chi Wong to Councillor Robert Johnson (Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters)**

As a tenant living in the private rented sector, can the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters provide further details on the protections included within the Renters Right Act regarding the renewal of tenancy agreements and support the Council is able to provide for tenants in terms of advice and guidance relating to their rights under the Act.

**Response:**

The Renters' Rights Act is a transformational landmark for private renters.

Under the Renters' Rights Act, the approach to tenancy renewals has fundamentally changed.

Fixed term Assured Shorthold Tenancies have been abolished and replaced with Assured Periodic Tenancies, meaning that tenants no longer need to renew their tenancy agreement at the end of a fixed term. Instead, tenancies continue on a rolling basis until either the tenant chooses to leave or the landlord regains possession using one of the statutory grounds set out in legislation. Section 21 "no fault" evictions have also been abolished, providing tenants with greater security of tenure.

In practical terms, Private Housing Services working in partnership with Housing Needs are supporting the implementation of these protections by:

- Providing clear advice and guidance to tenants on their rights under the Act, including security of tenure, notice periods and protections from unfair eviction.
- Offering tenancy sustainment services to help prevent homelessness and support tenants to remain in their homes.
- Providing early intervention and mediation services where disputes arise between landlords and tenants.
- Assisting tenants to challenge unlawful evictions, excessive rent increases or discriminatory practices.

- Signposting tenants to specialist legal advice and advocacy services where required.
- Working proactively with landlords to encourage compliance with the new legislative framework.
- Using enforcement powers where appropriate to address breaches of housing legislation and poor management practices.

We are also making sure that information relating to the Renters' Rights Act is readily accessible through **our** website, customer contact channels and community engagement activities.

In relation to tenancy agreements specifically, tenants should be advised that landlords can no longer require them to sign a new fixed term agreement in order to remain in their home. Tenancies continue automatically unless ended by the tenant or through a lawful possession process. Rent increases are also subject to statutory controls, with landlords generally limited to one increase per year through the prescribed legal process.

By providing timely advice, effective enforcement and targeted support, we want to play an important role in ensuring tenants benefit fully from the enhanced protections introduced by the Renters' Rights Act.

The Housing Needs Service have curated a new team to help support the department's response and implementation of the new legislation, combining the new opportunities the Act brings to sustain Private Rented Sector (PRS) tenancies in the borough, and to support and work collaboratively with the Private Housing Services team under the new enforcement powers relating to Landlord compliance.

The recently formed Private Rented Sector Sustainment & Compliance Team consists of 3 specialised senior officers, who are on hand to intervene with early rent concerns, tenant and landlord disputes before the situation escalates or the Landlord is seeking to end the tenancy, as well as any scenario where there is the possibility that the tenancy can either be sustained, or, where there is evidence to suggest a breach by the Landlord under the Act.

The aim is to grasp tenancy concerns ahead of them spiralling, using early intervention and pro-active assistance to resolve the issues with the tenant and Landlord, in turn avoiding the need (where a statutory duty has not been triggered) of a homelessness application and the cost and resource associated with that, as well as the potential need to use costly temporary accommodation further down the line.

The team can be reached via their dedicated inbox which is monitored throughout the day. Incoming enquiries are received directly from residents and landlords, as well as internal referrals from colleagues in Homelessness Service, and other teams such as Brent Hubs where there is potential to sustain a tenancy and keep residents in their home.

The inbox is already proving to be busy with lots of requests for advice and assistance in relation to PRS tenancies, rent concerns, and scenarios of Landlord harassment and verbally ended tenancies.

We recognise the importance of education for residents on the vast changes that the Renters Rights Act brings. If residents are unaware of the changes, they may not be aware of their rights, and in turn could be exposed to potential unlawful action by their Landlords, or if their Landlord has committed a breach.

The PRS Sustainment & Compliance Team are responsible for contributing to the continued education of their colleagues on the Act and key legislative changes, and for helping support information sharing, and providing advice to residents on their new rights.

The team are connecting with a number of internal and external partners to ensure consistent messaging is made through means that are accessible to tenants, as well as a leaflet and pamphlet to supplement the information made available on our website relating to the changes.

For residents seeking advice on their rights under the Act, any tenancy related concerns, or any questions related to the Renters Rights Act, enquiries can be sent to the team on:

[PRSSustainmentAndCompliance@brent.gov.uk](mailto:PRSSustainmentAndCompliance@brent.gov.uk)

2. **Question from Ranya Dauteva to Councillor Robert Johnson (Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters) and Councillor Tina Amadi (Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Cost of Living Support)**

From my experience as a sole parent and full-time carer of my son, please could you advise why families such as mine caring for disabled children continue to face lengthy delays in housing assessments and Blue Badge applications despite providing medical evidence and supporting documents.

Families in these type of circumstances require stability, routine and appropriate housing with delays in the assessment of housing and Blue Badge applications having a direct impact on wellbeing, safety and daily life.

Can the Cabinet Members therefore explain what action is being taken to reduce waiting times for disabled families and provide clearer communication regarding these type of applications and assessments?

**Response:**

**Response from Councillor Robert Johnson:**

Any household experiencing housing need is able to apply to join the Council's housing register (the waiting list for social housing). In more urgent or serious circumstances, households may instead make an application under homelessness legislation. In both cases, the Council undertakes an assessment of the household's circumstances to determine whether the relevant statutory thresholds are met and what duties, if any, are owed.

There should not be undue delay in the assessment itself. However, where an assessment identifies that a household requires alternative suitable accommodation, it is often at this stage that delays arise. These delays are not typically due to the assessment process but rather reflect the acute shortage of affordable housing within Brent.

There is a significant lack of available accommodation across both the private rented sector and the social housing sector. This scarcity means that, even where a need is clearly established, it can take a considerable amount of time to secure suitable accommodation that meets the household's needs.

The Council recognises these challenges and is actively working to increase the supply of affordable housing. This includes delivery through the Council's New Homes Programme, the acquisition of properties via Invest for Brent, and the use of leasing schemes to expand the pool of available accommodation.

**Response from Councillor Tina Amadi:**

In relation to Blue Badge applications, our target for completing the assessment is 10 working days. However, where applications are more complex, or where further medical or Occupational Therapy evidence is required, assessments can take longer.

Once the application has been approved residents can expect to receive their Blue Badge within 15 working days.

Unfortunately, we experienced short-term resourcing pressures during the year-end period which contributed to delays in some cases with the longest processing time at 23 days. The service is now back at full capacity, and over 100 additional applications have been assessed in the past month. The most urgent cases, including those with terminal conditions, are being prioritised and we expect to have returned to our processing target of 10 working days for the majority of applications within the next two to three months.



## **Item 7.2: Questions from Brent Youth Parliament**

### **Full Council – 6 July 2026**

1. **Question from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Jake Rubin (Cabinet Member for Children Services, Employment & Climate Action)**

When can we expect to see progress on the Educational Maintenance Allowance being introduced for young people in the borough?

**Response:**

The Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was a key manifesto commitment of Brent Labour Party, and introducing it is a top priority of this administration. The Brent EMA will play a key role in providing practical cost of living support to young people in Brent schools, while helping to tackle poverty and the inequalities of outcome that affect young people in education across the borough.

We have commenced development work on the proposal to introduce an Educational Maintenance Allowance for young people studying post-16 in Brent. This involves research on current EMA systems (for example in Scotland, Wales and more locally in Tower Hamlets), analysis of Brent post-16 data and developing costed options for a Brent EMA system. The options being developed may include the pupils who would be eligible for an EMA, proposed EMA rates and monitoring processes. It is likely that eligibility for the EMA would be linked to attendance.

As part of this work, consideration will need to be given to identifying a budget as part of the budget planning process and well as consultation with stakeholders, such as the Brent Youth Parliament.

The expectation is that the EMA could be introduced from September 2027, if not sooner.