

Appendix 2 – Report Summary: Anonymised Consultation Responses

Purpose of the Consultation

To gather feedback on proposed amendments to the tenancy agreement, including the shift from a 48-week rent model with four rent-free weeks to a consistent 52-week rent model, alongside updates to service charges, repairs responsibilities, succession, pets and parking.

Profile of Respondents

- Predominantly older tenants (55+), including a significant proportion aged 65–84
- High levels of long-term illness or disability
- Many receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit
- A large proportion not in employment or retired

This represents a tenant group more sensitive to changes affecting budgeting routines.

Awareness and Understanding of the Proposal

- Most respondents understood the proposal does not increase annual rent
- Some confusion remained around UC/HB payment cycles and timing of changes
- Clear communication was a consistent request

Views on Moving to 52-Week Rent Collection

Supportive Views

A significant minority of respondents were **supportive or neutral** towards the proposal, particularly where:

- Alignment with monthly UC/HB cycles
- Preference for predictable weekly/monthly payments
- Reduced confusion compared to rent-free weeks

Concerns and Objections

- Reliance on rent-free weeks to manage winter bills, Christmas costs, arrears
- Anxiety about UC/HB recalculation and risk of administrative errors
- Worries about change rather than the proposal itself
- Higher stress levels for vulnerable tenants during transition

Financial Resilience

- Rent-free weeks are relied upon to:
 - Manage **Christmas and Easter costs**
 - Pay higher **winter fuel bills**
 - Catch up on arrears or essential household expenses
- Many respondents stated they **budget specifically around these weeks** and view them as a vital coping mechanism during the cost-of-living crisis.

Support Needs Identified

- Where a move to 52 weeks is implemented, respondents identified a need for:
- Assistance notifying UC/HB
- Budgeting advice and financial inclusion support
- Practical examples ahead of implementation
- Reassurance that tenants will not lose out during the transition
- Other Key Tenancy Agreement Issues Raised

Service Charges

- Significant concern about:
 - **Lack of clarity** on what service charges cover
 - Perceived **poor value for money**, especially where services are not visible
 - Fear of **new or increased charges**, particularly for older and fixed-income households

Transparency and itemisation were repeatedly requested.

Other Tenancy Agreement Issues:

- Desire for more transparency on service charges
- Concerns over expected repairs responsibilities
- Requests for clarity on pets, succession and tenancy terms
- Importance of proportionate enforcement of ASB and parking rules

Overall Summary

While many respondents support or are neutral toward the 52-week model, there is significant reliance on the current 48-week approach as a coping mechanism. The

proposal is seen as logical but change-intensive, particularly for vulnerable tenants. Clear communication and strong transition support are essential.