

Quick Guide

Tenant Photograph



NORWICH
City Council

Tenant
approved

This guide explains our requirement to take a passport style photograph of all applicants when they sign for a tenancy with Norwich City Council.

This policy applies to all new tenants, but does not apply to leaseholders or licensees.

Why do we need a photograph of new tenants?

We are committed to tackling tenancy fraud and unlawful subletting. Subletting is where a tenant rents the whole of their property to someone else, which is a serious breach of the tenancy. Social housing is in short supply and unauthorised subletting deprives genuine applicants, many of whom have a desperate need and may have been waiting to be housed for a long time.

Tenants who sublet their homes often make a profit from the full market rent they receive from their subtenants, taking advantage of the lower rent they pay to the council.

Therefore part of the council's strategy for tackling unlawful subletting is to take a photograph

of each applicant as they sign for their new tenancy.

What will the photograph be used for?

Whenever we visit you, for example home visits or tenancy health checks, we can take the photograph along so we know the right person is living in the property.

Even if our staff changes we will still have an accurate picture of what the original tenant looks like, which will help us verify their identity and tackle tenancy fraud.

What kind of photo is needed?

Applicants have their photograph taken when signing for a new tenancy. It is the same type of photograph needed for a passport e.g. a clear picture of a full face.

Can an applicant refuse to have their photograph taken?

It is important that we have a photograph of all new tenants. If we made this optional then those tenants who intend to commit tenancy fraud by subletting their home could just refuse to let us take a photograph. Clearly, this is not acceptable so it is something that we must insist upon if you'd like to become our tenant.

Staff will deal sensitively with any concerns and make arrangements where possible to make sure that a photograph is taken and the tenancy can begin. But if an applicant still refuses to let us take a photograph the council will be forced to withdraw the offer of tenancy.

Can an applicant refuse on grounds of religion or belief?

If an applicant usually wears clothing that covers part of the face as part of their religion or belief then we will discuss with them the most acceptable way to allow a staff member to

verify their identity or take their photograph.

Staff will deal sensitively with this situation. Photographs will be taken in a private room and by a female member of staff if requested. In exceptional circumstances we may accept an alternative means of confirming identity, such as a signature.

How will the photograph be stored and disposed of?

We will treat the photograph in the same way we treat other personal data and make sure that we comply with Data Protection principles where they apply.

We will follow these guidelines when handling personal information:

- storing paper copies of personal information in secure filing cabinets;
- making sure computer records are kept securely;
- only working with companies who will keep your information confidential;
- destroying confidential information before discarding.

Will the photograph be shared with anyone else?

Where we employ a company to provide a service on our behalf or to act as our agent, they will have access to your personal data. They will only be able to access data that is appropriate to allow them do their job, in line with the access our staff are given to manage your tenancy effectively.

As with all personal data, we will not share your photograph with other third party organisations unless we have a legitimate need to manage your tenancy or where we

have a statutory obligation e.g. to assist in preventing a crime or to combat tenancy fraud.

Further information

If you would like any more information on this or any of our policies or services call us on **0344 980 3333** 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Calls are charged as 01 or 02 numbers, depending on your phone package. This means you can use mobile or landline 'inclusive' minutes to call us for free or visit our website **www.norwich.gov.uk**

If you require this leaflet in another language or format eg large print, CD, audio cassette or Braille **please contact Norwich City Council.**

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