SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ TENANTS: **AN INCLUSIVE TOOLKIT FOR LANDLORDS**

GREATER MANCHESTER GOOD LANDLORD CHARTER

akt

LGBTQ+ EQUALITY PANEL

LGBT FOUNDATION

WHY DO WE NEED THIS TOOLKIT?

LGBTQ+ people are more likely to rent than the general population, and more likely to have a poor experience when renting their home. (Good Landlord Charter Equality Impact Assessment)

They're more likely to be in unstable or shared accommodation, which is more stressful and can lead to poor mental health. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

In particular, young, disabled and neurodiverse LGBTQ+ tenants may need a more understanding and supportive approach from their landlord.

This toolkit's aim is to support you, as landlords, to provide an inclusive service for your tenants.

It gives you an insight into the issues LGBTQ+ tenants face at each stage of their tenancy, and highlights some of the data that demonstrates their experiences, alongside some real life stories to help you to understand more.

It explains how the Charter addresses the issues, and gives you some practical advice on what you can do to be inclusive as a landlord.

Throughout the toolkit, you will see reference to sources for the evidence cited. There are links to all of these sources on the final page.

LGBT FOUNDATION

akt

LGBTQ+ EQUALITY PANEL

This toolkit has been developed in conjunction with the LGBT Foundation, akt and the Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Equality Panel.

THE GOOD LANDLORD CHARTER CRITERIA

21 CRITERIA

These house symbols are used throughout this toolkit and tell you which of the Charter's criteria are being discussed.

AFFORDABLE

1. Clear and fair rent review or setting process
2. Giving a fair amount of time to tenants who struggle to pay their rent
3. Properties meet EPC C as a minimum, within achievable timescales
4. Not using mandatory rent arrears ground (social landlords only)

INCLUSIVE

5. Make or facilitate reasonable adaptations to properties, where needed by the tenant, and where applicable join an adaptations register
6. Make a demonstrable commitment to accepting tenants from any background

PRIVATE & SECURE

7. Tenants are able to make reasonable changes to their home
8. Access to a tenant's home should be by agreement, except in an emergency

RESPONSIVE

9. Published, timely, target response times
10. Clear complaints policy, with an independent stage

SAFE & SECURE

11. Effective approach to property inspection
12. Fit and proper person check
13. Any work/repairs done by a qualified or competent person
14. Adopt standards on what should happen at the start of a tenancy
15. Space standards and amenities

SUPPORTIVE

16. 'Commitment to Refer' tenants at risk of homelessness to council
17. Transparent, easy to understand contracts
18. Adopting advertising / viewing standards
19. Providing / signposting tenants to useful information

WELL-MANAGED

20. Landlord must be able to demonstrate accreditation or training, or use an accredited managing agent
21. Clear start and end-of-tenancy process

INCLUSIVE TOOLKIT
FOR LANDLORDS

PRE-TENANCY

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

LGBTQ+ tenants have often experienced discrimination in renting before.

EVIDENCE

LGBTQ+ tenants report worse outcomes as private renters than is the average for the population (Charter Equality Impact Assessment).

"Some of my neighbours have expressed homophobic views. I'm scared to go to the communal bin area in case they are waiting there. I know there is no CCTV there. I feel like I need to video every time I leave my home in case I am attacked. It takes me 20 minutes to hype myself up to leave the house."

Caller to the LGBT Foundation helpline

"My neighbours rent their property from a landlord. I have complained about noise and harassment from the neighbour but the landlord is not interested. I've since found out that the landlord has been reported to the police for homophobic behaviour. My neighbour has used really abusive language, and thrown dog faeces over the fence which led to a rat infestation."

Another caller to the helpine

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do acknowledge and prepare for diversity.

Do make a visible commitment to inclusion. You could wear a rainbow badge or lanyard, or use a rainbow logo on your website.

Do have a welcome pack, which explains your standards, so tenants know what to expect. Go through it with tenants.

Do show empathy from the start.

Do not assume tenants will match your view of the cultural norm.

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

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

5

To fulfil this criteria landlords must undertake EDI training which includes discrimination against LGBTQ+ tenants.

This toolkit will also sit as part of a suite of resources to support landlords.

The Charter also supports landlords to develop empathetic, supportive relationships through good communication from the start of the tenancy, with a series of policies that allow the landlord to make their approach to the tenancy clear to tenants from day one.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Lettings agents may not behave as inclusively as landlords would expect.

This can include taking photographs of a home that is due to be advertised, without permission from the sitting tenants, leading to private photos or decorations (e.g. rainbow flags) being made public.

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do work with letting agents that have shared values.

Do have a policy in place for lettings agents signed by landlord and tenant, so that the tenant knows what the landlord expects.

Do make sure the tenant knows they can contact you if they have any concerns about the agent.

EVIDENCE

LGBTQ+ tenants report discrimination when looking for a new home (Charter Equality Impact Assessment).

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

Champion of the Charter programme for letting agents

The Charter has a programme for agents called Champions of the Charter.

This is for agents that support the aims of the Charter and raise awareness of it among their landlords.

While we do not assess Champions in the same way as we assess landlords, we do expect them to uphold the values of the Charter.

GREATER MANCHESTER
GOOD LANDLORD CHARTER
CHAMPION

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Neurodiversity, poor literacy, or having English as an additional language can mean that documents are hard to understand.

EVIDENCE

Neurodiverse people are more likely to be LGBTQ+. (The Brain Charity)

Many people have low literacy skills and so may struggle with complex documents. (The National Literacy Trust)

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do have clear policy statements, which are easily accessible and written in plain English.

Do make your adverts clear and don't leave room for interpretation.

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

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

5

CRITERIA 16
Transparent and easy to understand contracts

16

Our inclusive criteria number 5 incorporates being inclusive of all tenants.

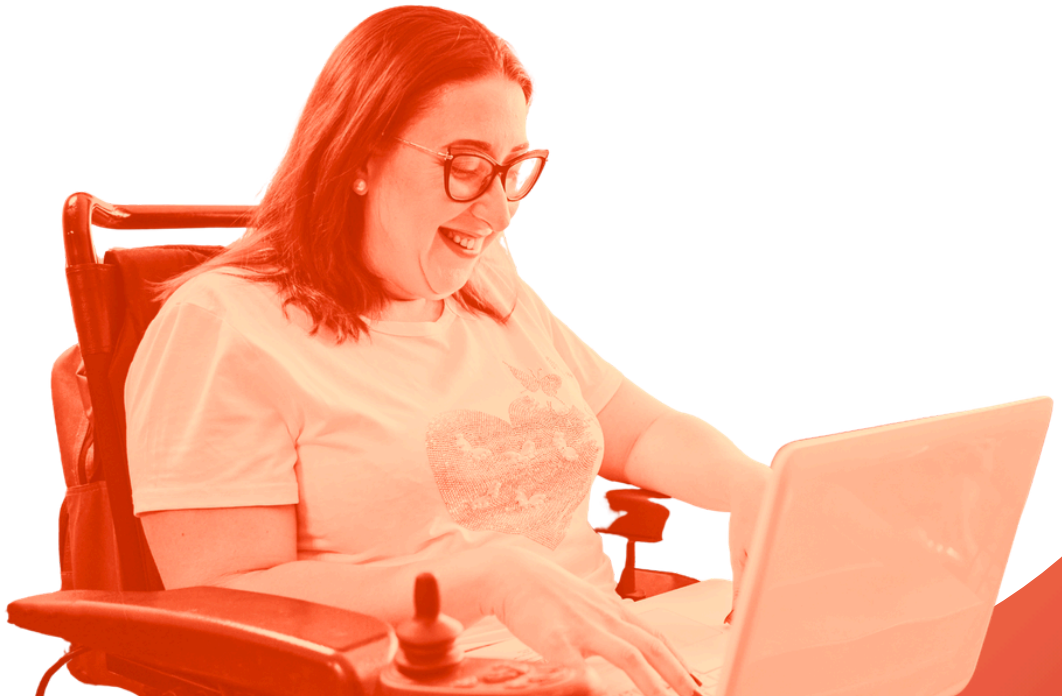
Supportive criteria 16 expects landlords to provide a one page summary of the tenancy agreement that covers the key pieces of information to ensure tenants understand what they are committing to.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Disabled tenants need to be aware of adaptations and limitations to accessibility

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do fully consider enquiries from prospective tenants who need adaptations, but also accept when your property is not fully accessible and be clear about this.



EVIDENCE

LGBTQ+ people are more likely to have a disability. (Equal Lives)

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 4

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

4

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Trans tenants can encounter discrimination, or negative reactions, when their name or gender marker on official documentation does not match their identity.

This can include 'microagressions' such as complaints about delays which care caused by paperwork requirements.

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do not react badly to identity discrepancies on the tenant's documents.

Do make sure tenants knows who will have access to their documents such as passports or other ID – for example, let them know if an agent will have access to them. This is a legal requirement.

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 5

Make a demonstrable commitment to accepting tenants from any background.

5

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

LGBTQ+ tenants, especially young people, may not have a family member willing to act as a guarantor. Having to explain that family are not supportive can be re-traumatising.

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do find out what rent guarantee schemes are available via charities and local authorities, and have this information readily available.

Don't expect prospective tenants to explain why a family member can't act as a guarantor.

EVIDENCE

77% of those who reach out to akt for support do so because they have been rejected by family. (akt internal figures)

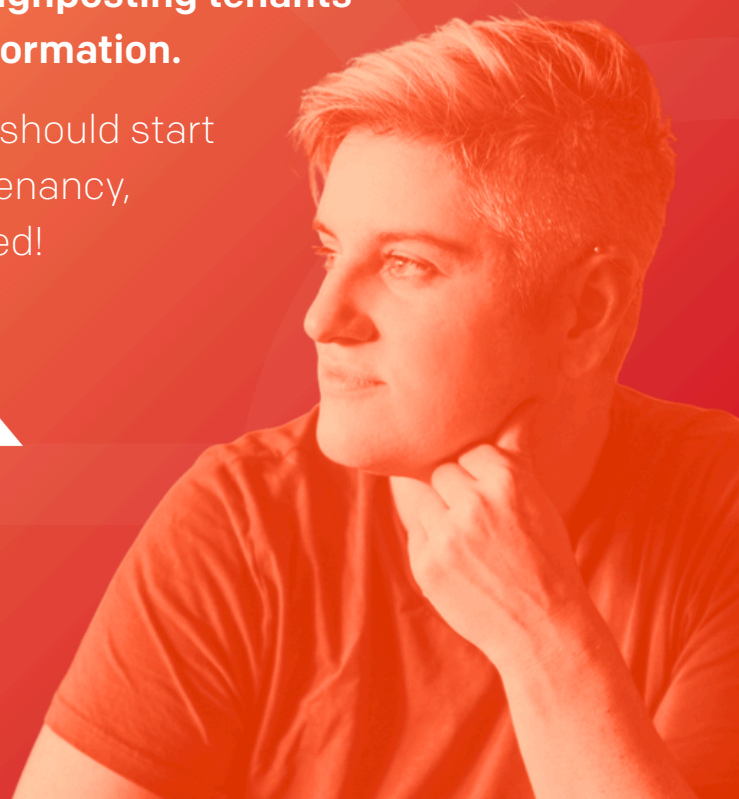
HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 18

Providing/signposting tenants to useful information.

This criteria should start during pre-tenancy, where needed!

18



INCLUSIVE TOOLKIT
FOR LANDLORDS

IN TENANCY

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

HMOs are particularly challenging settings for LGBTQ+ tenants.
For example, they are less secure, and tenants are vulnerable if another tenant behaves in a discriminatory or even illegal way.

An example of this is that post is often accessible to all tenants, and there have been instances where others have seen a trans tenant's previous name; or where post has been stolen leading to identity theft and fraud.

"I'm an asylum seeker and living in an HMO. I fled my country because it wasn't safe to be LGBTQ+. The other residents here make me feel unsafe, and I don't let my partner visit me here. I'm on medication for the stress it's causing."

Caller to the LGBT Foundation helpine

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do ensure privacy through security measures, such as secure, private post boxes, as well as lockable doors (which are required by law).

Do not discuss private issues in front of other tenants.

"I live in an HMO with five others who are verbally aggressive and make comments about my sexuality. The police can't act as there is no evidence, but I do not feel comfortable filming. I have no family support since my parents passed away and my other family members have cut contact with me."

Another caller to the helpine

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

LGBTQ+ tenants deserve the same level of service as everyone else, but don't always get it.

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do react promptly to tenant requests/issues and take it seriously.

EVIDENCE

Rates of satisfaction for LGBTQ+ tenants are lower than for the population as a whole (Charter Equality Impact Assessment).

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 8

Published, timely, target response times.

8

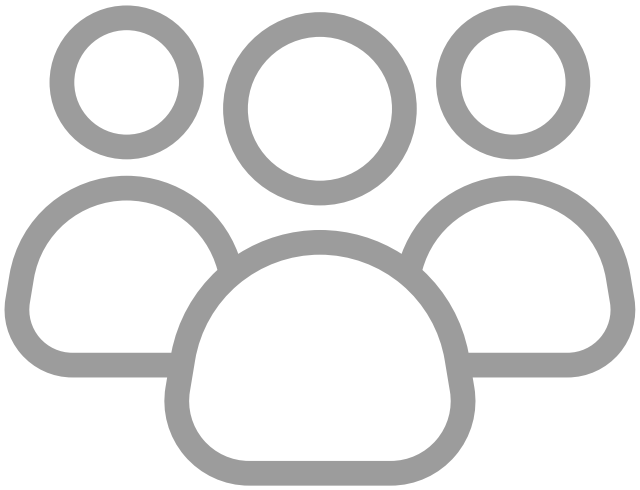
This means that tenants of Charter Members will know what to expect when raising requests with their landlord.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

LGBTQ+ tenants can feel fearful of the response they may receive from tradespeople who access the property.

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do ensure tradespeople share values where possible and communicate with the tenant to book repairs at a suitable time.



HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 11

Fit and proper person check

11

This criterion expects Members to make all reasonable enquiries to ensure any persons involved in the management of the property are fit and proper, including themselves.

This includes having a safeguarding policy detailing how safety and dignity will be upheld and how incidents can be reported.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Unannounced property inspections can 'out' a tenant who may not wish for this to happen.

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do not inspect property unannounced.

EVIDENCE

Trans tenants who contact the LGBT Foundation report a high rate of unauthorised access from landlords. (LGBT Foundation internal data)

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 10

Effective approach to property inspection

10

This includes an expectation that inspections will be carried out at a pre-arranged time.

INCLUSIVE TOOLKIT
FOR LANDLORDS

END-OF-TENANCY

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

LGBTQ+ tenants may experience poorer service at the end of tenancy.

EVIDENCE

Trans tenants who contact the LGBT Foundation report high rates of unfair deposit deductions. (LGBT Foundation internal data)

WHAT'S THE ADVICE?

Do pay back the deposit on time.

Do ask for, as well as give, feedback regarding the tenancy experience.

Do have clear policies from the start – it can create anxiety if they're not in place.

Do not enforce arbitrary requirements at the end of tenancy.

HOW DOES THE CHARTER ADDRESS THIS?

CRITERIA 20

Clear start and end-of-tenancy process.

20

Landlords will use a start and end of tenancy check-list that allows transparency and ensures tenants know what to expect.

INCLUSIVE TOOLKIT FOR LANDLORDS

We hope you found this toolkit useful.
Here are links to the various sources of evidence quoted:

Good Landlord Charter Equality Impact Assessment — **Read the PDF**

Anxiety Nation? Economic insecurity and mental distress in 2020s Britain. — **Visit Joseph Rowntree Foundation**

LGBTQIA+ and neurodiversity: the links between neurodivergence and being LGBTQ+. — **Visit Brain Charity**

What do adult literacy levels mean? — **Visit The National Literacy Trust**

Disability and LGBTQIA+ intersectionality: why is this important? — **Visit Equal Lives**

You can get further insights via the websites of our partners:

The LGBT Foundation: https://lgbt.foundation/

akt: https://www.akt.org.uk/