



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL
PROPERTY CHAMBER
(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**

Case Reference : **CHI/29UE/MNR/2021/0122**

Property : **Flat 6
Captain Webbs
161-165 Folkestone Road
Dover
Kent
CT17 9SZ**

Landlord : **Foster & Payne Homes Ltd**

Representative : **None**

Respondent/Tenant : **Mr H S Hadfield**

Representative : **None**

Type of Application : **Determination of a Market Rent
sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act
1988**

Tribunal Members : **Mr I R Perry BSc FRICS
Mr N I Robinson FRICS
Mr M C Woodrow MRICS**

Date of Inspection : **None. Paper determination**

Date of Decision : **9th December 2021**

DECISION

Summary of Decision

1. On 9th December 2021 the Tribunal determined a market rent of £565 per month to take effect from 11th December 2021.

Background

2. The case concerned the determination of a market rent for the subject property following a referral of the Landlord's notice of increase of rent by the Tenant pursuant to sections 13 and 14 Housing Act 1988.
3. On 4th October 2021 the Landlord served a notice under Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £565 per month in place of the existing rent of £530 per month to take effect from 11th December 2021. The notice complied with the legal requirements.
4. On 18 October 2021 the Tenant sent an application to the Tribunal under Section 13(4) (a) of the Housing Act 1988.
5. The Coronavirus pandemic and considerations of health have caused a suspension of inspections and Tribunal hearings in person until further notice.
6. The Tribunal issued directions on 28th October 2021 informing the parties that the Tribunal intended to determine the rent based on written representations. The parties were invited to make submissions which could include photographs or videos.
7. Both parties submitted papers by the specified dates which were copied to the other party.
8. As stated in the Directions, as no objection was received from either party, the Tribunal determined the case on 9th December 2021 based on the documents received without an oral hearing.

The Property

9. From the information given in the papers and available on the internet the property comprises a second-floor apartment in a purpose-built development of some 34 units which is a specialised social housing project limited to persons over 55 years of age. The scheme was built in 2006.
10. The property is within about 1/2 mile of the centre of Dover and there is a good range of local amenities within the area. The development is gated and there is a manager on site for four days each week.
11. The apartment has gas-fired central heating and double-glazed windows to accommodation which includes a Hall with cupboard, Living/Dining/Kitchen, one Bedroom and a Bathroom with WC. There is a single allocated Car Space.

12. Carpets and cooker are provided by the Landlord but a fridge, washing machine and curtains are provided by the Tenant. There is a communal Lounge and garden areas maintained by the Landlord.

Submissions

13. The Landlord set out the management charges for the property which for the latest year available amount to £122 per month. These are paid by the Landlord.
14. The Landlord provided details of similar 'retirement' properties advertised as available to let in Dover and nearby towns at asking rentals ranging from £572 per month to £725 per month. The Landlord also stated that an apartment similar to the subject property, within the same block, had recently been let for £615 per month.
15. The Tenant states that the floorcoverings are in need of attention in places.

The Law

S14 Determination of Rent by First-tier Tribunal

- (1) Where, under subsection (4) (a) of section 13 above, a tenant refers to a First-tier Tribunal a notice under subsection (2) of that section, the Tribunal shall determine the rent at which, subject to subsections (2) and (4) below, the Tribunal consider that the dwelling-house concerned might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing landlord under an assured tenancy-
 - (a) which is a periodic tenancy having the same periods as those of the tenancy to which the notice relates;
 - (b) which begins at the beginning of the new period specified in the notice;
 - (c) the terms of which (other than relating to the amount of the rent) are the same as those of the tenancy to which the notice relates; and
 - (d) in respect of which the same notices, if any, have been given under any of Grounds 1 to 5 of Schedule 2 to this Act, as have been given (or have effect as if given) in relation to the tenancy to which the notice relates.
- (2) In making a determination under this section, there shall be disregarded-
 - (a) any effect on the rent attributable to the granting of a tenancy to a sitting tenant;

- (b) any increase in the value of the dwelling-house attributable to a relevant improvement carried out by a person who at the time it was carried out was the tenant, if the improvement-
 - (i) was carried out otherwise than in pursuance of an obligation to his immediate landlord, or
 - (ii) was carried out pursuant to an obligation to his immediate landlord being an obligation which did not relate to the specific improvement concerned but arose by reference to consent given to the carrying out of that improvement; and
 - (c) any reduction in the value of the dwelling-house attributable to a failure by the tenant to comply with any terms of the tenancy.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b) above, in relation to a notice which is referred by a tenant as mentioned in subsection (1) above, an improvement is a relevant improvement if either it was carried out during the tenancy to which the notice relates, or the following conditions are satisfied, namely-
- (a) that it was carried out not more than twenty-one years before the date of service of the notice; and
 - (b) that, at all times during the period beginning when the improvement was carried out and ending on the date of service of the notice, the dwelling-house has been let under an assured tenancy; and
 - (c) that, on the coming to an end of an assured tenancy at any time during that period, the tenant (or, in the case of joint tenants, at least one of them) did not quit.
- (4) In this section "rent" does not include any service charge, within the meaning of section 18 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, but, subject to that, includes any sums payable by the tenant to the landlord on account of the use of furniture, in respect of council tax or for any of the matters referred to in subsection (1) (a) of that section, whether or not those sums are separate from the sums payable for the occupation.

Consideration and Valuation

- 16. The Tribunal first considered whether it felt able to reasonably and fairly decide this case based on the papers submitted only with no oral hearing. Having read and considered the papers it decided that it could do so.
- 17. The Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the subject property might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing Landlord under an assured tenancy. The personal circumstances of the Tenant are not relevant to this issue.
- 18. Having carefully considered the representations from the parties and associated correspondence and using its own judgement and knowledge of rental values in Dover, the Tribunal decided that the market rent for

the subject property if let today in a condition that was usual for such an open market letting would be £580 per month.

19. However, the fridge, washing machine and curtains are provided by the Tenant which would not normally be the case for an open market letting. The Tribunal decided that the rent of £580 per month should be reduced by £10 per month to reflect the Tenant's provision of a fridge and washing machine, and a further £5 per month to reflect the Tenant's provision of curtains.
20. The Tribunal noted that the floorcoverings need attention in places but decided to make no further adjustments to the rent.
21. The Tenant made no representation that the starting date for the new rent specified in the Landlord's notice would cause the Tenant undue hardship.

Determination

22. The Tribunal therefore decided that the rent at which the subject property might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing Landlord under the terms of this assured tenancy was £565 per month.
23. The Tribunal directed that the new rent of £565 per month should take effect from 11th December 2021, this being the date specified in the original Notice.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL

1. A person wishing to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) must seek permission to do so by making written application to the First-tier Tribunal at the Regional office which has been dealing with the case. Where possible you should send your application for permission to appeal by email to rpsouthern@justice.gov.uk as this will enable the First-tier Tribunal Regional office to deal with it more efficiently.
2. The application must arrive at the Tribunal within 28 days after the Tribunal sends to the person making the application written reasons for the decision.
3. If the person wishing to appeal does not comply with the 28-day time limit, the person shall include with the application for permission to appeal a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28-day time limit; the Tribunal will then decide whether to extend time or not to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed.

4. The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the Tribunal to which it relates, state the grounds of appeal, and state the result the party making the application is seeking.