

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY C.S. ALVES OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th JULY 2018**

Question

Will the Minister indicate how many tenants currently live in properties which have more bedrooms than are required to meet their needs?

What percentage of those tenants would see their rent increase if they moved to a property with fewer bedrooms, due to the new contract they would have to sign?

Answer

Andium Homes and the housing trusts do not record figures in relation to the number of their tenants who live in properties with more bedrooms than are required to meet their needs (under-occupation). However, the Affordable Housing Gateway waiting list shows that there are currently 128 active applications from households who wish to downsize to alternative accommodation.

Where a household receives assistance with its rent through Income Support, the household is required to notify Income Support as soon as its composition changes. This might arise, for example, where an adult child has moved out. When this happens, the household is put in contact with the Housing Gateway and given up to twelve months to find a new property.

If the household has chosen not to move in that time, the element of Income Support that goes towards its rent is reduced. If the household is unable to access a suitable property, perhaps because a member of the household requires a property adapted for disabilities, the twelve month period can be extended.

It is not possible to say what percentage of existing tenants registered on the Housing Gateway waiting list would see an increase in their rents if they were to move to a property with fewer bedrooms.

The rent that a tenant is required to pay will be set in line with social housing rental policy agreed by the States in 2013. This sets the rent at 90% of the market value of the property which takes account of factors such as the size, location and condition of the property to which they move.

Tenants who are in receipt of Income Support will not be affected by any change in their rents when they downsize. The housing component of Income Support for social rented accommodation is set according to the rent charged by a social housing provider, which must comply with the 90% rents policy. The full cost of a tenant's rent will, therefore, be met through Income Support irrespective of whether or not a tenant's rent increases or decreases when he or she downsizes.

Andium Homes has confirmed that, over the last 18 months, of the 18 households who have downsized to smaller properties during this period, none would have seen a change in the contribution towards their rent, either because they are in full or partial receipt of Income Support or because the rent on the property is lower.

The Minister for Housing recognises that there is an opportunity to review the current rents policy in order to ensure that it remains an effective policy.