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Tenancy Agreement

Strictly speaking a tenancy agreement is a contract under which a landlord grants a tenant (or joint tenants) exclusive possession of a dwelling for a certain time. It can also be described as a lease. “Exclusive possession” means that the tenant has the right to “shut out the world” and the landlord cannot enter the dwelling without the tenant’s permission. The exclusive dwelling might be an entire self-contained house or flat or it might be a single room in a house of multiple occupation.

In practice the word “tenancy agreement” is often used to refer to a licence as well where the licensee only has permission to use the dwelling but does not have exclusive possession of it (accommodation is often shared with the landlord, for example a lodger who has permission to use the landlord’s home). In Housing Benefit “tenancy” means any arrangement under which a person is liable to make payments that qualify for HB, including a licence.