# Lambeth council uses legal loophole to evict families despite Labour’s no-fault eviction pledge



Despite Labour’s clear manifesto promise to abolish no-fault evictions, a Labour-run council in south London is utilising a legal grey area to serve eviction notices to dozens of families without fault. Lambeth council has initiated eviction proceedings against 63 households by utilising an arm’s-length management organisation (Homes for Lambeth) to handle some of its housing stock. This strategic manoeuvre has enabled the council to issue what are traditionally Section 21 evictions—a process normally reserved for private landlords—notwithstanding Labour’s pledge to scrap these evictions immediately following their 2024 election victory.

Homes for Lambeth was created in 2017 as part of an estate regeneration scheme, acquiring properties that the council had bought back from residents under the right-to-buy scheme which was introduced in the 1980s. These properties, although ultimately owned by the council, were rented out on the private market through the company structure, enabling the use of no-fault eviction notices. More than half of the tenants affected by this move vacated voluntarily, but courts have granted possession orders for at least five families, with two homes already repossessed by bailiffs. Internal council documents indicate that these eviction efforts have been planned since at least 2023 but were delayed during the pre-election period due to the controversial nature of the actions.

This approach has drawn significant public criticism, especially given that Lambeth council had previously implored the Conservative government in 2019 to end no-fault evictions. Some residents facing eviction have reported severe mental health impacts; for example, Jules Zakolska, a tenant who received a Section 21 notice, has spoken about the trauma and stress caused by the threat of homelessness, underscoring the human cost behind these legal manoeuvres. Ms Zakolska’s case highlights the complexity of the situation, where the council asserts that reclaiming these homes is necessary to provide temporary accommodation for vulnerable families facing homelessness—a pressing issue in Lambeth, where approximately 5,000 homeless families reside in often substandard temporary housing.

The council defends its decisions as a regrettable but necessary measure amidst the ongoing housing crisis exacerbated by structural underfunding and the national failure to build sufficient affordable homes. A spokesperson acknowledged the difficult choices involved, emphasizing that the council aims to prioritise homeless families over renting properties privately on short-term deals. Meanwhile, the UK government states it is investing £1 billion to tackle homelessness and build 1.5 million homes, indicating openness to innovative local strategies to address housing needs.

Labour’s flagship legislation, the Renters' Rights Bill, is poised to bring significant reforms to the housing landscape by ending no-fault evictions within months. Announced in September 2024, the bill includes provisions to extend notice periods before eviction, implement Awaab’s Law to enforce timely essential repairs, and introduce measures to curb rental bidding wars that exacerbate housing unaffordability. These reforms reflect Labour’s broader strategy to overhaul the housing market and confront the UK’s entrenched housing crisis, aiming to protect tenants and improve conditions across the rental sector.

While Labour at the national level is moving to outlaw the kind of no-fault evictions currently being utilised by Lambeth council, the council’s actions illustrate the complexity and sometimes contradictory pressures local authorities face in balancing tenancy rights, housing availability, and homelessness relief. As these reforms edge closer to implementation, the Lambeth case underscores the urgent need to harmonise policy aspirations with local realities to safeguard vulnerable tenants without compromising responses to homelessness.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMingFBVV95cUxQUFl0VlRLUFJocVJqaGZkeEtrRE9lU0htU0NlbzJVVEFwSklBbXlXRlhERWxjXzJ5TTNtUmtaWjlleGJYaktYekdsb19iTk1wbHhXbUZuam1EQjJRbU85VndKWHA5T2dvSld2djhZVkgxOEZKcTJhY0lqcUFoVEpHZGhuYXUxX245M2p1UmxRa3dGaXZxLWJFZklYQnQwUQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en)
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2. <https://www.theguardian.com/money/article/2024/sep/06/labour-moves-to-end-no-fault-evictions-within-months> - In September 2024, Labour announced plans to end no-fault evictions, known as Section 21 evictions, within months. The proposed Renters' Rights Bill aims to provide greater tenant protections, including longer notice periods before eviction and measures to prevent rental bidding wars. The bill also seeks to implement Awaab's Law, requiring landlords to carry out essential repairs within specified timeframes. These reforms are part of Labour's broader strategy to overhaul the housing market and address the housing crisis in the UK.
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