# Brighton grandmother ordered to undo £30,000 garden makeover amid council safety concerns



Renata Mohamed, a 48-year-old mother and grandmother from Moulsecoomb, has found herself at the centre of a contentious dispute with Brighton and Hove City Council over her recently transformed garden, which she successfully converted from an overgrown “jungle” into a safe haven for her children and grandchild. According to Mohamed, she sacrificed vacations and poured her savings into the £30,000 renovation, yet now faces an ultimatum to reverse the updates. “I can’t sleep at night, and I have never cried so much,” she lamented, reflecting her distress over the council's demands. While the council has indicated that eviction would be a last resort, the threat nonetheless looms large.

The community's reaction to this dilemma has been decidedly mixed. Supporters of Mohamed argue that the council should appreciate her efforts to enhance the property, which aligns with the broader trend of tenants investing in their homes amid rising concerns about housing quality and neighbourhood standards. Liz Palombo, for instance, voiced her support by stating, “You would think the council would be happy that someone's trying to improve their property.” In contrast, critics have taken a more reserved stance, raising questions about safety and the garden's design. Professional landscaper James Gardner pointed out significant safety deficiencies in the modifications, such as lack of proper drainage and inadequate structural support. “As a professional landscaper, I can confidently state that the council are absolutely correct,” he asserted, highlighting concerns that the transformation may not comply with planning regulations.

This situation reflects a broader challenge facing many tenants in the area, particularly regarding the concept of "revenge eviction". As outlined by Brighton & Hove City Council, this term describes actions taken by landlords in retaliation against tenants who file legitimate complaints about property conditions. Under the Deregulation Act 2015, tenants are protected for up to six months against eviction after making such complaints, emphasising a legislative attempt to balance landlords’ and tenants’ rights. However, the effectiveness of these protections is under scrutiny, particularly given reports from community unions like Acorn, which have accused the council of aligning more closely with landlords than tenants, thereby undermining support for renters.

This environment becomes even more complex when juxtaposed with the experiences of other tenants in Brighton facing eviction after filing complaints. For instance, the case of Keziah Hall, who was evicted from her home of 16 years, underscores the precariousness of tenant security in the face of aggressive landlord practices. Such incidents have sparked calls for improved renters' rights, as community advocates argue that current measures are often ineffective in protecting tenants who speak up.

Moreover, the longstanding neglect of properties in Brighton, particularly those built between the 1930s and 1950s, has exacerbated issues of maintenance. As another local resident pointed out, many gardens have suffered from decades of overgrowth and lack of landscaping, making them difficult to manage. “A lot of the gardens are really high maintenance, for some it’s impossible to keep them cut back and tidy,” remarked Tara Doshlani, illustrating the broader challenges tenants face in adhering to council standards.

As Mohamed battles to keep her garden, the intricacies of tenant rights, property management, and community support come to the fore. The council's stance raises questions about the reasonable expectations placed on tenants to maintain properties historically neglected and the responsibility of the local government to support community members who are attempting to alleviate those maintenance issues. This case thus encapsulates a critical moment for local tenants navigating the difficult waters of housing policy and community living, illustrating the significant emotional toll that such disputes can exact on individuals striving for a better quality of life.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25182161.readers-react-gran-ordered-reverse-30-000-garden-makeover/?ref=rss)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25182161.readers-react-gran-ordered-reverse-30-000-garden-makeover/?ref=rss)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/revenge-eviction), [[3]](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/private-sector-housing-enforcement-policy)
4. Paragraph 4: [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czdpvzd3d9vo), [[5]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23256407.brighton-union-slams-council-revenge-eviction-plans/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-17373147), [[7]](https://brightonjournal.co.uk/resident-faces-homelessness-after-unexpected-eviction/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25182161.readers-react-gran-ordered-reverse-30-000-garden-makeover/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/revenge-eviction> - This page from Brighton & Hove City Council explains the concept of 'revenge eviction,' where a landlord evicts a tenant in response to a legitimate complaint about the property's condition. It outlines tenant protections under the Deregulation Act 2015, which safeguards tenants from eviction for six months after making a verified complaint about property conditions that have not been addressed by the landlord.
3. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/private-sector-housing-enforcement-policy> - Brighton & Hove City Council's Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy details the procedures and protections in place for tenants facing retaliatory eviction. It emphasizes the council's commitment to ensuring landlords address legitimate complaints and outlines the enforcement actions available to the council to protect tenants from unfair eviction practices.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czdpvzd3d9vo> - This BBC News article discusses the case of Keziah Hall, a single mother who was evicted from her home of 16 years after receiving a no-fault eviction notice. The article highlights the challenges tenants face in securing new housing after eviction and calls for improved renters' rights to prevent such situations.
5. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23256407.brighton-union-slams-council-revenge-eviction-plans/> - This article from The Argus reports on criticism from the community union Acorn towards Brighton and Hove City Council for allegedly backtracking on a policy aimed at preventing revenge evictions. The union accuses the council of siding with landlords over tenants and failing to implement measures to protect renters from retaliatory eviction practices.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-17373147> - This BBC News article covers the case of Olive Taylor, an 87-year-old pensioner in Brighton who was ordered by the council to clear rubbish from her garden. The article discusses the council's actions in response to complaints from neighbors and highlights the challenges faced by tenants in maintaining their properties to council standards.
7. <https://brightonjournal.co.uk/resident-faces-homelessness-after-unexpected-eviction/> - This article from the Brighton Journal details the case of Jim Haughey, a Brighton resident who faced eviction after complaining to his landlord about the state of his rental property. The piece discusses the concept of revenge eviction and the support provided by local renters' unions to tenants facing such challenges.