# Rising London rents fuel surge in property guardianship as affordable living alternative



In the face of soaring rents and limited affordable housing options, a growing number of Londoners are turning to property guardianship as an innovative way to significantly reduce their living costs. Honora Pamplin, 27, who shares a spacious converted warehouse in Walthamstow, east London, with four housemates, pays just £480 a month plus £15 for WiFi—a fraction of the typical rent in the area. This arrangement has enabled her to save approximately £5,000 since moving in last August, offering a smart alternative amid the capital's expensive rental market.

Property guardianship involves living in vacant properties to maintain their condition and protect them from squatting or vandalism. As a guardian, Honora’s responsibilities are minimal beyond acting as a responsible tenant. Her licence fee includes all bills and council tax, making it an all-inclusive, low-cost housing option. In contrast, average rents for a room in east London exceed £944, and two-bedroom flats can command rents between £1,787 and £2,135 monthly. The property Honora occupies, formerly a warehouse, now features two living rooms, a kitchen, and ample space, equipped with industrial air conditioning and heating to ensure comfort throughout the year.

Honora came across property guardianship when her lease was ending. After exploring the option on a friend's recommendation and visiting a viewing, she was drawn by the affordability. She and her housemates furnished the property themselves, mixing furniture from previous homes and second-hand finds. Although the style is eclectic and industrial, the group has succeeded in creating a homely atmosphere. They continue to enjoy the space and location, while saving money towards future goals such as a holiday and a house deposit.

However, while property guardianship offers clear financial benefits, it comes with trade-offs. Guardians typically have limited rights compared to traditional tenants. They can be asked to vacate on short notice—sometimes as little as 28 days or even two weeks, according to industry insights—if the property owner decides to reclaim the space. Tenants are often required to adhere to specific restrictions such as limits on guests, and they may be obligated to stay for a minimum period. Honora acknowledges this uncertainty but notes that the managing agent maintains good communication and currently has no plans to ask them to leave.

The model also appeals to those with flexible living arrangements rather than families needing long-term stability. Honora, who works in sustainability, finds value in repurposing unused buildings instead of letting them fall into disrepair or face demolition. This approach not only curbs housing costs but also supports environmental goals by maximising the use of existing structures.

Property guardianship emerges at a time when London’s rental market is under intense pressure. Recent data indicates that rents in the capital have surged to an average of £2,200 per month, up from £1,700 in 2021, driven by high demand and fewer properties available for rent. Increased mortgage costs and the difficulty many face in saving for deposits have intensified demand for affordable rental alternatives. The average UK house price rose to £292,000 recently, though London saw a slight decline to around £525,586, reinforcing the city’s affordability challenges for first-time buyers.

As housing costs continue to escalate, property guardianship might provide a viable solution for renters who value affordability and flexibility and who can tolerate the risks associated with less secure tenure. While it may not suit everyone, especially families needing a permanent home, it offers a practical means to live affordably in London’s otherwise prohibitively expensive housing market.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14915705/How-live-London-cheap-rent-trick.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14915705/How-live-London-cheap-rent-trick.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/58036726-e50c-4ab1-bc85-3255f523b2ba)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14915705/How-live-London-cheap-rent-trick.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14915705/How-live-London-cheap-rent-trick.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/58036726-e50c-4ab1-bc85-3255f523b2ba)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14915705/How-live-London-cheap-rent-trick.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/58036726-e50c-4ab1-bc85-3255f523b2ba)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14915705/How-live-London-cheap-rent-trick.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html> - This article discusses how property guardianship offers individuals the opportunity to live in vacant properties at significantly reduced costs. By acting as caretakers, guardians help prevent issues like squatting and vandalism. The piece highlights various properties available for guardianship, including former police stations and schools, and notes that while the rent is low, there are certain restrictions, such as limited guest allowances and a minimum stay requirement. It also mentions that guardians can be given as little as two weeks' notice to vacate.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/58036726-e50c-4ab1-bc85-3255f523b2ba> - In October 2024, UK rent growth intensified, especially in London where the average monthly rent surged to a record £2,200, a notable rise from £1,700 before October 2021. The Office for National Statistics reported an 8.7% increase in private rents year-over-year, indicating ongoing upward pressure despite tenant resistance to higher costs. London's demand for rental properties, coupled with landlord sales ahead of the recent Budget, contributed significantly to these trends. A decline in landlord property listings has further tightened the rental market. This is compounded by higher interest rates and mortgage repayments, which have pushed up rental demand as households find it harder to save for deposits. The average UK house prices also rose by 2.9% to £292,000, though prices in London experienced a slight annual decline of 0.5% to £525,586, highlighting the city's affordability challenges which hamper first-time buyers.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/on-the-money-how-guardian-angels-can-cut-their-rent-9648763.html> - This article discusses how property guardianship offers individuals the opportunity to live in vacant properties at significantly reduced costs. By acting as caretakers, guardians help prevent issues like squatting and vandalism. The piece highlights various properties available for guardianship, including former police stations and schools, and notes that while the rent is low, there are certain restrictions, such as limited guest allowances and a minimum stay requirement. It also mentions that guardians can be given as little as two weeks' notice to vacate.
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