EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Is it a fair cop for Surrey Police to evict its tenants for no fault?

10 February 2026



A pregnant mum facing eviction from her police-owned home has said Surrey Police's latest concessions 'do not go far enough' and are "insulting", despite the force extending the moving deadline and halving rents.

Around 21 families living in properties owned by Surrey Police were served 'no fault' eviction notices, known as Section 21 notices, at the end of January. The notices gave families just 12 weeks to leave homes many believed they could stay in for the duration of their service.

In a press statement, Ms Townsend said she must ensure the force's limited housing stock is used "in the fairest way possible" across more than 4,000 officers and staff. She said her ambition is to ensure new recruits can access affordable housing so they are not deterred from joining Surrey Police.

Following criticism from tenants and politicians, Surrey Police confirmed last week that affected families will now be allowed to remain in their homes until 18 July. The force also announced a 50 per cent rent reduction until tenants move out, described as a "gesture of goodwill" from Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Lisa Townsend.

However, the pregnant mum, who asked to remain anonymous, said the changes fail to address the core issue of affordability. She said describing the rent cut as a goodwill gesture was "insulting", adding that even with reduced rent her family still needs to find around £5,500 upfront for a deposit and first month's rent, followed by monthly payments of an extra £1,500.

"We feel as if the rug has been pulled out from under our feet," she said, explaining that the family had always felt fortunate to live in police accommodation and had believed their housing situation was secure.

She said families had previously been told there were no plans to change their housing arrangements, including during refurbishment works in December 2024, when tenants were even asked to help design renovations. She added that had families been given more warning, they could have saved towards a move. "We're not sitting on pots of money," she said.

While she accepted that her household does not meet the new eligibility criteria for subsidised accommodation, which includes a joint income threshold of £80,000, she argued the policy fails to consider the retention of experienced officers. She said police officers are underpaid for being the "ones who run towards danger when everyone else runs away".

The mum said extending the deadline was better than nothing but warned the fundamental problem remains money. She said the decision risks forcing long-serving officers out of the force because they simply cannot afford to leave Surrey. She also raised concerns about the possibility of emergency temporary accommodation, warning it could split her family up and may not be safe.

She added that prioritising subsidised housing for new recruits "does not make housing in Surrey more affordable" and said the force could face the same retention problems in the future. The mum said she did not know any new officers who were homeless, while her own family now faces the prospect of sofa surfing after her baby is born.

Liberal Democrat MPs in Surrey have urged the PCC to reconsider the approach. Guildford MP Zoe Franklin said there was no "legal cliff edge" requiring evictions ahead of the introduction of the Renters' Rights law and argued police forces would still be able to recover service-linked accommodation where genuinely needed. Ms Townsend has said she has taken legal advice on the issue.

Families affected by the decision say they are now urgently searching for alternative homes and fear they will be priced out of the communities where they live and work.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Related report

Paradox of Protection policy for tenants: triggers Surrey police evictions

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY