

'Made to feel like imposters in our own homes'

MORE SHORTLIFE EVICTIONS LOOM AS MP SAYS 'THERE MUST BE SOLUTION'

By **BEN MORGAN**

A TOWN hall is facing mounting opposition to its "short-sighted" policy of selling off shortlife properties as more families are due to be evicted this month.

Lambeth council is pressing ahead with plans to sell off its remaining shortlife properties, with one long-standing family evicted on Wednesday morning and another facing eviction on May 21.

The shortlife homes, which were often dilapidated, were maintained by co-operatives for a fixed term but many people stayed much longer.

The Blackhurst family, of Park Hill, Clapham, were evicted this week from a Grade II listed Georgian mansion that was once maintained through the Short Stock Housing Co-Op.

The organisation once took referrals from the council's own housing waiting list, to ease the burden on the housing department.

John Blackhurst has lived at the property for 29 years, while his wife Karina has lived there for nearly 20 years.

Karina said: "All I really want is for the council to recognise that we have taken care of this home after it was neglected by them."



SHOCK: How we reported one eviction last month

"It's so hard because housing is such a personal thing and I think we've been made to feel like imposters in our own home."

"The way the council has managed the end of shortlife is just shabby."

Lambeth council cabinet member for housing Councillor Pete Robbins has defended the recalls.

He said: "We have properties in Lambeth that are worth upwards of £2million."

"That money can be used to pay for

'I want the council to recognise that we have taken care of this home after it was neglected by them'
- Former shortlife tenant evicted this week

100 properties to be brought up to Decent Homes standard."

Nicholas Cope, his wife and two daughters, are facing eviction on May 21 from their home in Stockwell Park Road, where they have lived since February 1997.

Nicholas, an artist, has received two eviction notices - both were later blocked after pressure from his MP Kate Hoey and Stockwell councillor Peter Bowyer.

As recently as 2010 it was understood his family would remain in their home.

Nicholas said: "If Lambeth does get this flat and sells it, they will get a much higher price because we've looked after this place."

"When we needed the roof fixed, I had to do it because Lambeth said it was too dangerous."

"Shortlife properties were aimed at artists and musicians. But we were consistently told we would be able to stay here permanently."

The family has also been heavily involved with the annual Stockwell Festival, opening their garden to neighbours and visitors over the years.

Kate Hoey MP hopes that the imminent eviction can be postponed.

She said: "There must be a solution which allows the Copes to stay in their community and also retain social housing in that street."

"The council is taking a very short-sighted view on the sell-offs."

"Many of the units they are selling are up to Decent Homes standard and all they needed to do was transfer the family to become council tenants."

"Instead they are selling to the highest bidder."

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'WE LOOKED AFTER THE PLACE': Nicholas Cope and his family are facing eviction from the home they have lived in since 1997 h6476/C

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Tenants rehomed due to 'intolerable' fire risk

RESIDENTS at a housing co-op have been asked to leave their homes due to concerns over fire safety. The Carlton Mansions Housing Co-operative received a notice that a recent fire safety check carried out by Lambeth Living flagged up an "intolerable" risk to residents.

The four-storey building comprises 16 flats and is another example of Lambeth's legacy of shortlife housing, with residents being offered alternative accommodation elsewhere.

The matter was heard in Lambeth County Court on Tuesday, with a further hearing scheduled for later

this month.

A spokesman for Lambeth council said: "Following a fire safety assessment and the significant health and safety risk identified, we need to vacate the building as soon as possible."

"A possession order and injunction is the appropriate legal mechanism for this situation."

"We have offered rehoming to all the occupiers on a temporary basis and will then assess their eligibility for a permanent home."

The Carlton Mansions Housing Co-Operative did not respond to the *South London Press* when asked for a comment.