

VICTORY IN HANOVER

BISHOP FAMILY SAFE FROM EVICTION

- Renters' union ACORN helps member and her family keep their home after 5-week campaign
- Wilkinson's estate agents and landlord agree to honour 12-month contract and accept council's recommended repairs
- Latest in string of victories across the city including £75,000+ in compensation, repairs and returned deposits



In April, the Bishop family were served an eviction notice from Wilkinson's letting agents, weeks after they signed a new tenancy and requested they made repairs to damp in their house on Albion Hill.

But they didn't just roll over and give up. Beverley Bishop stood up to her letting agents, and joined ACORN Renters' Union.

Over the next five weeks, we ran a campaign to keep Bev and her family in their home. We held demonstrations and pickets on Elm Grove, collected petition

signatures from the community, and got support from local politicians. We're very happy to say this campaign has been successful. **People power finally forced Wilkinson's and the landlord to make a deal and meet our demands.**

The negotiated agreement includes a twelve-month secure tenancy for the family and a commitment by the landlord to meet all the repair recommendations made by the council's Environmental Health department.

We know how hard it can be to rent in Brighton. Name a problem, and an ACORN member has dealt with it: repairs done late, badly, or not at all; rent increases every year; extra charges and fees; our deposits withheld no matter how hard we clean; 'no benefits', 'no children', 'no pets'; damp, mould, leaky windows and roofs... the list goes on.

That's why our union is made up of renters and community members like you, who volunteer their time and energy to stick up for each other. **We know that when we all work together we can change the housing situation in this city for the better.**

That's why we're stepping up our organisation in Hanover. We've stopped one eviction, but we've got a lot more to do in the neighbourhood.

People power in Hanover! Community meeting

Join Beverley Bishop and other ACORN members to hear about how we stopped the Bishops from being evicted and how the community in Hanover can work together to solve the housing crisis.

Hanover Community Centre, 33 Southover Street
Sunday 1st July, 5-7pm

DBS-checked creche available. The venue is wheelchair accessible.

What We Do

Stopping the Bishop's eviction is the latest in a string of victories for a growing renters' movement in the city. With ACORN, renters in Brighton and across the UK are standing together to fight back against high rents, unfair evictions, bad conditions and bogus charges.

Deposit Theft

An ACORN member and night-shift worker had £30 withheld from her deposit by a letting agent. We took 40 people to their office in Hove to demand the money back, and won.

Evictions

An ACORN member and single mum was put onto a rolling monthly contract. A few weeks later she was told by her letting agent that she'd have to move out in two months. All she had to do was mention ACORN on the phone and the letting agent changed his tune. Now the family have a secure tenancy.

Repairs

When 126 students moved into their University of Sussex Kings Road halls they found a mess. Problems ranged from mould, failing appliances, and pests to constant construction work. They contacted ACORN for help. Together, we organised a rent strike. Four days later, ACORN negotiated a compensation deal of £515 per person, as well as a guarantee all repairs would be made immediately.

Universal Credit

The 6-week wait for Universal Credit was putting a lot of renters' in the city under huge financial strain. ACORN Brighton got the council, housing associations, and even private letting agent CoApt to agree that they would not evict anyone whose rent payments were late as a result of the switch.

'2 months ago, I thought my family would be out on the streets by now but Acorn fought my eviction notice. They supported me in standing up to the letting agency and landlord. 2 months later- we have won! We have a 12 month contract! I could never have done this on my own. It's only together we can fight and make a difference. Don't just give in and Don't try and do it on your own! Join Acorn and they will fight with you! I'm now a member of Acorn and will stand with them as we take on the next landlord or agency that think they can just throw someone out on the streets. I'm ready to fight for the next family that needs help. We can't do it alone and we are stronger together.' *Beverley Bishop*

About ACORN Renters' Union

ACORN is a national union with thousands of members and supporters in six branches across the country. Like any other union, we're a membership organisation. Membership costs a suggested one hour of your wages per month (average £8) or less if you're unwaged.

We organise around community issues. Usually that means housing, but are open to campaigning on any issue where the power of a union can make a difference to the lives of ordinary people. Our members meet a minimum of once a month at the Friends Meeting House, in the South Laine.

ACORN only works because its a union made up of people like you. If you want to take on the housing crisis and improve your conditions or the conditions of other people in your community, contact us:

brighton@acorncommunities.org.uk

www.acorntheunion.org.uk

facebook.com/acornbrighton