

Coronavirus update - What do I do if my landlord is asking me to leave?

The Government has changed the law about eviction notices to help people deal with Coronavirus. Your landlord will have to give you extra notice to leave before they can go to court to evict you:

- If your landlord has given you notice between the 26 March and 28 August 2020 - the required notice period is 3 months.
- If your landlord serves you notice on or after 29 August 2020 up until 31 March 2021 - they must provide you with at least 6 months' notice for most grounds (including Section 21 notices) - except in certain cases. These cases include rent arrears of least two months or eight weeks rent, poor tenancy behaviour and persistently late rent payments.

What happens when a notice period has expired?

- You do not have to leave the property once a notice has expired.
- You have the right to remain in the property until the landlord applies to the court for a Possession Order and a Bailiffs Warrant. You need to be aware that there are costs involved with this and if the issues with the tenancy cannot be resolved, you should look to find alternative accommodation.
- If your landlord lives with you and you share living accommodation, you are a licensee and you have very few rights against eviction. You would still be entitled to reasonable notice, usually 28 days but your landlord does not need to get a court order.
- If you have been served a notice you should contact the Housing Options team and we can check to see if your notice is valid.
- If the Notice is invalid, we will contact the Landlord and explain the correct legal procedure of serving a valid Notice. We can speak to your landlord to see if there is any possibility that you can stay in your property and if there is anything that we can do to help resolve any problems.
- If your landlord still wants you to leave, we can work with you to help you try and find alternative accommodation.
- If your landlord tries to evict you without applying to Court, or does things which make it difficult for you to remain there, such as harasses you, or withdraws essential services such as gas, water or electricity, they may be breaking the law. The council has a power to prosecute landlords who harass tenants. It is important that you contact the Housing Options team if your landlord harasses you or threatens to illegally evict you. See What can I do if I think I am being harassed or illegally evicted?

Are you in rent arrears?

If you are living in private rented accommodation and are having trouble paying your rent, you should contact your landlord, (or letting agent), immediately, before the situation gets worse. However, if this has not been successful then let Housing Options know and we can contact your landlord on your behalf. Often, we can work with you and your landlord to sort things out. Also, if you are claiming Housing Benefit we can liaise with them to try to resolve any issues.

The **Housing Options Team** are available to prevent or resolve problem situations and avoid unnecessary evictions.

Housing Options can:

- Work between you and your landlord to mediate successful tenancies and avoid unnecessary evictions
- Provide you with a list of available properties that are available to rent privately
- Keep you informed on housing law and tenancy regulation
- Refer you to the private sector team who can advise you on disrepair issues
- Provide guidance and support if you feel that your landlord has unfairly treated you, or if you have been harassed, threatened, or illegally evicted
- Give you successful tips and advice on maintaining a good relationship with your landlord
- Assist you with a bond in certain circumstances
- Provide referrals for affordable furniture
- Refer you to the Credit Union who can assist you in saving money

You should contact Housing Options as soon as possible if you:

- Are experiencing problems with your finances and are beginning to accrue rent arrears
- Are unsure of your rights or responsibilities as a tenant
- Need advice on Housing Benefit
- Have received a Notice Requiring Possession/ eviction letter from your landlord
- Have doubts about your rights as a tenant
- Need support to remain in your home
- Need advice before signing a tenancy agreement
- Need assistance in finding privately rented accommodation
- Have problems with your landlord
- Need assistance in finding privately rented accommodation