

Ending a council tenancy upon bereavement

This leaflet is a guide to families, friends and executors about how to end a council tenancy.

We appreciate the difficulties when a family member or close friend dies. We hope that the information in this leaflet should help to calm any fears or concerns you may have in taking on the responsibility of ending a tenancy, clearing the home and returning the keys.

What do I need to do?

Let us know as soon as you can. There is a form at the end of this leaflet that you can fill in and return to us. This will give us formal notice that the tenancy needs to be brought to an end. The earlier the notice the better, as any problems can be discussed and sorted out.

You can post the notice back to us at City Hall. It will be very helpful if you can have a copy of the death certificate with you if you call in or attach a copy if the form is posted. We will return this document to you.

How much notice do I need to give?

We legally require four weeks' notice to end the tenancy. This will start from the next Monday after death. The tenancy will end on a Monday, and we will tell you the actual date when the tenancy ends.

Rent payments

Rent will continue to be charged during the four-week notice period. Any housing benefit being paid will stop from the date of death. The rent charged during the notice period and any outstanding balance when the tenancy ends will be charged to the tenant's estate.

The term "estate" means the total value of the tenant's money and possessions. We will write to you when the tenancy ends telling you about any money that is owed. You will need to either pay any outstanding amount from the estate or produce evidence that the tenant left insufficient funds to meet the debt. In your role of administering the tenant's affairs you will not be personally responsible for any debts.

Here is a quick checklist of the key points:

- ✓ In all cases you must give us 4 weeks' notice to end the tenancy. If not, you will still be charged the rent for the notice period
- ✓ If possible, it would be helpful if you would allow us to do an 'end of tenancy inspection' of the property during the 4 weeks' notice period. This will help us to let the property again more quickly and to give you advice on how the property should be left
- ✓ You must leave the property in a good condition as agreed with the person who carries out the end-of-tenancy visit
- ✓ Check that you have done everything listed in this leaflet and that you are ready to end the tenancy.

You must not leave anyone in the property

In the tenancy agreement this is called giving us “vacant possession” of the property. For example, if there is a lodger you must make sure they leave the property by the time the tenancy ends.

The notice time must start and end on a Monday. All the keys must be handed into City Hall before midday on the Monday when the tenancy ends. If you return them after this time extra rent will be charged to the account.

Rent will be charged until the tenancy ends.

End of tenancy Inspection

We will book an appointment with you to carry out this inspection as soon as we receive your notice. It is very important that you keep this appointment.

During the visit we will:

- ✓ complete any missing information on the ‘end of tenancy’ form
- ✓ discuss any arrears of rent outstanding and agree payments required to clear the account at the close of the tenancy
- ✓ identify repairs that are needed before the property is let again
- ✓ tell you about the condition in which we would like the property returned
- ✓ let you know if any damage or repair issues will be charged to the tenant’s estate.

Leaving the property in good order

A new tenant will be moving in, so you need to:

- ✓ leave the property clean, tidy, in good repair and decorative condition. This includes any garden, yard, balcony, loft or shed
- ✓ leave all our fixtures and fittings in the property
- ✓ disconnect and remove any cooker and washing machine safely. If you are not sure how to do this then get a professional to do this for you
- ✓ remove all belongings, including all carpets and any rubbish and items stored in the loft, from the property, sheds and garden unless agreed with us at the inspection
- ✓ make sure that you leave any garden or outside area clean and tidy.

If you have large items that you no longer want, you should contact Customer Services on 01522 873333 and they will tell you about our service for removing these from the property before you hand it back to us.

A charge will be made for the cost of any cleaning or rubbish that is left in the property. Our charges include administration costs as well as the cost of the work

We will inspect the property when you hand the keys in to make sure that the property has been left clean and tidy.

Gas and electricity

If gas and electricity were paid by a prepayment card or key, please leave the card or key inside the property. The card or key is chipped to the meter in the property and will not work anywhere else.

The gas and electricity meters should not be left with money owing on them. The tenant's estate is liable for that debt and if we incur any costs because of a debt, the estate will be charged for that cost.

The energy supplier will be changed to British Gas when we get the notice to end the tenancy. This is done to make it easy for the next tenant to get their service when they move in. Please do not be surprised if you receive a letter from British Gas stating that this has happened. It is quite normal as we have asked for the supplier to be changed.

Have you thought of everything?

Keys

When you have finished clearing the property please leave it locked up and secure.

Don't forget to hand all the keys, including any window, shed, garage, and any communal entrance door keys or fobs, into City Hall by midday on the Monday the tenancy ends.

Meters

Have these read or make a note of the readings yourself and tell the gas and electricity providers so that they can close the accounts.

Water

Tell the water company about ending the tenancy so that they can close the account.

Please turn off the mains supply stop tap when finished with the property to stop any damage from leaks or burst pipes, especially in cold weather.

Council tax

Please tell Customer Services at City Hall so that council tax charges can be ended.

Post

You can arrange for any post to be directed to your address through the local post office. There is a small charge for this service. If you don't redirect the post, any letters sent to the address will not be kept for you.

Gas appliances

You should get a Gas Safe-registered engineer to disconnect any gas cooker and any gas fire that were owned by the tenant. Please do not disconnect our gas fire if there is one fitted.

Phone and cable or satellite TV

You will have to tell the service provider about the death to end any service being provided.

TV licence

Inform the TV licensing authority of the death so that the licence can be ended. You can do this at your post office, or online.

Others you should tell

Contact any insurance companies, banks, building society and all other agencies with which the tenant had contact.

You will need to notify the Department of Works and Pensions if any income support, pension or any other benefit was being paid. You must contact the office where the claim is based.

If a council garage was rented

You only need to give us one week's notice to end a garage tenancy. You can give notice on the same form that you used to give notice on the property. You must pay the rent till the tenancy ends.

You can hand the garage keys in earlier as a shorter notice period is applied. Please return these keys to City Hall.

End of tenancy notice (bereavement)

I wish to advise you that:

Forename: _____ Last name: _____

Who held the tenancy of: House/Flat number: _____

Name of flats (if appropriate): _____

Street: _____

Postcode: _____

Died on (date): _____

I hereby give the required four weeks' notice, starting from Monday following the date of death for the tenancy to end on _____

In my capacity of next of kin/personal representative, I am advising you of my intention to end the tenancy of this property. The tenancy will end after four weeks from the date of death and rent will be charged till the tenancy ends. Keys may be handed in before the tenancy ends, but this will not result in a reduction in the amount of rent due unless the property can be let again before the end of tenancy date.

Council garages

Did the deceased tenant rent a garage from us? Yes / No

If you answered yes, please write the address of the garage below

Is there a water meter? Yes / No

Name of gas supplier _____

Name of electricity supplier _____

Signed..... Date.....

Forename: _____ Last Name: _____

Address:

House /Flat number: _____

Name of flats (if appropriate): _____

Street: _____

Town / City: _____

Postcode: _____

Home telephone number: _____ Mobile: _____

Email address: _____

Please remove this form from the leaflet and return it to:

Directorate of Housing and Investment

City of Lincoln Council

City Hall

Beaumont Fee

LINCOLN

LN1 1DE

OFFICE USE ONLY

End of tenancy visit booked by: _____

Housing Officer: _____

Date of visit: _____