

## Foreword

The Newcastle Private Rented Service was established in 1997 to help raise standards in private rented housing through a mixture of advice, training and support for both private landlords and tenants.

We are funded through Bridging NewcastleGateshead which was set up to improve housing quality and choice in NewcastleGateshead and its aim is to create great places to live.

We are part of Newcastle City Council and work in partnership with a range of departments and external agencies to deliver services across the private rented sector. We believe that a well-informed, well-run and supported private rented sector benefits the whole city.

For more information about us and useful information about private renting please visit our website [www.privaterentedservice.co.uk](http://www.privaterentedservice.co.uk)

or contact us at:

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**This handbook was produced by the Newcastle Private Rented Service.  
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## **Introduction**

Choosing to rent from a private landlord can be a complicated process. This guide will help give you an idea of what to look out for, what to expect and what you can do to help yourself when trying to find a suitable property.

It will also give you some helpful contact addresses of agencies that can help you when you need further advice and it will provide you with information you need to have a happy and safe tenancy.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS HANDBOOK IS INTENDED FOR GUIDANCE ONLY AND SHOULD NEVER BE SUBSTITUTED FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL ADVICE.**

We have named many sources of further advice within the text of this document. An asterisk\* in the text indicates that the address of the organisation can be found listed in the Useful Contacts section at the end of this handbook.

Some sections are sourced to Government Circulars and Newcastle City Council literature. You should check with the source for further information and regular updates. This handbook deals with housing law in England and Wales only.

## **Why Private Rented?**

Why rent a property from a private landlord instead of buying your own home or renting from a Local Authority or Housing Association? We have listed some of the main reasons below.

- Cost – renting from a private landlord is, in the short term, considerably cheaper than buying your own home and it can also be cheaper than renting through a letting or management company.
- Flexibility – you can negotiate the length, and sometimes the price, of the accommodation you want to live in.
- Choice – you can choose from a wide range of locations, prices and types of properties to suit your needs.
- Short term or long term – you can choose how long you want to stay in a property. You may be able to negotiate a long-term Tenancy Agreement or open-ended agreement.
- Less responsibility – you don't have to pay the same costs as homeowners and have less responsibility for repairs.
- Less initial cost – if a property is already furnished you don't have the added cost of buying new furniture and you don't always need to pay a large deposit.

## **Where to start looking for a property**

There are several places to look if you want to rent from a private landlord. Some of the most popular places are:

- Local newspapers - many landlords advertise available properties in the classified adverts of local free papers and newspapers.
- Estate agents – most estate agents have a section dealing with private lettings and properties.
- Letting agencies – which deal specifically in letting properties on behalf of private landlords.
- The local area – check for posters and signs in shop windows and also for boards outside properties advertising that they are available to let.
- Ask friends in the area who their landlords are. They may have other properties available.
- If you are a student check with your place of study. Many have their own accommodation office.
- Advice centres/accommodation registers in libraries or the Newcastle Private Rented Service.\*

## **Estate Agents and Lettings Companies**

You may want to go through an estate agent or lettings agent when you want to find a place to live. They can offer you a number of helpful services that can assist you when you want to find a new home. However, they charge for their services and it can work out to be expensive, for example they may charge a finding fee for matching you to a property.

A letting agency cannot charge you unless you accept a service from them, so always ask them to write down exactly what charges there will be and why. Ask for an example of their Tenancy Agreement to take away and look at before you sign any paperwork.

If you do pay a fee to a letting agent, you will only be able to get it back if the agreement was incorrect, not just because you changed your mind, so always be sure that you want a property before you hand over any money.

## **How Do I check if a Private Landlord is Reliable?**

If you want to rent directly from a private landlord you can ask them if they are a member of a national or local landlord body. These organisations usually have an agreed level of service to which their members should adhere. Landlords in Newcastle can also join an Accreditation Scheme, which means their properties and management have to reach a certain standard.

If a landlord is a member of these schemes you can contact them to discuss any problems. You can also check with your letting agent or an independent advice agency if you feel that you are not happy with a landlord's behaviour.

**Are you under 18?**

It is always worth getting advice before you decide to move into your own place as you will find that some services you may need when moving may not always be available to under 18 year olds.

The Local Authority may have a duty to house you if you find yourself homeless, threatened with homelessness or in unsuitable accommodation.

**Discrimination**

There are several Acts of Parliament, which makes it illegal for anyone to discriminate against another person on specific grounds.

Human Rights Act 2001

Race Relations Act 1976

Sex Discrimination Act 1976

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

For further advice contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission\*.

## Viewing a property

### Hints and Tips

- Try to see lots of properties in the area as this helps give you an idea of what is available and what is in your price range.
- When going to view a property, always go with a friend or family member. It is useful to have another person's opinion and it is safer to go with someone than to go alone.
- If possible, try to avoid going at night as it may be difficult to see any faults or disrepair issues.
- If you are unsure of the location, go early and check out the local area for shops, bus routes and local facilities.
- Take a list of questions that you want to ask the landlord as you may not remember them all at the time of the viewing.

### New Tenancy Checklist

This checklist has been designed to help you get information about a prospective tenancy and avoid some of the most common problem areas. Don't be afraid to ask more questions and remember do not sign an agreement if you don't understand it or are not happy with it.

#### Exterior

- Does the property look in good condition?
- Is the roof in good repair?
- Is the paintwork clean and tidy?
- Is the property secure? Are there sufficient window and door locks? Is there a burglar alarm?
- Is there rubbish in the garden or yard?

#### Interior

- Does it have hot and cold water?
- Is there sufficient heating and is it working?
- Is it reasonably clean and tidy and dry?
- Is it decorated nicely?
- Is it the right size?
- Have you checked for signs of problems (e.g. rotting windows/dangerous wiring/damp/security)?
- Is there a fire escape route?
- Have you seen the gas/electrical safety certificates?
- If it is furnished - is there a complete list of contents (inventory)?
- Do you agree with the inventory?

#### Tenancy Agreement

- Is the landlord insured? e.g. buildings insurance.
- Have you checked the tenancy agreement?
- Who is responsible for repairs?

- Who is responsible for decoration?
- Who is responsible for bills and how are bills to be paid? (Council Tax, Gas, Electricity, Water Rates)
- Does the landlord keep a set of keys? (If yes, remember that they are not allowed access without your prior permission.)
- Is a deposit required?
- How much?
- Which Tenancy Deposits Scheme is the landlord using? Custodial or Insurance? (see section on Deposits)
- When can you move in?

The landlord is responsible, under the law, to maintain and repair certain items; if you are unsure make sure you get advice (see section on Repairs).

If you are unsure about any of the answers to these questions you may need to take further advice or consider alternative accommodation.

## **Shared accommodation and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

A cheaper way of going into private rented accommodation is to consider sharing and there are several ways that you could do this.

- You could live in a property that you share with your landlord; this could be either as a lodger, or as a tenant.
- Or you could live in a house of multiple occupation (HMO).

There are different types of HMO, but it usually refers to properties that are let by individual rooms. Occupants may have to share a common entrance, kitchen facilities, bathroom facilities and a living room.

HMOs have different safety regulations to other types of properties and some HMOs require the landlord to apply for a licence. If you live in a property that has three or more storeys, with five or more unrelated people sharing the property it is likely that you live in a licensable HMO. You should ask the landlord to provide a copy of this licence. If you need more information contact Newcastle City Council Regulatory Services and Public Protection\* or to check if your landlord has received a licence for the property you live in you can look online at [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk).

As a tenant you may also have a different type of Tenancy Agreement and different legal rights. For more information contact an advice agency or the Newcastle Private Rented Service\*.

## **Safety Regulations**

### **Gas Safety**

There is a legal duty on landlords and managing agents to provide a certificate of safety (CP12) for all gas installations and appliances in a property that is available to let.

A gas safety inspection should only be carried out by a CORGI engineer (Council of Registered Gas Installers)\*. This must be done annually and a copy of the certificate must be provided for the tenants of the property, showing the date of inspection, any defects identified and action taken. Copies of the certificate should be kept for two years from the date of inspection.

### **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

All landlords are required to maintain their property to a specific standard outlined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The system covers 29 areas of potential hazard and includes things such as cold and damp, crowding and security. If you feel there are hazards in your home which are detrimental to your health and safety you should contact Newcastle City Council Regulatory Services and Public Protection \*.

### **Electrical Safety**

Landlords have a legal obligation to ensure that electrical installations are safe and are maintained in a safe condition for the duration of a tenancy. A landlord can be liable to pay damages to a tenant or resident for personal injury or death that was caused by an unsafe property.

- It is recommended that a valid certificate of electrical safety be supplied by an approved contractor who is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA)\*.
- Inspections should be carried out between every five and ten years and if any alterations are carried out between inspections, work should be carried out by an approved contractor and should be re-inspected.

### **Furniture and Fittings**

A landlord that supplies furniture and furnishing with a property has a duty to make sure that they comply with fire safety regulations.

- Furniture must meet the fire resistance requirements and have the required labels attached. Since March 1993 it has been illegal to introduce any furniture into a property that does not comply with these regulations.
- Display labels or swing ticket must be attached to the furniture stating its compliance with the regulations.

## **Fire Safety**

If the property is an HMO, there are special standards that need to be taken into consideration. However, in general you should be aware of the potential fire risks within a property.

- It is recommended that a property should have at least one or two fitted and working smoke detectors that are regularly maintained and tested.

Other fire precautions that may be fitted are:

- Fire alarm/early warning detection
- Fire doors
- Emergency lighting
- Fire extinguishers/blankets
- A planned clear escape route.

You should always take steps to protect yourself and reduce the risk of fire wherever possible.

For more information on any of these safety matters please see our contacts page for the appropriate organisation.

## **Energy Performance Certificates**

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 landlords advertising their properties for let must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and this should be made available to prospective tenants when viewing the property. The EPC gives a rating on how energy efficient a property is and as a tenant this information is useful to you so you can judge how expensive it might be to heat the property.

The EPC also makes recommendations on how to make the property more energy efficient. The landlord is under no obligation to make these changes, however there are numerous grants available to landlords and tenants to improve energy efficiency in the home and you might want to talk to your landlord about these.

## **Furnished or unfurnished?**

There is no standard definition of furnished, unfurnished or part furnished accommodation. You should always check with the landlord exactly what is included in the inventory for the property. A rough guide is set out below:

- Unfurnished – properties may be let slightly cheaper if they are let unfurnished. Unfurnished may also mean no furniture but carpets and curtains are supplied.
- Part furnished – this generally means that carpets, curtains and some white goods (e.g. fridge, cooker) are included.
- Furnished – the standard of furnished property does vary depending on the landlord. But generally we recommend that to call a property fully furnished it should include: - carpets, curtains, beds and wardrobes for each bedroom, table and chairs, cooker and a fridge.

You can ask the landlord to provide more furniture or to remove unwanted objects but it is advisable to have the details included in the Tenancy Agreement.

It is also recommended that a list of all the furniture provided should be written down (this is called an inventory). The Inventory should note each item and its condition. It should then be signed by both the landlord and the tenant to help prevent later disagreements.

If you are viewing a property while it is still tenanted be sure to check what is being left behind by the occupants before you move in.

## **Before you move in**

Once you have viewed several properties and decided that you would like to take on a new tenancy there are several things to consider before you move in.

### **Tenancy Agreements**

A Tenancy Agreement contains information on the amount of rent you have to pay, the length of time you are permitted to stay in the property as well as your and your landlord's rights and obligations (things that must or must not be done).

It is strongly recommended that you receive a written copy of your Tenancy Agreement from your landlord. It is important that you read it carefully before signing and agreeing to the terms. Ask questions if you do not understand the terms. All tenants must sign the agreement.

The Tenancy Agreement should also clearly state the landlord's name and address (this does not have to be their home address but it must be an address in the England or Wales where post will reach them).

Also check: -

- The type of letting and how much security it offers.
- How much the rent is. What does it include?
- How much do you have to pay in advance (Deposits) and are there any extra charges?
- Repairs and decoration - who is responsible for what?
- What happens if you want to leave?

Landlords usually offer fixed term assured shorthold agreements of six or twelve months but you may be able to negotiate a longer period, or ask for an open-ended agreement. Another type of contract is an assured tenancy. This gives the tenant more rights to remain in the property providing they are not in breach of the tenancy.

If you are a tenant and you are unsure what type of tenancy you have, check your Tenancy Agreement. If you don't have one, ask your landlord for a copy of it.

More information on Tenancy Agreements can be found in the government booklet '*Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies – A Guide for Tenants*'.

### **Periodic Tenancies**

If your original Tenancy Agreement is not for a fixed term or the fixed term on your agreement has come to an end and has not been renewed, it is then called a statutory periodic tenancy. This means that it is renewed every rental period. There are some differences between a fixed term tenancy and a periodic tenancy which could affect your rights.

If you have any questions or problems regarding your Tenancy Agreement always get further information from a Solicitor or advice agency.

## **Deposits**

### **What is a deposit?**

A tenancy deposit is money\*\* that is intended to be held as security to make sure that the tenant pays their rent and does not cause damage to the property.

The amount and circumstances under which a deposit or part of a deposit can be withheld should be outlined in your tenancy agreement.

(\*\* NB Money can be cheques, postal orders, money orders or other types of currency as well as cash)

### **Paying a deposit**

Normally a landlord will ask you to pay a deposit at the start of a tenancy, typically equal to one month's rent.

The landlord is now responsible for ensuring that the deposit is protected within 14 days of receiving the deposit from you.

The landlord should then give you the following information within 14 days so you know how the deposit is being protected and where the money is being held.

- Contact details of the scheme protecting the deposit.
- How to apply for the money to be returned at the end of the tenancy.
- Information explaining the purpose of the deposit.
- What to do if there is a dispute at the end of the tenancy regarding the deposit.

If you cannot afford a deposit you can apply for help with this. Contact the Newcastle Private Rented Service\* for information on the Rent Deposit Scheme.

### **Referencing**

Most landlords in Newcastle including social landlords now reference check prospective tenants. This means checking your conduct with previous landlords, employers or personal contacts. Some landlords ask for bank references and they may pass the charge for this on to you.

Some organisations may also check with the police for a criminal record - it may be taken into account if you have convictions for drugs, anti-social behaviour or damage to or against properties or persons.

### **Guarantors**

If you cannot supply references or a deposit some landlords are willing to accept a guarantor. A guarantor is someone else for the landlord to claim against if you don't conduct the tenancy correctly or pay the rent. It is usually a parent or close relative.

## **Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance**

If you need help paying your rent you can apply for Housing Benefit (HB) or Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to help you do this. HB or LHA is a government paid benefit for households on low income and can be used to pay all or part of your rent. You can find HB and LHA application forms at some local housing offices, City Council Customer Service Centres and at the Private Rented Service office.

To find out the maximum\*\* amount that you are entitled to, you need to find out how many rooms you and your household are entitled to, and what the rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is for households of that size in your town or city. This can be done when you collect your form.

(\*\* LHA won't take into account any deductions from the full amount for things such as income, non-dependent charges etc)

You will receive the benefit direct so you will need to make arrangements with your landlord to make regular payments. In some circumstances it can be arranged that payments can be made directly to a landlord or letting agent. Contact your local Housing Benefit Section\* for more information.

**Licences**

Some people who rent from a private landlord are technically called 'licensees'. They have fewer rights than tenants. Check your Tenancy Agreement carefully and if it mentions the words *licensor* or *licensee* you should get further advice. If you think you may have one of these tenancies you can get further information from the Citizens' Advice Bureau\*, law centre\* or other agency.

## **Moving in**

### **Practical Tips**

Moving home is a busy time. Here are some practical hints and tips around moving home.

- Arrange a meeting with the landlord to receive the keys. This can also be an opportunity to discuss issues that you want to raise with him before you move into the property.
- Check the meter readings together and ask the landlord who the current utility suppliers are. If you do not know who the suppliers are you can find out from the National Grid (previously known as Transco)\* for gas supply and Mpass\* for Electric supply.
- You and your landlord should inspect the property together and agree the inventory before both signing it.
- Ask the landlord how the heating and other appliances work. If possible ask for copies of handbooks for reference.
- Make sure you have copies of keys for locks etc including window locks and bars.
- Ask the landlord the procedure for rubbish removal. Is it collected from the front or rear of the property? What is the usual collection day and method of collection (wheelie bin)? Is recyclable material collected separately? How can you get rid of bulky items?
- Get contact details for your landlord in case of an emergency.

### **Rent Books**

Landlords are legally obliged to provide a rent book if the rent is stated to be paid weekly. It is recommended that a rent book be provided for every tenancy and that it is kept up to date. It can be used as a record of payments and to resolve any dispute.

### **Rent Payments**

Rent is usually paid in regular weekly or monthly instalments and it is also usually paid in advance.

You can choose to pay by several methods but it is advised that you set up a Standing Order to make regular payments if you have a bank account. If you cannot pay by Standing Order try to pay by cheque or to get receipts so that a payment is recorded.

### **Help With Your Rent**

You may be able to apply for a loan, grant or benefit to help pay your rent in advance if you are on a low income. The Department of Work and Pensions\* can provide payments, discretionary grants or loans in circumstances when your regular income is not able to meet a need. The money is paid through local benefit offices and in the case of a loan is repaid weekly from your benefit.

- If you are working but have a low income or are claiming Income Support or Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance you may be eligible for Housing Benefit. The amount of benefit you receive will depend on your income level and is assessed on your age, household details and rent level.
- You can get Housing Benefit paid directly to your landlord in some circumstances.

The rules for Housing Benefit are sometimes complex and it is always worth contacting your local Housing Benefits Office\* or advice centre for more information.

### **Council Tax**

Council Tax is paid to the Local Authority and it is based upon the property value. It is payable from the day you move in so it is important to inform the Local Authority of any change in address. Single occupiers can claim a 25% reduction (more if you claim benefits) and households occupied solely by students are exempt.

You can apply for Council Tax Benefit in the same way you apply for Housing Benefit. Contact Newcastle City Council\* for more information on any of the points raised in this section.

### **Utility Bills**

As well as your rent you will also have to pay other bills while you are living in the property. Utilities and bills that most households have to budget for are:- Council Tax, Electricity, Gas, Water Rates, TV licence, Telephone and Contents Insurances.

You may have to pay connection charges for some utility bills or pay a small deposit as security against non-payment of bills. Some companies will carry out credit checks before providing a service. You should take readings from meters and inform the relevant companies when you move in.

## **Once you are in**

It is important to look after your home and keep it in a good condition. Your Tenancy Agreement should state who is responsible for maintaining which parts of your home.

At some point you may face problems with your home or the furniture in it or even your neighbours. This section will help you deal with problems you may have.

### **Repairs**

The law states that your landlord is responsible for repairs to the structure and outside of the property such as drains, gutters and pipes.

The landlord must also keep the following in good repair and working order:

- The water, gas and electricity supply installations
- The sanitary installations, and
- The fires, radiators and wall heaters.

The legal duty for the above DOES NOT COVER any gas or electrical appliances such as cookers and fridges (however, a gas cooker must be safe under the gas safety regulations). You must discuss repairs to these items with your landlord.

Even if your landlord has said to you, "if there are any problems, just give me a ring", always confirm the need for repairs in writing. Make sure the letter is dated and keep a copy for your records.

When your landlord does know, they have the right to come in and do the repair, but they should agree dates and times with you first. The landlord is not responsible for repairs to anything that belongs to you. Nor are they responsible for damage which you or your visitors have caused.

You SHOULD NOT withhold rent for any repairs that the landlord has refused to carry out. If you do you may risk losing your home.

Newcastle City Council's Regulatory Services and Public Protection \* may be able to help enforce some repairs such as leaking roofs, damaged toilets, faulty electric circuits or damp walls and rooms.

If you have a problem with any disrepair in your home you should get further advice about your rights.

REMEMBER, you have a duty to look after the property and to repair anything you damage.

### **Dampness**

Dampness is a common problem and can be caused by either condensation or structural faults.

If you have condensation on windows, puddles on windowsills, mould and dampness on walls or even water drops appearing on walls it could be condensation rather than dampness.

To remedy these complaints you should increase ventilation and/or heating in the property and discuss with your landlord increasing the level of insulation in the property. There are many schemes that offer to provide increased insulation to a property either for free or subsidised by the government. Most of these schemes have some criteria such as location of property or incomes, age or health of its occupiers; for more information contact the Newcastle Private Rented Service.\*

If this does not remedy the situation discuss the problem with your landlord and ask him to take action. Further advice and action can be taken through Newcastle City Council's Regulatory Services and Public Protection\*.

### **Noisy Neighbours**

If you feel that your neighbours are causing problems you should attempt to talk to them about the problem before raising it with any statutory agency. They may not be aware that their noise is causing disturbance to others. Ask your neighbours to change their behaviour but if this does not work, you may need to consider raising the matter with somebody such as the police or the City Council.

If the noise is occasional and unpredictable, it is best to call the anti-social behaviour helpline on 0300 1000 101 for each individual incident. If the noise is regular contact the council's Environment Team\* who may be able to issue you with a noise meter or other method of recording the regular noise disturbance.

Alternatively if the noise disturbance is a question of varying lifestyles between you, mediation organisations may be able to assist. Contact your local Council to find out what services are available.

If you are unsure about how to deal with any issue that arises during your tenancy, you can ask for advice from the Newcastle Private Rented Service\* or other advice agency.

Remember that you are someone's neighbour so be a good tenant. Try to conduct your tenancy in an appropriate way; you may need a reference from your current landlord in the future.

### **Remember you are responsible for...**

- Looking after the property and what is in it.
- Paying your rent on time.
- Making a prompt application for Housing Benefit, if you apply for it, and providing all the correct information to the Housing Benefits office. If the benefits amount is lower than the amount on the agreement then you must pay the extra.
- Not going against the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.
- Allowing reasonable access to the property for repairs and inspections.

- Making sure that you or your visitors do not harass, annoy or cause a nuisance to anybody who lives or works in the local area, including your landlord or their employees.

### **You have rights and so does your landlord.**

Every landlord has the right to...

- Charge a market rent.
- Fix the terms of the Tenancy Agreement before the tenancy begins.
- Receive a rent as and when it falls due.
- Be advised of any necessary repairs.
- Be given proper notice by a tenant if they wish to leave.
- Inspect the property (by appointment).
- Obtain a court order if the tenant has not left the property once the notice period has expired.

### **Important points to remember**

We have listed some other points to be aware of below.

- You are entitled to live in your home free from harassment by your landlord e.g. your landlord is not entitled to enter your home without your permission, or to interfere with your gas, electricity or water supplies.
- A verbal agreement is just as binding as a written agreement, but always get a written agreement whenever possible.
- If you are an Assured or Assured Shorthold tenant your landlord can only increase your rent once a year (unless he has your agreement to do so).
- Deposits are returnable when you leave your tenancy as long as your landlord does not have a valid claim against it, e.g. to repair damage for which you are responsible.
- Get a receipt for any payment you make to your landlord or agent, clearly stating what the money was for.
- Your rights will be limited if you share accommodation with your landlord.
- You can usually only be evicted by a court order.

## **Leaving the Property**

In virtually all situations a period of NOTICE, either by the landlord or the tenant, must be given. How long the notice period is depends on the situation and how straightforward this process is depends on your relationship with your landlord and a willingness to co-operate.

### **Deciding to Leave**

If your tenancy is for a fixed period (usually six or twelve months) and you want to end your tenancy during this time you can only do so if your landlord agrees. You must discuss this with your landlord. If your landlord agrees you will probably be asked to sign a 'surrender of tenancy' which will also be signed by your landlord. If your landlord refuses to allow you to leave the tenancy early and you leave anyway you may be held in breach of tenancy terms and you will still be liable for the rent.

If your tenancy has become a periodic tenancy on a weekly or monthly basis (this happens automatically once the fixed period on your Tenancy Agreement expires), you can end the tenancy by giving the landlord written notice. For a weekly tenancy the notice must be at least four weeks; for a monthly tenancy the notice must be at least one month.

If you discuss things with your landlord first, they may let you end the tenancy early, but you must have their agreement.

### **My Landlord Wants Me out**

A landlord can end an Assured Shorthold Tenancy by giving the tenant a minimum of two months' written notice (Section 21, Housing Act 1988). No reason is needed and although there is no prescribed form required it must be in writing.

A landlord cannot ask you to leave before the end of a fixed term, unless you have broken a clause of the Tenancy Agreement.

At the end of the fixed term tenancy they can get a possession order from the court and it will automatically be granted as long as the landlord has followed the correct procedures. You may have to pay the landlord's court costs.

A landlord can also serve a notice on the basis of a particular reason called a ground. In this case you must be given a special type of notice which tells you why the landlord wants you to leave.

The landlord must give either two months' or two weeks' notice (depending on the reasons) and in some instances the landlord can go to court before the notice period has ended.

You are within your rights to stay in the property once the period of notice has expired. Your landlord will have to go to court to get a possession order in order to evict you. It is advisable to always take further advice if your landlord serves you with any notice.

### **Harassment and Illegal Eviction**

Some tenants can be harassed or illegally evicted by their landlord. It is a serious criminal offence and it may take one of many forms such as threats of violence or cutting off essential services. If you feel that you are being harassed by your landlord, further advice is available through the Tenancy Relations Service\*. They can investigate the matter and they can prosecute landlords, if there is sufficient evidence to do so. You may be able to get free legal help.

### **When You Vacate the Property**

- Secure the property,
- Return all sets of keys to the landlord,
- Check the meter readings with the landlord if possible,
- Arrange to have your mail forwarded to your new address,
- Check the property with the landlord so that any deposit can be returned.

## **Finally**

We hope that you have found this handbook useful and we wish you luck with your tenancy.

You will find a list of useful contacts at the end of this handbook. For more information about us and useful information about private renting please visit our website [www.privaterentedservice.co.uk](http://www.privaterentedservice.co.uk) or contact us at:

91 Tamworth Road, Arthur's Hill, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 5AS

Tel: 0191 273 6103

Fax: 0191 273 6117

Email: [privaterentedservice@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:privaterentedservice@newcastle.gov.uk)

This handbook was produced by the Newcastle Private Rented Service.

## Useful Contacts

### **NATIONAL**

#### **Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA)**

Arbon House  
6 Tournament Court  
Edgehill Drive  
Warwick CV34 6LG

**Phone** 01926 496 800  
**Fax** 01926 417 788  
**Email** [info@arla.co.uk](mailto:info@arla.co.uk)  
**website** [www.arla.co.uk](http://www.arla.co.uk)

#### **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline  
Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTR  
Arndale House  
Arndale Centre  
Manchester M4 3EQ

**Phone** 0845 604 6610  
**Textphone** 0845 604 6620  
**Fax** 0845 604 6630  
**Email** [info@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:info@equalityhumanrights.com)  
**website** [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

#### **Council of Mortgage Lenders**

Bush House  
North West Wing  
Aldwych  
London WC2B 4PJ

**Phone** 020 7438 8956  
**Fax** 0845 373 6778  
**Email** [info@cml.org.uk](mailto:info@cml.org.uk)  
**website** [www.cml.org.uk](http://www.cml.org.uk)

#### **Council for Registered Gas Installers (CORGI)**

1 Elmwood  
Chineham Park  
Crockford Lane  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire RG24 8WG

**Phone** General Reception - 0800 915 0480  
**Fax** 0870 401 2600  
**Email** [enquiries@trustcorgi.com](mailto:enquiries@trustcorgi.com)  
**website** [www.trustcorgi.com](http://www.trustcorgi.com)

#### **Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)**

Ministerial Correspondence Unit  
Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory

Reform  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0ET  
**Phone** 020 7215 5000  
**Minicom** 020 7215 6740  
**Fax** 020 7215 0105  
**Email** [enquiries@berr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@berr.gsi.gov.uk)  
**website** [www.berr.gov.uk](http://www.berr.gov.uk)

#### **Electrical Contractors' Association**

ECA  
ESCA House  
34 Palace Court  
London W2 4HY  
**Phone** 020 7313 4800  
**Fax** 020 7221 7344  
**Email** [electricalcontractors@eca.co.uk](mailto:electricalcontractors@eca.co.uk)  
**website** [www.eca.co.uk](http://www.eca.co.uk)

#### **Communities and Local Government Free Literature**

PO Box 236  
Wetherby LS23 7NB  
**Phone** 0870 1226 236  
**Fax** 0870 1226 237  
**Email** [contactus@communities.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@communities.gov.uk)  
[communities@twoten.com](mailto:communities@twoten.com)  
**website** [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

#### **Health and Safety Executive**

Arden House  
Regent Centre  
Regent Farm Road  
Gosforth  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3JN  
**Phone** 0191 202 6200  
**Fax** 0191 202 6300  
**website** [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

#### **Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO)**

In Newcastle, publications produced by The Stationery Office can be obtained from:  
Blackwell's Bookshop  
141 Percy Street  
Newcastle NE1 7RS  
**Phone** 0870 600 5522  
**website** [www.opsi.gov.uk/about/hmso.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/about/hmso.htm)

#### **HM Revenue & Customs**

Aidan House  
All Saints Business Centre

**Phone** Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 2TT  
0845 302 1456  
**Fax** 0191 230 0884  
**website** [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

### **Land Registry**

Land Registry  
Durham (Southfield) Office  
Southfield House  
Southfield Way  
Durham DH1 5TR  
**Phone** 0191 301 3500  
**website** [www.landregistry.gov.uk](http://www.landregistry.gov.uk)

### **National Association of Estate Agents**

Arbon House  
6 Tournament Court  
Edgehill Drive  
Warwick CV34 6LG  
**Phone** 01926 496800  
**Fax** 01926 417788  
**Email** [info@naea.co.uk](mailto:info@naea.co.uk)  
**website** [www.naea.co.uk](http://www.naea.co.uk)

### **National Approved Letting Scheme**

Tavistock House  
5 Rodney Road  
Cheltenham GL50 1HX  
**Phone** 01242 581712  
**Fax** 01242 232518  
**Email** [info@nalscheme.co.uk](mailto:info@nalscheme.co.uk)  
**website** [www.nalscheme.co.uk](http://www.nalscheme.co.uk)

### **National Federation of Residential Landlords**

8 Wellington House  
Camden Street  
Portslade  
East Sussex BN41 1DU  
**Phone** 0845 456 9313  
01273 423295  
**Fax** 01273 421962  
**Email** [info@nfri.co.uk](mailto:info@nfri.co.uk)  
**website** [www.nfri.co.uk](http://www.nfri.co.uk)

### **National Landlords' Association**

22-26 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TJ  
**Phone** 020 7840 8900  
**Fax** 0871 247 7535  
**Email** [info@landlords.org.uk](mailto:info@landlords.org.uk)

**website** [www.landlords.org.uk](http://www.landlords.org.uk)

**Communities and Local Government**

Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

**Phone** 020 7944 4400

**Email** [contactus@communities.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@communities.gov.uk)

**website** [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

**Office of Fair Trading**

Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London EC4Y 8JX

**Phone** 08454 04 05 06

**Email** [enquiries@oft.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@oft.gov.uk)

**website** [www.oft.gov.uk](http://www.oft.gov.uk)

**Ofgem**

9 Millbank  
London SW1P 3GE

**Phone** 020 7901 7295

**Fax** 020 7901 7196

**Email** [consumeraffairs@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:consumeraffairs@ofgem.gov.uk)

**website** [www.ofgem.gov.uk](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk)

**Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)**

RICS Contact Centre  
Surveyor Court  
Westwood Way  
Coventry CV4 8JE

**Phone** 0870 333 1600

**Fax** 020 7 334 3811

**Email** [contactrics@rics.org](mailto:contactrics@rics.org)

**website** [www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org)

**Shelter**

Shelter  
88 Old Street  
London EC1V 9HU

**Phone** 0808 800 4444

**website** [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

**NationalGrid** (have replaced Transco)

General gas enquiries to:  
National Grid House  
Warwick Technology Park  
Gallows Hill  
Warwick CV34 6DA

**Phone** 0845 605 6677  
**website** [www.nationalgrid.com/uk](http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk)

### **Department of Work and Pensions**

**Web** [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

### **NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

NB If outside Newcastle upon Tyne please contact your Local Authority for local contacts

#### **Housing Advice Centre/Homeless Unit**

112-114 Pilgrim Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6SQ  
**Phone** 0191 277 1711  
**website** [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)

#### **National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux (NACAB)**

St Cuthbert's Chambers  
35 Nelson Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5AN  
**Phone** 0870 126 4015  
**Fax** 0191 232 0461  
**Email** [citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk](mailto:citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk)  
**website** [www.newcastlecab.org.uk](http://www.newcastlecab.org.uk) [Newcastle CAB website]  
[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) [NACAB website]

#### **Newcastle City Council**

Council Tax, Housing Benefit, Social Services, Trading Standards Team, Public Health and Environmental Protection, Newcastle Private Landlords' Forum, Accreditation Standards

**Ask switchboard for the relevant department or see the website for more details**

Civic Centre  
Barras Bridge  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE99 1RD  
**Phone** 0191 232 8520  
**website** [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)

#### **BridgingNewcastleGateshead**

1st Floor  
Central Exchange Buildings  
128 Grainger Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5AF  
**Phone** 0191 277 2666  
**Fax** 0191 277 2660  
**Email** [info@bridgingng.org.uk](mailto:info@bridgingng.org.uk)  
**website** [www.bridgingng.org.uk](http://www.bridgingng.org.uk)

**Newcastle Law Centre**

1st Floor  
1 Charlotte Square  
Newcastle  
NE1 4XF

**Phone** 0191 230 4777  
**Fax** Fax: 0191 233 0295  
**Email** [info@newcastlelawcentre.co.uk](mailto:info@newcastlelawcentre.co.uk)

**Newcastle Private Rented Service**

91 Tamworth Road  
Arthur's Hill  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 5AS

**Phone** 0191 273 6103  
**Fax** 0191 273 6117  
**Email** [privaterentedservice@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:privaterentedservice@newcastle.gov.uk)  
**website** [www.privaterentedservice.co.uk](http://www.privaterentedservice.co.uk)

**The Rent Service**

Washington Office  
Durham House  
Washington NE38 7SD

**Phone** 08450 264 696  
**Email** [customer.services@therentservice.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@therentservice.gov.uk)  
**website** [www.therentservice.gov.uk](http://www.therentservice.gov.uk)

**Her Majesty's Courts Service**

The Law Courts  
The Quayside  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3LA

**Phone** 0191 201 2000  
**Fax** 0191 201 2001  
**website** [www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk](http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk)

**Tenancy Relations Service**

Housing Advice Centre  
112-114 Pilgrim Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6SQ

**Phone** 0191 277 1720  
**website** [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)

**ARCH (Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment)**

14 Jesmond Road West  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PQ

**Phone** 0191 277 7833  
08000 32 32 88(24 hour reporting line)  
**email** [arch@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:arch@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Shelter - North East Housing Aid Centre**

1-2 Blackfriars Court  
Dispensary Lane

**Phone** Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4XB  
0844 515 1601  
**Fax** 0844 515 2914  
**email** [tyneside@shelter.org.uk](mailto:tyneside@shelter.org.uk)

**Night Time Noise Service (Newcastle City Council)**

Civic Centre  
Barras Bridge  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE99 1RD  
**Phone** 0300 1000 101 (8 pm till 4pm)  
0191 211 6102 (office hours)  
**email** [phep@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:phep@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Your Homes Newcastle**

YHN Benton  
Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7LX  
**Phone** 0191 278 8600  
**Minicom** 0191 278 7727  
**Web** [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk)