Housing Services

Leaving your council home

What to do if you are moving from your Council home
Moving home can be a stressful experience. When you move out of your property, either to transfer into another Council property or move somewhere else, it is hard to remember everything you should do. This leaflet explains what to do when you move home and provides useful telephone numbers, addresses and a checklist to help you.

Contents

Giving notice to end the tenancy 3
Returning the keys 3
Up to date rent 3
Clearing your home 4
Alterations or damage 5
Home improvements 5
Pets 6
Gas, water and electricity 6
Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Council Tax 7
Advice for relatives and next of kin 8
Checklist 9
Useful addresses and telephone numbers 10
Contact us 11
Giving notice to end the tenancy

You must give four weeks notice in writing if you are moving out of your home. You can send your notice letter to your Neighbourhood Office or First Point or alternatively visit your Neighbourhood Office or First Point where you will sign a termination of tenancy form.

It is part of your conditions of tenancy to allow a Neighbourhood Officer to inspect your property during the notice period, so leave a phone number to allow us to arrange access with you. You must continue to pay your rent until your tenancy has ended. After the four week notice period your tenancy will end and you will not have any right to stay in your former home.

The only times you do not have to give four weeks notice is if you are transferring to another Sheffield Council tenancy or moving into a residential care home.

Returning the keys

When you call at the office to give up your property, you must sign a quitting form. You will be given a date and time to return your keys.

It is very important that you return all the keys on this date or before if possible. If your tenancy was linked to a door entry system, you must return all access fobs as well. If you don’t, you will be charged for the use and occupation of your former home until you hand in the keys or we change the locks. If we do change your locks you will be charged for the cost of the lock change. Remember you are unlikely to get Housing Benefit if you are not actually living at the property.

Up to date rent

When you hand in your keys your rent account must be clear. If you are unable to pay any arrears in full, you should discuss this with us. We will ask you to make a weekly
payment arrangement to clear your debt.

If you are not moving to another council tenancy you must give a forwarding address and contact telephone number so we may contact you about any outstanding rent.

If you owe us money and do not tell us where you are moving to we will take steps to find you, and may use tracing agents and debt collection agencies to help us. We may also take legal action to recover the debt. You could also be disqualified from the Housing Register if you apply for a council tenancy in the future.

Clearing your Home

It is your responsibility to leave your property clean, tidy and ready for the next person to move in, and we will charge you for any items left behind that you have not discussed with us beforehand to obtain our permission to leave.

However, this does not apply to any curtains or blinds if you have no further use for them. You are welcome to leave them in the property.

Any other item such as carpets or other floor coverings that you wish to leave will need to be discussed with the local Neighbourhood Office, who will arrange for an officer to visit.

There is a scale of charges for removing items left behind, ranging from a minimum of £90, rising to over £250 if a lot of items need to be cleared. Any items will be thrown away and the Council will not accept responsibility should you want them back.

Make sure you clear all outbuildings, lofts, cupboards, and remove any satellite dishes. Gardens should be left in a tidy condition and cleared of rubbish.

Do not remove any furniture that was provided by the Council for a furnished tenancy.
Alterations or damage

You need to put right any damage caused by yourself, family or guests. If you have removed doors, fires or other fittings which were there when you moved in, you must leave satisfactory replacements. If you have fitted a new gas fire for example, and wish to take it with you, you must replace it with a satisfactory replacement that is in good working order. A charge will be made if you do not.

Remember – only gas contractors who are on the ‘Gas safe register;’ can remove gas appliances, as the supply must be properly sealed. **Unsealed pipes are very dangerous.** If they are not sealed then legal action may be taken against you and you will be charged the repair costs. For more information visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Home improvements

Any home improvements of fittings you have installed will normally become the property of the city council, and must be left in good working order.

You may be able to receive an allowance for some improvements (such as central heating) before you give up your tenancy. To find out more, contact the Neighbourhood Office or read the leaflet ‘Tenants own improvements’ available on our website.

Ask your Neighbourhood Office for advice.

Disposing of bulky refuse

Household and garden waste can be taken to any of the city’s five household waste recycling centres which are located across the city and accept many different household materials.

Many large blocks of flats and maisonettes have a dry store facility in which you can place your unwanted bulky items.
If there is no dry store in your block, please contact your local Neighbourhood Office for advice on how to dispose of your bulky items.

You may arrange for the removal of bulky refuse before you leave by contacting Veolia Environmental Services. This service offers one free annual collection for Council tenants. Veolia will remove items such as chairs, fridges, settees and cookers.

For more information please telephone 273 4567. Please remember to give reasonable notice to arrange for collection prior to handing in your keys. Veolia make collections within 7 working days for up to a maximum of 12 items.

Some charities collect unwanted furniture to help people who are unable to furnish their home themselves. It is worth contacting them - someone may have a use for the items you no longer need. Try internet search “unwanted furniture charities Sheffield”.

**Pets**

Remember to make arrangements for your pets when you move. If you are not allowed to keep pets in your new home, telephone the RSPCA for advice. Alternatively your Neighbourhood Officer may be able to provide you with other useful telephone numbers.

If you are moving to a Council property it is very important that you check if pets are allowed in your new home.

You will be breaking the conditions of tenancy if you take pets where they are not allowed. This will result in court action being taken against you.

**Gas, water and electricity**

Before you leave make sure that you have turned off all taps and if possible turn the water off at the stop tap. This is especially important during winter. If you are not sure where the stop tap is, ask at your local Neighbourhood Office.
Remember to get in touch with your utility suppliers with final readings of gas, electricity and water meters.

**Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Council Tax**

If you already receive Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support, make sure you continue to receive all that is due to you by telling the Benefits Service your new address as soon as possible. It is simpler and easier to do this online: [www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/benefit/changeincircumstances](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/benefit/changeincircumstances)

If you don’t receive Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support, you must let the Council Tax Office know of your move. You can do this online at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/council-tax/if-you-move-home](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/council-tax/if-you-move-home)

If you do not receive Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support at your present address, it may be worth making a new claim at your new address. Do this online at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/benefit/claimingbenefit](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/benefit/claimingbenefit)

If you do not have online access at home, you can use our assisted, self-service online facilities at the First Point at Howden House on Union Street or your Neighbourhood Office.

You can also ring the Benefits Call Centre on **273 6777**.
Advice for relatives and next of kin

If you are responsible for clearing a property when a relative or friend dies:

• Contact the local Neighbourhood Office as soon as possible and say when you are returning the keys.

• We will not charge for any rent due for two weeks after the death, if the keys are handed in within this period.

• The Council will claim any outstanding rent from the estate left by the deceased for any rent arrears accumulated before their death and any rent due if the keys are not handed in on time.

• If you wish to pay the outstanding rent due the staff at the Neighbourhood Office will be able to help you.

• Housing Benefit will cease on the Sunday following the death.

• Remember to have the gas and electricity meters read before returning the keys.

• If your relative or friend has a city wide alarm pendent, please return it with the keys.
CHECKLIST

1. Give notice (if applicable)

2. Arrange an inspection of your tenancy

3. Make a note of the date the tenancy ends and what date you need to return the keys

4. Arrange mail redirection

5. Arrange removals

6. People who require your new address
   i. Job centre plus
   ii. Council Tax Office
   iii. Housing benefit office
   iv. Utility companies
   v. 
   vi. 
   vii. 
   viii. 
   ix. 
   x. 

7. Arrange final meter readings

8. Arrange removal of rubbish and unwanted items items

9. Check everything (inside and externally) is cleared, clean and tidy

10. Make sure all damage is repaired

11. Turn off water

12. HAND KEYS IN
Useful addresses and phone numbers

• Veolia Environmental Services (bulky refuse removal)
  Tel: 273 4567

• Telephone Disconnection
  Tel: 0800 800 150 (for BT lines)

• Mail Redirection
  Call at your local Post Office for information

• RSPCA
  Tel: 289 8050

• Council Tax
  Corporate Finance, Sheffield City Council
  PO Box 1310
  Sheffield S1 1UY
  Tel: 273 6633

• Sheffield Benefits Service
  Howden House
  Tel: 273 6777
Contact Housing Services

Phone:  Call Centres  0114 293 0000
         Repairs  0114 205 3333
         Repairs  0114 273 5555

Online:
Enquiries:  www.sheffield.gov.uk/contacthousing
Website:  www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing
Follow us:  twitter  facebook  YouTube

Write:  Council Housing Service
       PO Box 483
       M33 0DH

Visit Us:  To find your local office please telephone us or alternatively you can visit our website and search for your local office using our interactive map.

Some calls may be monitored by Sheffield City Council and its partners for quality and training purposes.
Need help accessing our services?

A translation of this leaflet is automatically available in the languages below. It can also be made available in other languages on request.

Arabic
تتوفر نسخة مترجمة من هذه الكراسة باللغة العربية

Farsi
ترجمه ان برجچه در فارسی دستیاب است

Somali
Turjibaanka guub-yarahaan waxaa lagu heli karaa Soomaali

This document can be supplied in alternative formats, please contact 0114 293 0000

Sheffield City Council
www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing