



Leaving Your Home



districtnk
100 flourishing communities
North Kesteven District Council

This document is available in large print, Braille, audio tape, electronic formats such as CD, or in a different language. For a copy please contact Customer Services at the Council using the following options:

Phone: 01529 414155 (main switchboard) or
01522 699699 (if calling from a
Lincoln number)

Minicom: 01529 308088

Fax: 01529 413956

Web: www.n-kesteven.gov.uk

Email: customer_services@n-kesteven.gov.uk

Communities
North Kesteven District Council
Kesteven Street
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 7EF

What to do when you are ready to move

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

Giving notice to end the tenancy

You must give four weeks notice in writing if you are moving out of your home. When you let us know you are moving out of your home, we will send you a “termination notice” to sign. A termination notice is a document, which ends your tenancy. The only time you do not have to give four weeks notice is when you are transferring to another North Kesteven District Council tenancy.

Please send your notice to the Council offices in Sleaford. The address is at the back of this leaflet. You must continue to pay your rent until your tenancy has ended.

During the notice period no property inspection will be made. It is your responsibility to leave your home in accordance with the information contained in this leaflet. However if you have any concerns regarding your responsibilities and would find an inspection useful please contact the Voids Officer in the Repairs Team to make an appointment.

Returning the keys

You must return all keys by noon on the Monday following the last day of your tenancy. A receipt will be issued when the keys are returned. In the case of a dispute, you will need the receipt.

Up to date rent

When you hand in your keys, your rent account must be clear. If you are unable to pay any unpaid rent in full, you should discuss this with your Housing Officer. We will ask you to make a weekly

payment arrangement to clear the debt. If you are not moving to another council tenancy, you must give us a forwarding address and telephone number so we can contact you. If you owe us money and do not tell us where you are moving to, we will take steps to find you.

If you do not clear your rent account, or make arrangements to pay outstanding rent through regular payments, North Kesteven District Council will take further action to get back the money you owe. We may use tracing agents and debt collection agencies to help us. We may also take legal action to recover the debt.

Recharges

You may be recharged for the costs and administration, where we consider that certain work is your responsibility when leaving your property. For example,

- Repairs required where damage is not due to general wear and tear;
- Your house and garden have not been cleared of rubbish before you leave the property;
- Any fixtures and fitting that you have added which need to be removed; and
- Removal of sheds, greenhouses, garden furniture and pots etc.

Your responsibilities are outlined below. If in doubt please contact a Repairs Officer for more information.

You may not be allowed to move to another council property in the future if you owe us money.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax

You must inform the Benefits Service of any change of address.

If you already receive Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, you must tell the Benefits Service your new address as soon as possible. This is to make sure you continue to receive all money.

What should I do before handing in the keys?

General internal condition of your property

Before handing in your keys you must make sure:

- All walls and ceilings are brushed down to remove cobwebs and dust. If walls/ceilings are dirty or stained they may need decorating. This may not be obvious until furniture and pictures are moved;
- All internal paintwork is washed down with a suitable cleaning fluid. This includes:
 - Doors,
 - Window frames,
 - Skirting boards and
 - Door frames;
- Window glass is clean on the inside;
- Any damage to decoration is repaired to fitted items, such as dado rails and picture rails, which may have been removed; and
- Light fixtures you have fitted yourself are removed and replaced with a normal pendant fitting.

Please see the alterations section if you have fitted wall lights or different switches or sockets.

Kitchen

All kitchen cupboards and drawers must be emptied, swept out and washed down with a damp cloth and cleaner. This includes sinks, taps, draining boards and tiles.

All tiled floors must be properly cleaned, especially around the cooker area. Foam-backed floor covering sometimes breaks-up when lifted, so please make sure floors are left clean.

Bathroom / toilet

The bath, basin, tiled walls and window sills must be cleaned. Toilets must also be thoroughly washed and disinfected with a toilet cleaner before you leave.

Carpets and furniture

The property must be completely cleared of all furniture and carpets.

Decoration

You are allowed to decorate your home in a style of your choice. However if you leave your home with an extreme decorating scheme, for example very dark colours, you may be asked to tone this down or redecorate.

If you have any queries regarding your choice of decoration, please contact your Housing Officer.

If we have to clean or carry out repairs to the property, you will be charged. This will include the cost of the contractors for cleaning and decorating work, plus an extra 10% for our administration costs.

Outside the property

All planters, garden constructions and building materials must be removed from the outside of the property. If you have put up a shed or greenhouse in the garden during your tenancy, you are responsible for its disposal if you are not taking it with you.

Only leave sheds, ponds, patios and concreted areas if you have agreement from the Council to do so. Please contact your Housing Officer if you are in any doubt. If no agreement has been made you will be charged for the removal of old sheds and greenhouses and slab/patios.

If you have a lawn, please make sure it is cut before you leave. Hedges should be cut and any shrub beds left clear and weed free. All gardens should be left in a tidy and manageable condition.

If we need to carry out any works to the outside of the property, you will be charged. This will include the cost of the contractors for clearing and tidying the garden, plus an extra 10% for our administration costs. You should be aware that our contractors have to pay to dispose of rubbish and garden waste.

This leaflet was written and updated in January 2008 – when the cost of clearing an average size garden could be up to £1,500.

Other areas

The house, flat or bungalow, including outhouses, sheds and gardens, must be cleared of all domestic and garden rubbish. Loft spaces must be cleared even if you believe the items were there when you moved into the property.

Environmental Services can collect and dispose of large items for a small charge. This service does not include the collection of garden or building waste. You may not have to pay the charge if you receive State Benefit.

If you wish to arrange this, please contact the Council, by telephoning 01529 414155, or 01522 699699 if calling from a Lincoln number.

You can also dispose of unwanted items at various waste disposal sites. For further advice on this service please contact your Housing Officer.

What if I have carried out alterations during my tenancy?

Please inform the Council of any alterations you made to the property whilst living there. This is so the Council can make sure the property is safe for new tenants.

If you made alterations to the property without permission, you must ask the Council to carry out an inspection. If these alterations enhance the property and are of good quality we may be able to leave them, but we have no obligation to do so. If the Council

accepts the improvements, we will always let you know in writing. If you have made alterations and are unsure if they need to be removed, we will inspect them to see if they are suitable.

You will be charged for any electrical or safety-checks that the Council has to carry out.

If we do not accept the alterations you have made, we will ask you to remove them. If you do not do this, you will be charged for the cost of removal.

Example One

If you have installed your own fireplace you should:

- Either remove the fireplace and redecorate any damaged areas; or
- Ask if the Council will accept the fireplace you have fitted (The Council has no obligation to accept any such changes - we may ask you to remove them).

Example Two

If you have removed a Council-owned garden fence, and put up a panel fence:

- Either remove your fence and replace it with the Council fence (if this is not replaced you will be charged); or
- Ask the Council to accept the fencing you have installed.

The same applies to other alterations and fittings including:

- Fires or other heating*;
- Showers* (if you remove a shower you should make sure that all damaged tiles are replaced, and both wiring and plumbing are re-fitted correctly);
- Light fittings, sockets and switches*;
- Decorative items such as dado rails or picture rails;
- Replacement doors; and
- Internal layout.

(Items marked * - work must be carried out by a qualified Contractor. Before accepting any of these alterations we will complete a safety test. There is a charge for this service) There are some items that we will never accept and you must ensure these are removed. These include:

- Satellite dishes and associated wiring (any damage caused by removing the fitting must also be repaired);
- Alarm systems;
- Greenhouses; and/or
- Television aerials that are fitted to the chimney.

If we give permission for any changes or carpets to be left in the property, we will confirm this in writing. If you do not have permission you will be charged.

What if there is damage to the property?

If there is evidence of neglect or damage caused by you, your household or visitors, we will usually charge you for repair works.

Before I hand in the keys what else should I do?

Below is a checklist of what you need to do before you hand in your keys:

- Read the electricity meter and tell your supplier you are moving;
- Turn off the water at stop-cock;
- Notify Post Office of change of address;
- Tell telephone company you are moving;
- Turn gas supply turned off, read meter and tell supplier you are moving;
- Cancel milk deliveries; and
- Cancel newspaper deliveries.

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 Housing Officer may be able to give you other useful telephone numbers. If you are moving to another 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.

Advice for relatives and next of kin

If you are responsible for clearing a property when a relative or friend dies, please let North Kesteven District Council know as soon as possible, stating when you will be returning the keys.

Rent must be paid until the keys are handed in. Housing Benefit payments end on the first Sunday after death. Full rent is due each week after that. North Kesteven District Council will claim any outstanding rent from the estate left by the deceased.

If you would prefer to pay the outstanding rent on the property, please contact the Housing Officer who will help you.

Advice for joint tenants

If you are a joint tenant you should be aware of the following:

- One joint tenant can end the tenancy on behalf of all joint tenants. We do not need the agreement of all joint tenants; and
- Each of the joint tenants is responsible for all debts. We will not divide a debt between tenants, but pursue all joint tenants until the full debt is paid.

Checklist

1	Have you given notice (if applicable)?	
2	Make a note of the date tenancy ends and by which you must return the keys	
3	Have you arranged mail redirection?	
4	Arrange removal	
5	People who require your new address	
1	Housing Department	
2	Council Tax/Housing Benefit Department	
3	Department of Work and Pensions	
4		
5		
6		
6	Cancel milk, papers etc.	
7	Arrange final meter readings	
8	Arrange removal of rubbish and unwanted items	
9	Check everything is cleared and clean and tidy	
10	Make sure all damage is repaired (you may be charged if not)	
11	Turn off water	
12	Hand Keys In	

Good Luck!

