Housing Rights

https://www.housingrights.org.uk/landlords/getting-started-landlord/landlord-responsibilities

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Landlord responsibilities

This information is for private landlords of properties in Northern Ireland.

If you are a tenant, you can find advice here.

If you are a landlord or letting agent in Northern Ireland seeking advice, you can:

- send a message to Landlord Advice, or
- call 028 90 245 640 (Option 1)

As well as keeping to the terms of your tenancy agreement, you must comply with specific legal responsibilities.

If you do not, you can be fined by the local council or taken to court.

Am I a landlord?

You might not think of yourself as a landlord. But you're a landlord if you own a property and rent it out.

This also includes renting out:

- a bedroom in your own home
- your own home while you travel
- property to a company that rents it to other people

You must follow certain laws if you are a landlord. You also need to understand if the person renting from you is a licensee or a tenant.

A lodger rents a room in a property they share with their landlord. A lodger can be a tenant or a licensee. It depends on the practical arrangements in place, not only what is in the contract.

Responsibilities before your tenants move in

Before renting out your property, you must:

- register as a landlord
- make sure you have legally required property certificates
- apply for a HMO licence – if renting to three or more unrelated people

Pay your mortgage, rates and tax

Make sure you keep up to date with mortgage payments. You must:

- have written permission from your mortgage lender or a ‘buy to let’ mortgage
- make sure the person legally responsible pays rates
- pay tax on income from your rental property – even if you live outside the UK

Landlords who only let out rooms in their own home will only need to do a tax return if they receive more than £7,500 in rent each year.

Landlord insurance

Make sure you have landlord insurance for your rental property. This includes building insurance. You may also need to make sure you’re covered for damage, loss of rent, accident or injury.

Data protection for landlords

As a landlord, you're running a business and you should keep accurate records for your rented property.

You must register with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) if you:

- collect personal information about tenants (such as names, phone numbers), and

- collect, share or store this information using a phone, computer or other electronic device

You can use the ICO's privacy notice generator for small businesses to make a privacy notice. Give prospective tenants a copy of the notice so they understand how you will manage their information.

Landlord responsibilities at the start of a tenancy

Once tenants move into your property, you are legally required to:

- protect a tenancy deposit
- give tenants a tenancy information notice
- allow tenants to apply for benefits to help with rent

Allow your tenants 'peaceful enjoyment'

Once the tenancy starts, your rights to enter the property are very limited.

'Peaceful enjoyment' means the tenant can live in the property without any unnecessary interruptions from the landlord.

If you do not respect this right, your tenant may see this as harassment and report you to the local council.

Ending a tenancy

You must follow a specific process to end a tenancy, even if your tenant owes you rent or has breached the tenancy agreement. This process involves:

1. giving notice to quit
2. applying for a court order
3. eviction

It is illegal for a landlord, or an estate agent, to evict a tenant without going through this process.

More advice

- Landlord registration
- Setting up a tenancy
- Tenancy paperwork