# 17 Section 17 — Moving on

**The main points**

- ✓ You can leave your home if you want to. It is your choice.
- ✓ You have to tell us in writing. You have to give us four weeks' notice.
- ✓ Talk to your support worker first. Moving takes planning, and we can help.
- ✓ Take your own things with you. Leave the things we gave you. Give back your keys.
- ✓ Nobody will make you leave without a court order.

## Thinking about moving on

Some people stay in a Harbour Light home for many years. Some people move on.

People move for different reasons. For example:

- they want to live somewhere else
- they need more help than they used to
- they need less help than they used to
- they want to live nearer to family
- they want to live on their own, or with other people

There is no right answer. It is your life.

If you are thinking about it, talk to your support worker first. Talk to us too. You can ask as many questions as you need to.

## What we can help with

We can help you:

- understand what you would need to do
- work out the money side

- talk to the council
- get free advice from somebody independent

Your support worker and your social worker can help with the rest, like finding a new home and arranging your support.

Please give yourself plenty of time. Moving takes longer than most people expect.

## How to end your tenancy

Here are the steps.

1. Talk to your support worker and to us first, if you can.
2. Tell us in writing that you want to leave. Your support worker can help you write it.
3. You must give us at least **four weeks'** notice.
4. We will write back and tell you the date your tenancy ends.
5. Keep paying your rent until that date. Your Housing Benefit stops when your tenancy ends.
6. We will arrange a time to visit and check the home with you.
7. On the last day, take your things, leave the keys, and tell us you have gone.

If you are not sure about any step, ask us. We would much rather explain it twice than have something go wrong.

## Before you go

Please:

- take all your own things with you
- leave the things Harbour Light provided, like the cooker and the furniture
- leave the home clean and tidy
- take the meter readings, or ask your support worker to
- tell the council, the gas and electricity companies, and anyone else who writes to you
- give back all your keys and fobs

You do **not** have to put right fair wear and tear. Things get worn out over time. That is normal.

If there is damage that is not fair wear and tear, we will talk to you about it. We will not send you a bill without talking to you first.

## Your money when you leave

- You pay rent up to the day your tenancy ends. Not after.
- Your Housing Benefit stops when the tenancy ends.
- If you owe any rent, tell us. We will agree a plan with you. Section 4 explains more.
- You did not pay a deposit, so there is no deposit to get back.

If money is worrying you, please say so early.

## Moving to a different Harbour Light home

Sometimes a person wants to move to a different Harbour Light home.

You can ask to move to a different Harbour Light home. You can ask us yourself, or your support provider or social worker can ask us for you. We will explain what is possible.

We cannot always say yes. It depends on whether a home is empty, whether it would suit you, and how your support would work. We will tell you honestly.

## Moving to a home with different support

Some people move because the help they need has changed.

This is not something Harbour Light decides. Your support needs are decided by the council's adult social care team, with you and the people who help you.

Here is what to do:

1. Tell your support worker how you are finding things.
2. Ask your support worker or your social worker for a review of your care and support.
3. The council will look at what help you need.
4. If a different kind of home would suit you better, they will talk to you about it.
5. Tell us as well, so that we know what is happening.

**Your tenancy does not end just because your support changes.** Nobody can make you leave your home because your needs have changed, unless the proper legal steps are followed. If anyone tells you otherwise, ask us or get independent advice.

## If you go away for a while

Going away is not the same as moving out.

If you go into hospital, or stay somewhere else for a while, your home is still your home.

You must tell us if you are going to be away for more than **2 weeks (14 days)**. Tell your support worker too.

This is important. If nobody tells the council, your Housing Benefit could stop, and your rent would not be paid. Section 4 explains more.

## If we ever needed to end a tenancy

We only ever ask somebody to leave as a very last step, after we have tried everything else to help.

- We would talk to you first.
- We would try to fix the problem.
- We would only go to court if there was no other way.
- **Nobody is ever made to leave a Harbour Light home without a court order.**
- We would tell you where to get free, independent advice.

If you are ever worried about losing your home, tell us straight away. You can also get free advice from Shelter or Citizens Advice, or ask an advocate or your social worker to help you. Section 18 has the contact details.

The law about this is changing in October 2027. Section 3 explains more.

## If you leave without telling us

Please do not just leave. If you go without telling us, your rent keeps being charged, and your things might be left behind.

If we cannot get hold of you and we think you may have gone, we will try hard to find you. We will contact your support provider, your family if we can, and anyone else who might know.

**We would not simply take your home back.** Ending a tenancy must be done properly and legally.

## Things left behind

If you leave things behind, we will try to contact you so you can collect them.

We have to keep them safe for a period of time first. We would write to you at your last known address. Only after that could we get rid of them.

## If a tenant dies

This part is written for the family and for support staff.

Losing someone is very hard, and dealing with a tenancy at that time is difficult. We will try to make it as straightforward as we can.

- Please tell us as soon as you are able to. Telephone 0151 909 5919.
- We will explain what needs to happen and put it in writing.
- We will give the family reasonable time to clear the home. We will agree the time with you.
- We will not ask for rent for the time after the tenant died, if the home is cleared and returned to us within a reasonable time.
- In some situations, another person living in the home may have a legal right to take over the tenancy. This depends on the law and on the circumstances. We will look into it and tell you.

If you are not sure what to do, telephone us and ask. You do not need to have everything worked out before you contact us.

## Getting help to understand this

If any of this is hard to understand, that is OK. Ask your support worker. You can also ask a relative, a friend or an advocate to help you.

You can ask us for this information on paper, in a bigger size, or in another format. Just ask us or ask your support worker.

### More detail

This box is for tenants who want more detail, and for support staff, relatives, advocates and social workers. You do not need to read it to understand the section above.

**Tenant's notice.** The tenancy agreement (clause 2.18) requires four weeks' written notice. The clause also provides for notice to end on a Sunday; Harbour Light does not insist on this. From October 2027, a tenant's notice under the new tenancy regime is expected to be two months (see Section 3).

**Landlord's notice and possession.** Possession may only be obtained through the proper legal process. The Protection from Eviction Act 1977 makes it a criminal offence to evict a residential occupier without due process. Harbour Light follows the Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims where arrears are involved, and the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard. Eviction is a last resort and requires senior sign-off. See Section 3.

**Renters' Rights Act 2025.** The tenancy reforms apply to social housing assured tenancies of private registered providers **from October 2027**, not before. Until then the rules in place before 1 May 2026 continue to apply to these tenancies. The detailed possession grounds are being finalised through secondary legislation and are not settled. This section will be reviewed ahead of October 2027.

**Support needs and security of tenure.** A change in a tenant's assessed care and support needs does not of itself end an assured shorthold tenancy. Where a move to a different setting is proposed, the tenancy can only be brought to an end by the tenant's own valid notice, by surrender by agreement, or by a court order. Where a tenant may lack capacity to give a valid notice or to agree a surrender, specific legal advice is required — a surrender agreed by a person without authority may be ineffective, and a decision to give up a tenancy may require Court of Protection involvement.

**Abandonment.** Harbour Light does not treat a home as given up simply because it appears to be empty. Any steps are taken lawfully and consistently with the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

**Goods left behind.** Where goods are left in a property, the landlord becomes an involuntary bailee. The Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 provides a process for giving notice of intention to sell or dispose of uncollected goods, and Harbour Light follows that process.

**Succession on death.** Section 17 of the Housing Act 1988 provides for statutory succession to a periodic assured tenancy by a spouse or civil partner, or a person living with the tenant as if they were a spouse or civil partner, who occupied the dwelling as their only or principal home immediately before the death. The tenancy agreement may also contain contractual succession provisions. In predominantly sole-occupancy supported accommodation, statutory succession will rarely arise, but it cannot be excluded and it must not be misdescribed to a bereaved family. Where there is no successor, the tenancy vests in the deceased's personal representatives and is ended in accordance with the law.

**Rent after death.** Rent liability does not automatically cease on death, and Housing Benefit ordinarily ceases from the date of death. Harbour Light will not pursue any rent arising from the continuation of the tenancy after the tenant's death, provided the property is returned within a reasonable time in the circumstances.

**Transfers.** Assured shorthold tenants have no statutory right to transfer, to exchange or to be rehoused. Harbour Light will consider a request to move to another of its homes, working with the support provider (see the main text).

**Homelessness.** Where a tenant is at risk of losing their home, the local housing authority owes duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, including the duty to refer. Support staff should be aware that early referral matters.