

# What to do about a tenancy when a relative or friend dies

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A guide for Winchester City Council tenants



**Winchester**  
City Council

When a relative or close friend dies it is a very distressing experience. This leaflet explains what you need to do if the person who died was a tenant of Winchester City Council.

## **Who do I contact?**

There are three main sections of the City Council which will need to be notified of the death of your relative/friend:

## **Housing Tenancy Services**

You should contact the **Void Property Officer** as soon as possible after the death on **01962 840 222**.

The type of tenancy your relative/friend held and their circumstances will determine what course of action you need to take.

Don't worry, we will explain and guide you through the process.

## **The deceased was the sole tenant and sole occupier of the property**

If there is no one who would expect to take over the tenancy after the death of the tenant, the tenancy must be terminated. If you are the next of kin or executor, we will require you to complete a Tenancy Termination form. In compliance with the tenancy conditions, four weeks' notice is required to end the tenancy. The notice period begins on the date the City Council receives the completed and signed Tenancy Termination form and ends 28 days later.

You should return the completed form, ensuring it has been signed, together with a copy of the Death Certificate and Enduring/Lasting Power of Attorney if held, to Housing Tenancy Services as soon as possible. Once we receive the form we will contact you to arrange a pre-termination visit. The purpose of the visit is to discuss the termination process with you and any concerns you may have and also to inspect the property for re-letting.

## **What about the rent for the property?**

Rent and any associated charges are payable during the four week notice period. Full rent and charges will be payable as any entitlement to Housing Benefit ends on death.

We will advise you of the current balance of the rent account and an estimated balance when the tenancy is expected to terminate. Please inform us if there are insufficient funds in the deceased's estate to cover this and we will provide you with a Declaration of No Funds form to complete.

## What about the property?

The property, including any loft space, shed/outhouse and garden, must be cleared of all personal possessions, furniture, carpets, curtains, curtain rails, non-standard City Council fixtures and fittings unless agreed with us at the pre-termination visit. The property must be left in a clean condition ensuring all rubbish is removed.

The City Council will charge the deceased's estate for any clearing, cleaning or work that is the responsibility of the next of kin/executor.

You must inform the gas and electric suppliers that the tenant has passed away and arrange for the meters to be read or emptied. Any disconnection of appliances must be done by a qualified person. Please inform the Royal Mail so all post can be redirected.

Please ensure all the doors and windows to the property are locked and the property is left in a secure state.

## What do I do with the keys?

Please ensure all keys are labelled with the property address and are returned to the City Council Offices by 12.00 noon on the next working day after the expiry of the four weeks notice. If the keys are not returned on time, rent and any associated charges will continue to be charged until the keys are received. If you fail to return the keys the deceased's estate will be recharged for the cost of us having to gain access to the property and changing the locks.

For advice and assistance please telephone the **Void Property Officer** on **01962 840 222** or email us at [propertylettings@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:propertylettings@winchester.gov.uk)

## The deceased was a joint tenant and their partner wishes to remain in residence

If the deceased was a joint tenant and their partner wishes to remain in residence, he/she must contact the Housing Officer (Tenancy) as soon as possible for advice and assistance as to the next course of action to be taken.

## The deceased was the sole tenant but not the only occupier of the property

It is extremely important that the person left in occupation seeks advice and assistance immediately from the Housing Officer (Tenancy).

## Council Tax

You will need to contact the Council Tax Section. The charge ends on death but any outstanding amounts must be paid from the deceased's estate.

For more information and advice please contact the **Council Tax Section** at the City Council on **01962 840 222**.

## Housing Benefit

You must contact the Housing Benefit Section who will let you know if your relative/friend was receiving Housing Benefit. Payment of Housing Benefit stops on death. This means no further payments to assist with the rent for the property will be made to their rent account. However, rent must still be paid during the tenancy notice period.

For more information and advice please contact the **Housing Benefit Section** at the City Council on **01962 840 222**.

## Important Addresses and Telephone Numbers

### Registering a Death

Winchester Register Office, Station Hill, Winchester, SO23 8TJ

tel 0845 603 5637 or 01329 225 397

email [winchester.registrars@hants.gov.uk](mailto:winchester.registrars@hants.gov.uk)

### Winchester City Council

City Offices, Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ

tel 01962 840 222 email [propertylettings@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:propertylettings@winchester.gov.uk)

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



The Government Standard

If you have any particular needs which affect how you are able to use or be involved in our services or how you would like to receive information for example translation, interpreters, Braille, audio tape, large print, sign language - please contact the Customer Service Centre either by

**telephone 01962 840 222**

or by **email [customerservice@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:customerservice@winchester.gov.uk)**

Telephone calls may be recorded