

# Guidance on The Private Tenancies (Notice to Quit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025

## Introduction

This guidance is for tenants, landlords and agents in the private rented sector to help understand the new changes to notice to quit periods in Northern Ireland.

## Standard case notices to quit

Article 14 of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (as amended by Section 11 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022) sets out longer notice to quit periods that a landlord must give to a tenant. The increased notice to quit periods are as follows:

- 8 weeks, if the tenancy has not been in existence for more than 12 months;
- 4 months, if the tenancy has been in existence for more than 12 months but not for more than 3 years;
- 6 months, if the tenancy has been in existence for more than 3 years but not for more than 8 years; and
- 7 months, if the tenancy has been in existence for more than 8 years.

The Private Tenancies (Notice to Quit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 - “the Regulations” - refer to these notice periods as standard case notice periods. A landlord does not need to give a reason to issue a standard case notice to quit.

## How does a landlord give this notice?

Landlords issuing a standard case notice to quit must use the standard case form that is set out (or ‘prescribed’) in the Regulations. This form can be found in Schedule 1 to the Regulations.

Further information on the prescribed forms for these Regulations can be found on page 9.

**It is important to note** that before these Regulations commenced a notice to quit given by a landlord did not have to be in a particular form, it simply had to be ‘in writing’. Once the Regulations commence, **all** notices to quit given by a landlord must be in **the prescribed form**.

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**It should be noted that there is no change to the length of the notice to quit periods that tenants must give landlords.**

## Special case notice to quit

There are four circumstances in which a landlord can give a shorter notice period than those set out in Article 14(1A). The Regulations refer to these shorter notice periods as special case notice periods. These circumstances and associated notice periods are set out in the table below:

Notice to Quit Circumstance	Special Case Notice Period
Substantial arrears of rent	1 month
Engaged in Serious Anti-social Behaviour	2 weeks
Convicted of a Relevant Criminal Offence	2 weeks
Possession for occupation by the landlord or landlords' immediate family	3 months

**This guidance provides information on:**

- the definitions for each of the circumstances where a special case notice to quit would apply;
- the length of the shorter notice period for each special case circumstance;
- examples of evidence that a landlord would need to prove the validity of the shorter notice; and
- some sources of further help and advice that may be useful to tenants and/or landlords.

Tenants who receive a special case notice to quit, but do not agree that the special case circumstance is correct, can challenge the notice in court should the landlord commence possession proceedings. It will then be up to the landlord to prove the validity of the particular circumstance which is being relied upon.

The Department has included examples of types of evidence for the first 3 circumstances in this guidance. The requirement for an affidavit in the event that a landlord requires the property for occupation or for occupation by their immediate family is however set out in in the Regulations.

**Annex A** of this guidance signposts tenants, landlords and their representatives to sources of help and advice.

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## **Substantial arrears of rent**

### **What is the definition of substantial arrears of rent?**

Tenants may use alternative frequencies of rental payments e.g. they might pay their rent weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly. The definition of substantial arrears of rent in the Regulations is as follows:

- For those tenants who pay their rent weekly, fortnightly or 4 weekly, substantial arrears of rent are where 8 weeks' worth of rent is unpaid;
- For those tenants who pay their rent monthly, substantial arrears of rent are where 2 months' worth of rent is unpaid; or
- For those tenants who pay their rent quarterly or annually, substantial arrears of rent are where the rent has not been paid within 2 months of the date the rent was due.

### **What notice period does a landlord have to give?**

A landlord can issue a tenant with a 1-month notice to quit if they fall into substantial arrears of rent. Landlords issuing a notice to quit under this circumstance must use the special case form.

### **What if the tenant pays the rent arrears?**

If a tenant receives a special case notice to quit for substantial arrears but pays all outstanding arrears in full before the end of the 1-month notice period, then the notice will become invalid, and the tenancy will continue.

### **Further information**

There may be a number of reasons why tenants have not paid their rent. For example, if facing financial difficulty, due to illness, banking problems, benefit or salary payment delays.

Early and ongoing communication is essential when rent arrears arise. Tenants should inform their landlord as soon as possible if they are experiencing any difficulties in paying rent. Landlords, in turn, should take time to understand the tenant's circumstances and work with them to explore potential solutions. This creates the best chance of a mutually acceptable arrangement, such as, a repayment plan to enable the debt to be paid off in affordable instalments. Any agreement should be clearly set out in writing.

If a solution cannot be agreed upon, the landlord can issue a 1-month notice to quit due to the tenant being in substantial rent arrears.

More information on how to deal with rent arrears can be found in **Annex A**.

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## Evidence required

When a landlord issues a special case notice to quit because of substantial rent arrears, they are obliged to provide a statement of evidence. In this instance, this statement will include a written statement of facts so that the tenant understands why they are receiving the shorter notice to quit. This must

- State the total arrears due on the date of the notice to quit,
- State, in respect of each period for which rent was payable but not paid in full,
  - the date the rent was due,
  - the amount of rent that was due,
  - the amount of rent that was not paid,
- State the manner in which the rent was meant to be paid, including, for example, the bank details of the account into which the rent was to be paid.

If the tenant disputes that they have fallen into substantial arrears of rent, it will be up to the landlord to prove this. Further evidence that a landlord might use to prove that the tenant is in arrears could include:

- the tenancy agreement;
- supporting documentation such as bank statements.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive.

If a tenant refuses to leave the property within the notice period given, then the landlord may apply to the court for a possession order.

It is a legal requirement for a landlord to provide a tenant with a written receipt for any payments made in cash in relation to a tenancy which would include rent, as this could be considered as evidence. This legislative requirement is contained in [Section 3, The Private Tenancies Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

## Serious anti-social behaviour (ASB)

### What is the definition of serious ASB?

In order for this circumstance to be relied upon, the serious ASB must have occurred in or in the locality of the rented property when the tenant or a member of the tenant's household has:

- used the property, or allowed it to be used, for illegal purposes
- harassed or caused alarm or distress to a person,
- caused serious annoyance or nuisance to a person or repeatedly caused annoyance or nuisance to a person, or
- deliberately caused substantial damage to the dwelling-house, or to the landlord's property within the dwelling-house.

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This covers a broad spectrum of behaviour and ranges from incidents that cause repeated nuisance/annoyance through to incidents which have a serious adverse impact on people's quality of life. It can affect individuals or the community at large.

Serious anti-social behaviour might include, amongst other things:

- Using or threatening to use violence.
- Creating a risk of significant harm to other lawful residents of the neighbours or the landlord/agent including their contractors/ employees, including through serious threats, intimidation, harassment and hate behaviour targeting people because of differences.
- Repeated noise nuisance (rowdy parties, loud music/TVs etc.).
- Deliberately causing substantial damage to the rented property, any contents belonging to the landlord (including safety equipment), or other properties in the locality.
- Using the rented property or any common area for criminal purposes, including production or trafficking of illegal drugs.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive.

### **What notice period does a landlord have to give?**

A landlord can issue a tenant a 2-week notice to quit if the tenant, or a member of the tenant's household has engaged in serious anti-social behaviour in or in the locality of the rented property. Landlords issuing a notice to quit under this circumstance must use the special case form.

The tenant can dispute the notice to quit in court if they, or a member of their household have not engaged in serious anti-social behaviour in the locality of the rented property

### **Evidence required**

When a landlord issues a special case notice to quit, they are obliged to provide a statement of evidence. In this instance, this statement will include a written statement of facts so that the tenant understands why they are receiving the shorter notice to quit. This must include written detail of any such incidents the tenant, or a member of a tenant's household have been accused of and the times and dates of any such incidents.

The landlord will need to provide further evidence to the court of such behaviour and a judge will decide if the notice is valid.

There are various forms of evidence that a landlord may provide; some examples of evidence are:

- Correspondence including text messages or emails e.g. with the tenant, solicitor, environmental health officer etc;
- Police reports/incident numbers;

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- Insurance claim paperwork;
- CCTV footage or photographs showing damage, disturbances, or illegal activity; and
- Eyewitness reports.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive.

If a tenant refuses to leave the property within the notice period given, then the landlord may apply to the court for a possession order.

## **Convicted of a relevant criminal offence**

### **What is the definition of relevant criminal offence?**

For the purposes of these Regulations, a relevant criminal offence means

(a) an indictable offence

- Committed wholly or partly in, or in the locality of, the property,
- Committed elsewhere against a person with a right to reside in, or occupy housing accommodation in the locality of the property, or
- Committed elsewhere against the landlord, or a person employed (whether or not by the landlord) in connection with the exercise of the landlords housing functions, and directly or indirectly related to affecting those functions.

(b) An offence involving using the property or allowing it to be used for illegal purposes.

An indictable offence is a serious crime that is tried before a judge and jury in the Crown Court.

Below are some examples of the types of criminal behaviours that are likely to be relevant criminal offences:

- Using or letting someone else use the property for illegal reasons;
- Criminal damage to the property;
- Violence or threat of violence;
- Hate behaviour targeting people because of difference;
- Criminal harassment;
- Production or trafficking of illegal drugs.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive.

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## **What notice period does a landlord have to give?**

The landlord can issue a 2-week notice to quit if a tenant, or a member of a tenant's household has been convicted of a relevant criminal offence. Landlords issuing a notice to quit under this circumstance must use the special case form.

## **Evidence**

When a landlord issues a special case notice to quit, they are obliged to provide a statement of evidence. In this instance, this statement will include a written statement of facts so that the tenant understands why they are receiving the shorter notice to quit. This must set out to the best of the landlord's knowledge, detail of any such conviction the tenant, or a member of a tenant's household have been prosecuted for. Tenants can dispute the notice to quit if they, or a member of their household have not been convicted of a relevant criminal offence.

An indictable offence will be tried in the Crown Court and there will be evidence of a conviction. The landlord will need to provide evidence to the court of the relevant criminal offence and a judge will decide if the notice is valid.

If a tenant refuses to leave the property within the notice period given, then the landlord may apply to the court for a possession order.

## **Overlap between serious ASB and relevant criminal offence**

It is worth noting that there can be an overlap between the serious ASB and the relevant criminal offence circumstances. A landlord may have two options when considering which special case notice period to issue. For example, in a case where a person is using the property for illegal purposes, a landlord may issue a notice under the serious ASB circumstance and be prepared to prove in court that the tenant has used the property for illegal purposes or the landlord could wait until there is a conviction and rely upon proof of the conviction to issue a notice to quit under the criminal offence circumstance.

## **Occupation by landlord or landlord's immediate family**

The definition of a landlord's immediate family includes:

- The landlord's spouse, civil partner, or where the landlord is living in a couple,
- Parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother or sister of the landlord,
- Relationships by marriage, for example half-brothers or half-sisters,
- A stepchild of a landlord who will be treated as a child.

## **What notice period does a landlord have to give?**

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The landlord can issue the tenant a 3-month notice to quit. Landlords issuing a notice to quit under this circumstance must use the special case form.

However, if the tenancy has not been in existence for more than 12 months, then the landlord may decide to use the standard case notice to quit, where the standard case notice period is 8 weeks.

### **Further information for tenants/landlords**

The Department recommends that the landlord engages with the tenant and informs them if this is a potential prospect at the earliest opportunity.

### **Evidence**

When a landlord issues a special case notice to quit for this circumstance, a statement of evidence is not required.

Instead, the landlord must provide an affidavit signed before a Commissioner for Oaths, Practising Solicitor, or a Notary Public. Please note that the landlord must sign the affidavit him or herself. It cannot be signed on the landlord's behalf by an authorised agent. The affidavit must state the name of the person who will reside in the property (if not the landlord), their relationship to the landlord and the expected duration of occupation.

The requirement for an affidavit is set out in regulations and is the only form of evidence that will be accepted in this circumstance. A copy of the affidavit must be attached to the special case form.

If a tenant refuses to leave the property within the notice period given, then the landlord may apply to the court for a possession order. Tenants can dispute the notice to quit if they have reason to believe that the landlord or family member does not intend to live in the property.

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## **Prescribed forms for these Regulations**

Prior to these Regulations, a landlord did not have to use a specific notice to quit form, it simply had to be 'in writing'. Once the Regulations commence **all** notices to quit given by a landlord must be in **the prescribed form** – in other words, using a form set out in the Regulations. There are 2 prescribed forms that a landlord can issue to a tenant, which are explained below.

A notice to quit is not valid unless:

- it is in the prescribed form,
- contains the prescribed information, and
- it is given not less than the relevant period before the date on which the notice period ends.

## **Schedule 1 – Notice to Quit: Standard Case**

This form must be used by landlords when issuing a standard case notice to quit regarding the notice periods under Article 14(1A) of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. This form will require information such as;

- Tenant name and address of the rented property,
- Name and contact details of the landlord/agent,
- The notice to quit period, and
- Date the notice to quit period ends.

## **Schedule 2 – Notice to Quit: Special Case**

This form must be used by a landlord when issuing a special case notice to quit under the Private Tenancies (Notice to Quit) Regulations (NI) 2025. This form requires the same information as the standard prescribed form but will also include;

- The notice to quit period and reason for the notice,
- A statement of evidence that shows that the notice falls within the circumstance selected and helps the tenant to understand why they are receiving a shorter notice, or
- Where the reason is occupation by the landlord or their immediate family, an affidavit is required.

The notice period contained in the prescribed forms will take effect from the day the notice is delivered. For example, if the notice is e-mailed to the tenant, then the notice begins from that day. However, if the notice is sent via post, then the course of postage should be taken into consideration when working out the date the notice to quit period ends. If the notice to quit is sent by post, then it would be good practice for a landlord to send this by recorded delivery as proof of issue.

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## Annex A - Sources of help and advice

### General

If tenants/landlords need housing advice, they can contact Housing Rights on 02890245640 or via their website [www.housingrights.org.uk](http://www.housingrights.org.uk).

[For landlords | Housing Rights](#) – Specific advice for landlords

[Private tenants' rights | Housing Rights](#) – Specific advice for tenants

[Housing Mediation Service | Housing Rights](#) Housing Rights' Housing Mediation is a service for landlord/tenants to help solve disputes in private rented tenancies.

Tenants can contact the Make the Call service to check if they are getting all the benefits, services and support they are entitled to. Tel: 0800 232 1271 or e-mail at [makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk)

Homelessness – Tenants can speak to The Housing Executive if they are worried about having somewhere to live Tel: [0344 8920 900](tel:03448920900) (or after hours at [0344 8920 908](tel:03448920908)).

### For Debt Advice through Housing Rights

Information and advice for landlords on how to deal with rent arrears can be found at [Dealing with rent arrears](#) and for tenants can be found at [Rent arrears](#).

Tenants can also visit Housing Rights site [help pay housing costs](#) which provides a range of information on applying for Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payment.

Further information on debt can be found at [Debt repayment options | nidirect](#)

### Other Support Services

Tenants should always feel safe in their home. If a tenant feels unsafe or threatened, they should call the police. In an emergency, always call 999.

Tenants should be safe from any kind of abusive behaviour. This includes physical violence, controlling behaviour, financial and sexual abuse.

Tenants who are victims of, or need advice on domestic violence, support is available. Below are some of the organisations that they can contact:

Further information and advice for support services for victims can be found at [Support services for victims | nidirect](#).

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Support service website link	Contact details
<a href="#">Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland</a>	Tel: 02890249041 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@womensaidni.org">info@womensaidni.org</a>
<a href="#">Men's Advisory Project (MAPNI)</a>	Tel: 02890241929 (Belfast) 02871160001 (Foyle) E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@mapni.co.uk">info@mapni.co.uk</a>
<a href="#">Home - Nexus NI</a>	Tel: 02890326803 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@nexusni.org">info@nexusni.org</a>
<a href="#">LGBTQIA+ Domestic Abuse Project</a>	Tel: 0808 8000 390 Email: <a href="mailto:admin@cara-friend.org.uk">admin@cara-friend.org.uk</a>
<a href="#">DSA Helpline</a>	Tel: 0808 802 1414 E-mail: <a href="mailto:help@dsahelpline.org">help@dsahelpline.org</a>
<a href="#">The Rainbow Project</a>	Tel: 028 9031 9030 (Belfast) 028 7128 3030 (Derry/Londonderry) E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@rainbow-project.org">info@rainbow-project.org</a>
<a href="#">Age NI</a>	Tel: 0808 808 7575 E-mail: <a href="mailto:advice@ageni.org">advice@ageni.org</a>
<a href="#">Commissioner for Older People for NI</a>	Tel: 029 9089 0892 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@copni.org">info@copni.org</a>
<a href="#">Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities</a>	Tel no: 028 9023 8645 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@nicem.org.uk">info@nicem.org.uk</a>

[Family Support Hubs](#) provide early intervention services and work with families who need support. There are currently 29 Family Support Hubs in operation covering all of Northern Ireland. You can search your local Family Support Hub at [Search Results in Family Support Hub Category](#).

The District Councils Good Relations Programme aims to promote good relations by promoting cultural diversity and respect for all cultural identities. For information in your area, you should contact the Good Relations Officer in your local council. Contacts can be found at [Local councils in Northern Ireland | nidirect](#)

PCSPs (Policing and Community Safety Partnerships) are local bodies made up of councillors and independent people from each council area who work to make your community safer. They do this by focusing on the policing and community safety issues that matter most in your area. They are overseen by both the Policing Board and the Department of Justice (DOJ). Contact details for each organisation are as follows:

- Northern Ireland Policing Board Tel: 028 9040 8500 or e-mail: [pcsp@nipolicingboard.org.uk](mailto:pcsp@nipolicingboard.org.uk)
- DOJ Community Safety Unit Tel: 028 9082 8555 or e-mail: [csupdb@justice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:csupdb@justice-ni.gov.uk)

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Registered landlords can also access the landlord registration scheme portal at [Landlord Registration Scheme](#). This portal includes information and advice that will signpost landlords to various relevant support service organisations.

### Welfare

It may be the case that incidents of anti-social behaviour are brought on/exacerbated by mental health issues. If a tenant, or a member of the tenant's household has been affected by mental health issues that may impact on their tenancy, support is available. Below are some organisations you can contact.

Support service website link	Contact details
<a href="#">Childline</a>	Tel: 0800 1111
<a href="#">Home - NICCY</a>	Tel: 028 9031 1616 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@niccy.org">info@niccy.org</a>
<a href="#">Young Minds-Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People</a>	Tel: 0808 802 5544 (Parent Helpline)
<a href="#">Home   Action Mental Health</a>	Tel: 028 9182 8494 <a href="#">Contact Details for each location in NI</a>
<a href="#">Alzheimer's Society in Northern Ireland</a>	Tel: 028 9066 4100 or 0333 150 3456 E-mail: <a href="mailto:nir@alzheimers.org.uk">nir@alzheimers.org.uk</a>
<a href="#">Autism Connect   Minding Your Head</a>	Tel: 028 3083 5764 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@bolstercommunity.org">info@bolstercommunity.org</a>
<a href="#">Disability Action Northern Ireland</a>	Head Office Belfast, Tel: 028 9029 7880 E-mail: <a href="mailto:hq@disabilityaction.org">hq@disabilityaction.org</a> Derry ~ Londonderry, Tel: 028 7136 0811 E-mail: <a href="mailto:derry@disabilityaction.org">derry@disabilityaction.org</a> Dungannon, Tel: 028 8775 2372 E-mail: <a href="mailto:dungannon@disabilityaction.org">dungannon@disabilityaction.org</a>
<a href="#">Autism NI</a>	Tel: 028 9040 1729 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@autismni.org">info@autismni.org</a>

Further information and advice on support for mental health can be found at the following link [Mental health support | nidirect](#). This includes GP's and specialised healthcare professionals.

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## Student support

Advice for students on issues such as housing, finance and health and wellbeing can be found at the following links:

- [SU Advice | QSU](#)
- [Key Contacts | Students | Queen's University Belfast](#)
- [Ulster University SU Advice](#)
- [Advice for young people | Housing Rights](#) – Housing Rights also provide a dedicated advocacy and mediation service for people aged 18-25 at risk of homelessness at [Get advice | Housing Rights](#)