

## **Leaving your home for more than four weeks**

### **Guidelines for tenants**

You may leave the house for up to 4 weeks if you want to, and do not need to ask for the Council's permission. For periods over 4 weeks, but less than 6 months, you can apply for permission to leave the house.

If you wish to leave your home for more than 4 weeks, please note the following:

- Your Neighbourhood Office will inform you of its decision to grant permission to leave your house within 15 working days of receipt of your application.
- As your landlord, we need to know: where you will be staying when you are away, your reasons for being away from the house, if anyone will be staying in the house while you are away and if you have applied for a permit for any subtenant or lodger.
- Having informed us of your intentions to leave the house, a family member, neighbour or friend may be granted permission to look after the house in your absence.
- You will be expected to move back into your house by an agreed date. We have the right to end your tenancy if you do not return or inform us of your reasons for the delay in your return.
- If you receive Housing Benefit, you may continue to receive benefits to cover an extended absence. You should contact the Benefits Agency about this for your situation.
- If we have given you permission to have a subtenant while you are away, you are still responsible for their behaviour. You are responsible for making sure that the rent is paid and that the subtenant leaves the house by an agreed date.
- A subtenant or lodger who is allowed to live in the house while you are away may be entitled to receive Housing Benefit.
- Please let us know when you return to the house.

Permission to leave the house for more than 4 weeks is not given where:

- The proposed period of absence is more than 6 months;
- There are rent arrears of more than one month's rent, and no arrangement is in place to clear the arrears;
- There is no satisfactory arrangement for paying the rent during the tenant's absence;
- There is no satisfactory arrangement in place for upkeep of the garden;
- The tenant is moving to another house as their permanent or principal home;
- No forwarding address has been given;
- We have evidence that the tenant does not intend to return (such as furniture being removed without good reason, or evidence that the tenant has bought another property).