

May 2019

Rent arrears waived for Housing Executive tenant

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has agreed to waive the rent arrears of a man who left his accommodation without providing suitable notice.

The man had complained to the Ombudsman, stating that he had left his flat and moved into private accommodation because he was being intimidated by a new tenant who had just moved in below him. He stated that the new tenant had a history of anti-social behaviour and that he should not have been allowed to occupy the flat.

The Ombudsman wrote to the Housing Executive, asking it to provide confirmation that the complaint had been properly considered through the organization's complaints procedure. It also asked for comments on each of the issues raised by the complainant.

The Housing Executive responded by setting out the allocation rules and policies for tenants. It stated that while it regretted the complainant's concerns, it was satisfied that all necessary steps had been taken to explain these rules and policies to him.

It also said that at all stages suitable support was made available to the tenant, and that his allegations were investigated at the earliest opportunity. It stated that the man had alternatives to terminating his tenancy and was made of aware of these options, but chose not to use them.

However, the Housing Executive accepted that it had failed to open an Anti-Social Behaviour case, as would be normal practice in such situations. It offered to apologize to the complainant for this oversight, and as a goodwill gesture in order to resolve the man's complaint it agreed to waive the rent arrears which stood at almost £200.

The Ombudsman decided that this was an acceptable resolution, and that further enquiries or an investigation would not be proportionate. The complaint was therefore closed.