

# Fact sheet

## Absence from Tenure

### Who is responsible for the property you are renting when you are away?

If you are the tenant and you need to be away from the property for more than a few days, you are still responsible for:

- Paying the tenant contribution on time.
- Making arrangements for someone to care for the property, and grounds, if any.
- Making arrangements for someone to keep an eye on the property, for signs of damage or break-ins.

### Absences of less than eight weeks

You do not have to gain approval if you plan to be away from the property for less than or up to eight weeks. This is a permissible absence. It is always a good idea to let Centacare Evolve Housing (CEH) know, if you are going to be away for more than a few days.

We will then know that your house has not been abandoned, and that you plan to return. We can also deal with any problems that may come up if you:

- Tell us where we can contact you.
- Put us in contact with the person you have asked to keep an eye on the property for you.

### Absences of more than eight weeks

If you are going to be away from the property for more than eight weeks, this is an extended absence. You must let CEH know and must gain approval for the absence. Acceptable reasons include when you:

- Are on an overseas or longer local (e.g. caravanning) holiday, not more than once every twelve months.
- Are in prison, provided the offence does not involve a breach of the lease.
- Or an immediate member of your family, are in rehabilitation, respite or hospital.
- Are looking after an extended family member with an illness or disability.
- Have to travel as a result of a death or other crisis in your family.
- Are undertaking self-improvement, such as studying or training at an educational institution; and or
- Staying in emergency accommodation for your safety.

Where you plan to be away for eight weeks or less, and then find that you need to stay away longer, you must contact CEH to discuss your circumstances, or you risk losing the property.

### **Absences of more than twelve weeks**

If you need to be away from the property for more than twelve weeks, this is called an exceptional absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will such a long absence be approved.

If you plan to be away for more than twelve weeks, CEH may reassess whether you are still in need of housing assistance. Acceptable reasons for being away for an exceptional period are the same as for an extended absence; however you must have strong reasons as to why you cannot return to the property sooner.

### **Appointing an agent**

We want to help you keep your home and belongings safe. When you plan to be away from the property for more than a few days, we would like you to think about appointing another adult, who you trust, to keep an eye on the house and ensure necessary maintenance is done.

This is referred to as appointing an agent. The person can stand in for you should any problems arise and can receive letters and documents on your behalf. The agent may be another adult who is living in the house or a family member, neighbour, friend or solicitor.

### **Who can live in the property while you are away?**

Declared household members who are adults can live in the house while you are away. A “declared household member” means you have told CEH they live there, and their income has been taken into account when calculating the rent. Your agent can also stay in the house while you are away.

Children under 16 cannot stay in the house without adult supervision while you are away. If children are left unsupervised in the house, we are required by law to report it to Child and Family Services immediately.

### **Subletting**

You cannot sublet the property when you are away. This means you cannot rent the house to another person when you are not there, without letting CEH know. If your agent lives in the house while you are away, this is not seen as a subletting arrangement.

### Referrals to Housing Connect

If you are away from the property because you have a problem, and need help and support to live there, we can refer you to Housing Connect to have your housing and support needs assessed. If the house is no longer suitable for you, staff at Housing Connect can refer you to options that might suit you better.