

Press release: 17 August 2020

Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre has written to local housing associations asking that they commit to protect their tenants.

The current ban on evictions runs out next Monday 24 August. Once the ban is lifted, we fear the mass eviction of tenants behind on rent due to problems suffered during the pandemic.

Housing associations have a proud history of standing by their tenants and supporting their local community. Eviction of those facing financial hardship for reasons outside of their control does not align with those values. It would increase pressure on cash-strapped local authorities to rehouse those made homeless and add to the suffering of vulnerable people kicked onto the street during a national pandemic.

We are encouraging our local housing associations to promise that they will:

1. Suspend any use of 'ground 8'

Evictions using this procedure remove the court's 'discretion', meaning that if tenants have more than 8 weeks or 2 months' rent arrears, a judge is not allowed to consider their circumstances or give them a chance to stay. In almost all ground 8 cases, the judge has no choice but to evict. Housing associations do have a choice though. The decision to use ground 8 is theirs alone and they can choose to use a different legal procedure open to them under Grounds 10 and 11. These alternative grounds allow a deciding judge to look at why someone has fallen behind and their proposals to stay.

2. Not evict their tenants because of rent arrears caused by the pandemic.

With only a week to go until the eviction ban ends, we call on housing association to help our local communities weather the storm caused by the pandemic and stop this ticking time bomb faced by their tenants.

The housing service at Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre continues to actively offer advice and assistance to those facing eviction. If you need to speak to us about the threat of eviction from your home, please call our housing specialists on 01924 663549, message us on Whatsapp on 07858 587725 or by email to housing@kcalc.org.uk