



**DECISION AND STATEMENT OF REASONS OF PETRA HENNIG MCFATRIDGE LEGAL  
MEMBER OF THE FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL WITH DELEGATED POWERS OF THE CHAMBER  
PRESIDENT**

Under Rule 8 of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber Rules  
of Procedure 2017 ("the Procedural Rules")

in connection with

Case reference FTS/HPC/EV/22/2977  
**10 Hawthorn Drive, New Stevenson, Motherwell, ML1 4ER (the property)**

**Parties**

**Mr Dominic McKinnon (Applicant)**  
**Mr Stephen Lennon, Miss Stacey Gavan (Respondent)**

1. The application dated 18.8.22 was made on 22.8.22 to the First-tier Tribunal (the FTT) under rule 109 and S 51 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 (the Act) using ground 12 of schedule 3 of the Act.
2. Various documents were provided with the application. These include a Tenancy Agreement commencing 3.1.22 with a clause stating payment of rent of £650 per calendar month (Clause 8) is due in advance on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the month, a S 11 notice and a Notice to leave dated 16.6.22 with an entry in part 4 of 17.7.22 as the first day when proceedings can be raised. In subsequent correspondence the applicant provided further evidence of the service of the S 11 notice and correspondence to the respondents regarding arrears. The applicant advised that with his consent the payment date for rent had been altered to the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the month due to a change in the payment pattern of the tenants' work arrangements.

3. The FTT wrote to the Applicant's representative on 11.11.22 requesting further information regarding the Notice to Leave as the document lodged disclosed that the arrears commenced on 28.3.22 and the Notice to Leave was dated 16.6.22. The FTT referred the applicant to the UT decision of Majid v Gaffney of Sheriff Fleming [2019] UT 59.
4. On 22.11.22 the applicant replied to the issue raised as follows: "I feel I have satisfied the above requirements as set out by the Scottish government for issuing the notice to leave as - - The notice was served after 31 March 2022, - The tenants had not lived in the property for more than 6 months, - The notice to leave was issued on the basis of not only rent arrears but other failings by the tenants, i.e. breaching terms of the rental agreement (repeated lateness of the few rent payments I did receive, failure to set up a standing order for rent payments, failure to set up and pay Council tax, removal of bathroom suite without my knowledge or consent, as well as some other issues). To further add to this, I would also refer you to the same set of guidelines for Notices issued after 31 March which states that - "The tenant is in rent arrears over three consecutive months on the date you apply to the Tribunal for an eviction order" 23 August 2022 was the date on which I received email acknowledgement from the tribunal that my application was now being considered. On this date the tenants were in arrears by almost 5 months. 2 Nowhere within this guidance does it state that the Notice to leave can only be issued after 3 full months' rent had been missed. The Oxford Dictionary definition of arrears - "money that is owed and should have been paid earlier." Wikipedia definition of arrears - "Arrears (or arrearage) is a legal term for the part of a debt that is overdue after missing one or more required payments.[1] The amount of the arrears is the amount accrued from the date on which the first missed payment was due. The term is usually used in relation with periodically recurring payments such as rent, bills, royalties (or other contractual payments), and child support." The Tenancy agreement states that payment shall be made in full on or before 28th of each month in advance (or 7th as it was agreed to move the date). Nowhere does it state within the tenancy agreement that the tenants have the entirety of the calendar month, or until the eve of the next months due date in which to make payment. Therefore, as far as I'm concerned and backed up by the definitions above, if payment is not received in full on the day it was due from the tenants, then the day immediately following, they are classified as being in arrears. So, in this case on 8 April 2022 the tenants account was in £650 in arrears = one months' rent. On 8 May 2022 the tenants account was £1300 in arrears = two months' rent. On 8 June 2022 the tenants account was £1950 in arrears = three months' rent."
5. The file documents are referred to for their terms and held to be incorporated herein.

## **DECISION**

6. I considered the application in terms of Rule 8 of the Procedural Rules. That Rule provides:-

*"Rejection of application*

*8.—(1) The Chamber President or another member of the First-tier Tribunal under the delegated powers of the Chamber President, must reject an application if –*

*(a) they consider that the application is frivolous or vexatious;*

*(b) the dispute to which the application relates has been resolved;*

*(c) they have good reason to believe that it would not be appropriate to accept the application;*

*(d) they consider that the application is being made for a purpose other than a purpose specified in the application; or*

*(e) the applicant has previously made an identical or substantially similar application and in the opinion of the Chamber President or another member of the First-tier Tribunal, under the delegated powers of the Chamber President, there has been no significant change in any material considerations since the identical or substantially similar application was determined.*

*(2) Where the Chamber President, or another member of the First-tier Tribunal, under the delegated powers of the Chamber President, makes a decision under paragraph (1) to reject an application the First-tier Tribunal must notify the applicant and the notification must state the reason for the decision."*

7. After consideration of the application, the attachments and correspondence from the Applicant, I consider that the application should be rejected in terms of Rule 8 (c) of the Rules of Procedure on the basis as the Tribunal has good reason to believe that it would not be appropriate to accept the application.

## **REASONS FOR DECISION**

**Relevant Legislation**

**Rules of Procedure:**

**Rule 109.** Where a landlord makes an application under section 51(1) (for an eviction order) of the 2016 Act, the application must—

(a) state—

(i) the name, address and registration number (if any) of the landlord;

(ii) the name, address and profession of any representative of the landlord;

(iii) the name and address of the tenant [\[F72\]](#)(if known)]; and

(iv) the ground or grounds for eviction;

(b) be accompanied by:

- i. evidence showing that the eviction ground or grounds has been met
- ii. a copy of the notice to leave given to the tenant as required under section 52(3) of the 2016 Act
- iii. a copy of the notice given to the local authority as required under section 56 (1) of the 2016 Act

### **Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016**

#### **56 Restriction on applying without notifying local authority**

(1) A landlord may not make an application to the First-tier Tribunal for an eviction order against a tenant unless the landlord has given notice of the landlord's intention to do so to the local authority in whose area the let property is situated.

(2) Notice under subsection (1) is to be given in the manner and form prescribed under section 11(3) of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

(3) In a case where two or more persons jointly are the landlord under a tenancy, references in subsection (1) to the landlord are to any one of those persons.

### **Ground 12 schedule 3**

#### *Rent arrears*

12(1) It is an eviction ground that the tenant has been in rent arrears for three or more consecutive months. ..

(3) The First-tier Tribunal may find that the ground named by sub-paragraph (1) applies if—

(a) for three or more consecutive months the tenant has been in arrears of rent, and

(b) the Tribunal is satisfied that it is reasonable on account of that fact to issue an eviction order. ..

1. The application is made on ground 12 of schedule 3 of the Act and would require, in terms of S 52 (3) of the Act, to be accompanied by a Notice to Leave and in terms of S 56 by a Notice to the Local Authority. The FTT considers that the meaning of this section is

that the Notice to Leave has to be a valid Notice to Leave. The same requirements are also stated in rule 109, which is the rule under which the application is made.

2. The Notice to Leave provided is dated 16.6.22 and relies on the ground “You are in rent arrears over three consecutive months”. The entry in part 3 gives the lack of payment of rent on 28.3.22, 28.4.22 and 28.5.22 as the basis for the notice as stated in the attached rent statement. The attached rent statement shows a monthly rental charge of £650.
3. In terms of the tenancy agreement the rent of £650 per month is payable in advance on or before the 28<sup>th</sup> day of each month. The rent statement lodged with the application shows no arrears of rent until the entry of 28 March 2022, when no payment was made on the due date. The arrears increase from then onwards. The applicant explained his understanding of the legislation in his email of 22.11.22. However, as much as he may wish to rely on the Scottish Government website information and his calculation of when the arrears arose, the matter has been fully and comprehensively dealt with by the Upper Tribunal in at least two decisions, which are binding on the FTT.
4. In the decision [2019] UT 59 Majid v Gaffney Sheriff Fleming sets out the requirements of a valid Notice to Leave in cases of rent arrears and states in para 9 “[9] *The First-tier Tribunal may only order eviction if one of the grounds specified in Schedule 3 to the 2016 Act applies. It is clear from the terms of the Notice to Leave that ground 12 is being relied upon; as at the date of the Notice to Leave the tenant must have been in rent arrears for three or more consecutive months. Therefore, if the tenant was first in arrears of rent as at 30 April 2019 then the expiry of the three month period would be 30 July 2019. As at 1 July 2019 the tenant was not in rent arrears for three or more consecutive months. The tenant must have been in arrears for the specified period of time, not simply owing rent. Ground 12 does not apply as at the date of service of the Notice to Leave.*” and goes on to say: “[13] *The basis for the decision of the First-tier Tribunal is that the Notice to Leave specified a ground for eviction which was not satisfied as at the date of the service. That being the case the notice itself is invalid. [14] The appellant appears to be conflating two separate statutory provisions. In terms of section 62(1)(b) reference is made to a date on which the landlord “expects to become entitled to make an application for an eviction order to the First-Tier Tribunal”. It is clear that the word “expects” relates to the date on which the application will be made. That is entirely distinct from the eviction ground. The statutory provision is clear which is that the ground of eviction must be satisfied at the date of service of the Notice to Leave. If it is not it is invalid. If it is invalid decree for eviction should not be granted. The decision of the First-tier Tribunal sets out the position with clarity. It could in my view it could never have been intended by Parliament that a landlord could serve a notice specifying a ground not yet available in the expectation that it may become available prior to the making of an application. Such an approach would be open to significant abuse. Either the ground exists at the time when the Notice to Leave is served or it does not. If it does not the Notice to Leave is invalid and it cannot be founded on as a basis for overcoming the security of tenure that the 2016 Act. There is no arguable ground of law. Permission to appeal is refused.*” The issue was further recently confirmed in the decision of Sheriff Kelly in [2022] UT07 Rafique v Morgan.
5. Having regard to these decisions, the clear requirement for a valid Notice to Leave in arrears cases is that as at the date the Notice to Leave is served on the tenant the tenant is in arrears

of rent for three or more consecutive months. On 16.6.22 the tenants had not been in arrears of rent for that required period.

6. Taking the first date when a deficit is shown on the rent statement, 28.3.22, then the expiry of the three months period would be 28.6.22. The documents lodged show that the Notice to Leave is dated 16.6.22. At that time the tenant had not been in arrears of rent for a period of three or more consecutive months. This is exactly the same situation which was addressed in the UT decision *Majid v Gaffney*. The FTT is bound by the clear decisions of the Upper Tribunal on this matter. The Notice to Leave was issued incorrectly and is thus invalid. It would not be appropriate to accept an application based on a Notice to Leave which is invalid.
7. The application is accordingly rejected.
8. The applicant should note that this decision does not prevent the applicant from making a further application to the FTT in future based on a new Notice to Leave.

### **What you should do now**

**If you accept the Legal Member's decision, there is no need to reply.**

**If you disagree with this decision:-**

**An applicant aggrieved by the decision of the Chamber President, or any Legal Member acting under delegated powers, may appeal to the Upper Tribunal for Scotland on a point of law only. Before an appeal can be made to the Upper Tribunal, the party must first seek permission to appeal from the First-tier Tribunal. That party must seek permission to appeal within 30 days of the date the decision was sent to them. Information about the appeal procedure can be forwarded to you on request.**

**Petra Hennig-McFatridge**

Legal Member  
14 December 2022