



Decision with Statement of Reasons of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) under Section 50 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 (“the 2016 Act”)

Chamber Ref: FTS/HPC/EV/21/2058

Re: Property at 2 MENTEITH COURT, MOTHERWELL, ML1 1RD (“the Property”)

Parties:

Yazoo Properties Limited, 2 Jones Wynd, Motherwell, ML1 5NJ (“the Applicant”)

Mr Scott Taylor, Ms Emma Dollochin, 2 MENTEITH COURT, MOTHERWELL, ML1 1RD (“the Respondent”)

Tribunal Members:

Ruth O’Hare (Legal Member) and Mary Lyden (Ordinary Member)

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) (“the Tribunal”) determined to make an order for eviction against the Respondent.

Background

- 1 By application to the Tribunal the Applicant sought an eviction order against the Respondents in respect of the property under section 51 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 (“the 2016 Act”). In support of the application the Applicant provided the following documentation:-
 - (i) Tenancy Agreement between the Applicant and Emma Dollochin dated 16 May 2019;
 - (ii) Tenancy Agreement between the Applicant, Emma Dollochin and Scott Taylor dated 16 May 2020;
 - (iii) Notice to Leave dated 18 February 2021 citing ground 12;
 - (iv) Notice under section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003 to North Lanarkshire Council and proof of delivery;
 - (v) Rent Statement; and

(vi) Copy correspondence from the Applicant to the Respondents.

2 By Notice of Acceptance of Application the Legal Member with delegated powers of the Chamber President intimated that there were no grounds on which to reject the application. A Case Management Discussion was therefore assigned for the 29 October 2021, to take place by teleconference due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. A copy of the application paperwork together with notification of the date and time of the Case Management Discussion and instructions on how to join the teleconference was intimated to the Respondents by Sheriff Officers.

First Case Management Discussion

3 The Case Management Discussion took place by teleconference on 29 October 2021. Mr John Calderwood was present on behalf of the Applicant and accompanied by his representative Mr Alistair Buttery, Solicitor. Neither Respondent was present.

4 Mr Buttery addressed the Tribunal on the order sought. He advised that the Respondents had failed to make payments of rent and had failed to engage with the Applicant despite attempts at contact. He was not aware of any dependents in the household. The arrears now stood at £6049.20, with no payments having been made since the application was lodged. In response to questions from the Tribunal Mr Calderwood confirmed that he had applied to the Department of Work and Pensions for direct payments which had resulted in some money being received, however these had now stopped. Neither he, nor Mr Buttery, were aware of the reason for this, or the Respondent's personal circumstances.

Relevant Legislation

5 The legislation the Tribunal must apply in its determination of the application are the following provisions of the Private Housing Tenancies (Scotland) Act 2016, as amended by the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 (Eviction from Dwelling-houses) (Notice Periods) Modification Regulations 2020:-

1 - Meaning of private residential tenancy

1) A tenancy is a private residential tenancy where—

(a) the tenancy is one under which a property is let to an individual ("the tenant") as a separate dwelling,

(b) the tenant occupies the property (or any part of it) as the tenant's only or principal home, and

(c) the tenancy is not one which schedule 1 states cannot be a private residential tenancy.

(2) A tenancy which is a private residential tenancy does not cease to be one by reason only of the fact that subsection (1)(b) is no longer satisfied.

51 First-tier Tribunal's power to issue an eviction order

(1) The First-tier Tribunal is to issue an eviction order against the tenant under a private residential tenancy if, on an application by the landlord, it finds that one of the eviction grounds named in schedule 3 applies.

(2) The provisions of schedule 3 stating the circumstances in which the Tribunal may find that an eviction ground applies are exhaustive of the circumstances in which the Tribunal is entitled to find that the ground in question applies.

(3) The Tribunal must state in an eviction order the eviction ground, or grounds, on the basis of which it is issuing the order.

(4) An eviction order brings a tenancy which is a private residential tenancy to an end on the day specified by the Tribunal in the order.

52 Applications for eviction orders and consideration of them

(1) In a case where two or more persons jointly are the landlord under a tenancy, an application for an eviction order may be made by any one of those persons.

(2) The Tribunal is not to entertain an application for an eviction order if it is made in breach of—

(a) subsection (3), or

(b) any of sections 54 to 56 (but see subsection (4)).

(3) An application for an eviction order against a tenant must be accompanied by a copy of a notice to leave which has been given to the tenant.

(4) Despite subsection (2)(b), the Tribunal may entertain an application made in breach of section 54 if the Tribunal considers that it is reasonable to do so.

(5) The Tribunal may not consider whether an eviction ground applies unless it is a ground which—

(a) is stated in the notice to leave accompanying the landlord's application in accordance with subsection (3), or

(b) has been included with the Tribunal's permission in the landlord's application as a stated basis on which an eviction order is sought.

54 Restriction on applying during the notice period

(1) A landlord may not make an application to the First-tier Tribunal for an eviction order against a tenant using a copy of a notice to leave until the expiry of the relevant period in relation to that notice.

(2) The relevant period in relation to a notice to leave—

(a) begins on the day the tenant receives the notice to leave from the landlord, and

(b) in the case of a notice served before 3 October 2020 expires on the day falling—

(i) 28 days after it begins if subsection (3) applies,
(ii) three months after it begins if subsection (3A) applies,
(iii) six months after it begins if neither subsection (3) nor (3A) applies.
(c) in the case of a notice served on or after 3 October 2020, expires on the day falling—

(i) 28 days after it begins if subsection (3B) applies,
(ii) three months after it begins if subsection (3C) applies,
(iii) six months after it begins if neither subsection (3B) nor (3C) applies

(3) This subsection applies if the only eviction ground stated in the notice to leave is that the tenant is not occupying the let property as the tenant's home. [ground 10]

(3A) This subsection applies if—

(a) the only eviction ground, or grounds, stated in the notice to leave is, or are, one or more of the following—

(i) that the landlord intends to live in the let property, [ground 4]

(ii) that a member of the landlord's family intends to live in the let property, [ground 5]

(iii) that the tenant has a relevant conviction, [ground 13]

(iv) that the tenant has engaged in relevant anti-social behaviour, [ground 14]

(v) that the tenant associates in the let property with a person who has a relevant conviction or has engaged in relevant anti-social behaviour, [ground 15]

(vi) that the landlord is not registered by the relevant local authority under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, [ground 16]

(vii) that the let property or associated living accommodation is in multiple occupation and not licensed under Part 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, [ground 17] or

(b) the only eviction grounds stated in the notice to leave are—

(i) the eviction ground mentioned in subsection (3), and

(ii) an eviction ground, or grounds, mentioned in paragraph (a)

(3B) This subsection applies if the only eviction ground, or grounds, stated in the notice to leave is, or are, one or more of the following—

(a) that the tenant is not occupying the let property as the tenant's home, [ground 10]

(b) that the tenant has a relevant conviction, [ground 13]

(c) that the tenant has engaged in relevant anti-social behaviour, or [ground 14]

(d) that the tenant associates in the let property with a person who has a relevant conviction or has engaged in relevant anti-social behaviour. [ground 15]

(3C) This subsection applies if—

(a) the only eviction ground, or grounds, stated in the notice to leave is, or are, one or more of the following—

(i) that the landlord intends to live in the let property, [ground 4]

(ii) that a member of the landlord's family intends to live in the let property, [ground 5]

(iii) that the landlord is not registered by the relevant local authority under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, [ground 16]

(iv) that the let property or associated living accommodation is in multiple occupation and not licensed under Part 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, or [ground 17]

(b) the only eviction grounds stated in the notice to leave are—

(i) an eviction ground, or grounds, mentioned in subsection (3B), and

(ii) an eviction ground, or grounds, mentioned in paragraph (a).

62 Meaning of notice to leave and stated eviction ground

(1) References in this Part to a notice to leave are to a notice which—

(a) is in writing,

(b) specifies the day on which the landlord under the tenancy in question expects to become entitled to make an application for an eviction order to the First-tier Tribunal,

(c) states the eviction ground, or grounds, on the basis of which the landlord proposes to seek an eviction order in the event that the tenant does not vacate the let property before the end of the day specified in accordance with paragraph (b), and

(d) fulfils any other requirements prescribed by the Scottish Ministers in regulations.

(2) In a case where two or more persons jointly are the landlord under a tenancy, references in this Part to the tenant receiving a notice to leave from the landlord are to the tenant receiving one from any of those persons.

(3) References in this Part to the eviction ground, or grounds, stated in a notice to leave are to the ground, or grounds, stated in it in accordance with subsection (1)(c).

(4) The day to be specified in accordance with subsection (1)(b) is the day falling after the day on which the notice period defined in section 54(2) will expire.

(5) For the purpose of subsection (4), it is to be assumed that the tenant will receive the notice to leave 48 hours after it is sent.

Schedule 3, Part 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 subparagraph (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. (4) In deciding under sub-paragraph (3) whether it is reasonable to issue an eviction order, the Tribunal is to consider whether the tenant's being in arrears of rent over the period in question is wholly or partly a consequence of a delay or failure in the payment of a relevant benefit.

6 The Rent Arrears Pre-Action Requirements (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 are also relevant to this application.

Findings in Fact and Law

7 The Applicant entered into a tenancy agreement with Miss Dollochinn as sole tenant which commenced on 16 May 2019.

8 The tenancy between the parties was a private residential tenancy as defined by section 1 of the 2016 Act.

9 The tenancy renewed by tacit relocation until 16 May 2020, at which point the Applicant entered into a tenancy agreement with both Respondents.

10 The Applicant's Representative delivered a Notice to Leave to the Respondents by recorded delivery mail on 18 February 2021. The Notice to Leave cited ground 12 of Schedule 3 of the 2016 Act and confirmed that proceedings would not be raised any earlier than 22 August 2021.

11 The Notice to Leave is in the format prescribed by the Private Residential Tenancies (Prescribed Notices and Forms) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

12 In terms of the said Tenancy Agreement dated 16 May 2020 the Respondents undertook to make payment of rent at the rate of £500 per month.

13 As at the date of the Notice to Leave rent arrears of £3420 were outstanding.

14 As at 29 October 2021, rent arrears in the sum of £6049.20 are outstanding.

15 Despite repeated requests the Respondents have refused or delayed to make payment of the rent due.

16 The Applicant has sought to enter payment agreements with the Respondent and has provided information on where to seek advice and assistance to address his rent arrears.

17 The provisions of ground 12 of Schedule 3 of the 2016 Act have been met.

18 It is reasonable to make the order sought by the Applicant.

Reasons for Decision

19 The Tribunal was satisfied at the Case Management Discussion that it had sufficient information upon which to make a decision and that to do so would not be prejudicial to the interests of the parties. The Respondents had been given the opportunity to take part in the proceedings but had chosen not to do so. On that basis the Tribunal did not consider there to be any requirement to fix a hearing in the matter as there were no facts in dispute.

20 The application before the Tribunal was accompanied by a Notice to Leave which confirmed the Applicant's intention to rely upon ground 12 of Schedule 3 of the 2016 Act. The Tribunal was satisfied that the required notice had been given to the Respondents and therefore that the Notice to Leave was competent.

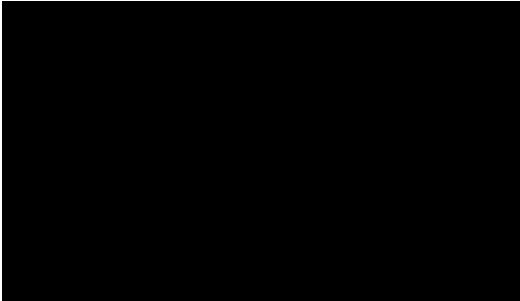
21 The Tribunal accepted that there were rent arrears outstanding in the sum of £6049.20, which far exceeded an amount equivalent to three months rent. It was apparent from the rent statement provided that payments had been sporadic, and the Tribunal accepted the evidence of Mr Calderwood, namely that he had to resort to applying to the Department of Work and Pensions for direct payments which had now stopped.

22 The Tribunal was also satisfied that the Applicant had complied with the pre-action requirements on the basis of the correspondence sent to the Respondents. Accordingly, having regard to the level of arrears, the period over which arrears had accrued and the failure on the part of the Respondents to engage, the Tribunal considered that it would be reasonable to grant the order for eviction. There was nothing before the Tribunal to contradict the evidence put forward by the Applicant.

23 The Tribunal therefore determined to make an eviction order. The decision of the Tribunal was unanimous.

Right of Appeal

In terms of Section 46 of the Tribunal (Scotland) Act 2014, a party aggrieved by the decision of the Tribunal 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.



29 October 2021

Legal Member/Chair

Date