



Decision with Statement of Reasons of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) under Section 51 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.

Chamber Ref: FTS/HPC/EV/20/1255

Re: Property at 32 Burnette Avenue, Lochside, Dumfries, DG2 9NQ (“the Property”)

Parties:

Mrs Margaret Dickson, Newbridge Farm, Glasgow Road, Dumfries, DG2 0QU (“the Applicant”)

Mr Aiden Bissett, 32 Burnette Avenue, Lochside, Dumfries, DG2 9NQ (“the Respondent”)

Tribunal Members:

Fiona Watson (Legal Member)

Decision (in absence of the Respondent)

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) (“the Tribunal”) determined that an order is granted against the Respondent for eviction of the Respondent from the Property under section 51 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016, under ground 12 under schedule 3 to the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.

- Background
- 1. An application dated 8 June 2020 was submitted to the Tribunal under Rule 109 of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber (Procedure) Regulations 2017 (“the Rules”). Said application sought a repossession order against the Respondent on the basis of rent arrears accrued by the Respondent under a private residential tenancy, being Ground 12 under Schedule 3 to the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 (“2016 Act”).

- Case Management Discussion

2. A Case Management Discussion (“CMD”) took place on 15 October 2020 by tele-conference. The Applicant was personally present and represented by John Muirhead. There was no appearance by or on behalf of the Respondent. The Tribunal was satisfied that the application had been intimated on the Respondent by way of Sheriff Officer on 16 September 2020 and accordingly the Respondent had sufficient intimation of the date and time of the CMD. Accordingly, the Tribunal was satisfied that the CMD could proceed in the Respondent’s absence.

3. The Applicant’s representative moved for the Order to be granted as sought. The parties had entered into a Private Residential Tenancy Agreement (“the Agreement”), which commenced 18 September 2018. The Respondent fell into rent arrears in April 2019 and there had been a continuous arrear since then. The rent arrears due at the date of the CMD stood at £4759.75. The monthly rent was £380. A Notice to Leave had been served on the Respondent on the basis of Ground 12 of Schedule 3 to the 2016 Act, on 6 February 2020 by Sheriff Officer. There had been no payment from the Respondent since then and he was still believed to be residing within the Property.

4. The following documents were lodged alongside the application:

- (i) Copy Private Residential Tenancy Agreement
- (ii) Copy Notice to Leave
- (iii) Proof of service of the Notice to Leave
- (iv) Section 11 notification to the local authority under the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- (v) Rent statement

- Findings in Fact

5. The Tribunal made the following findings in fact:

- (i) The parties entered into a Private Residential Tenancy Agreement (“the Agreement”) which commenced on 18 September 2018;
- (ii) In terms of Clause 7 of the Agreement the Respondent was due to pay rent to the Applicant in the sum of £380 per calendar month;
- (iii) The Applicant has served a Notice to Leave on the Respondent on the basis of Ground 12 of Schedule 3 to the 2016 Act, and which was served on 6 February 2020;
- (iv) The Respondent has been in continuous arrears of rent since April 2019;
- (v) The Respondent is in arrears of rent amounting to £4759.75 at the date of the CMD.

- Reasons for Decision

6. Section 51 of the 2016 Act states as follows:

51 (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 or must 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.

7. Ground 12 of Schedule 3 to the 2016 Act states as follows:

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

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

(a) at the beginning of the day on which the Tribunal first considers the application for an eviction order on its merits, the tenant—

(i) is in arrears of rent by an amount equal to or greater than the amount which would be payable as one month's rent under the tenancy on that day, and

(ii) has been in arrears of rent (by any amount) for a continuous period, up to and including that day, of three or more consecutive months, and

(b) the Tribunal is satisfied that the tenant's being in arrears of rent over that period is not wholly or partly a consequence of a delay or failure in the payment of a relevant benefit.

(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.

(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.

(5) For the purposes of this paragraph—

(a) references to a relevant benefit are to—

(i) a rent allowance or rent rebate under the Housing Benefit (General) Regulations 1987 (S.I. 1987/1971),

(ii) a payment on account awarded under regulation 91 of those Regulations,

(iii) universal credit, where the payment in question included (or ought to have included) an amount under section 11 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 in respect of rent,

(iv) sums payable by virtue of section 73 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980,

(b) references to delay or failure in the payment of a relevant benefit do not include any delay or failure so far as it is referable to an act or omission of the tenant.

8. The Tribunal was satisfied that the terms of Ground 12 of Schedule 3 to the 2016 Act had been met, namely that the Respondent has been in continuous arrears of rent for at least three months up to and including the date of the CMD and further that the arrears of rent are an amount which is greater than the amount due to be paid as one month's rent. The Tribunal was satisfied that there was no information before it to suggest that the tenant's being in arrears of rent over that period was either wholly or partly a consequence of a delay or failure in the payment of a relevant benefit.

9. The Tribunal was satisfied that a Notice to Leave had been served on the Respondent and which specified that ground, in accordance with the requirements of section 52 of the 2016 Act.

- Decision

10. The Tribunal granted an order against the Respondent for eviction of the Respondent from the Property under section 51 of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016, under ground 12 under schedule 3 to the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.

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.

Legal Member/Chair

**15 October 2020
Date**