



About your notice and how you should respond to it

I have received a notice – why and what action should I take? If your plot is not clearly numbered then you might have received a neighbour's notice in error. Your plot must be clearly numbered – as per the tenancy agreement rules – and you must contact us well in advance of re-inspection date.

Most notices are issued for poor cultivation or weed-infested beds, but they can also be issued for overgrown boundaries, plots infested with brambles and long grass, dangerous structures, as well as tenants having illegal waste on their plot. You need to deal with the issues identified before the earliest re-inspection date on the notice in order to pass it.

What is the difference between a weed and a cultivation notice? A weed notice relates to weed infestation on existing beds and will state in the drop-down notice reasons that you are failing to control weeds on your plot. Usually a weed notice is best responded to by simply tidying your plot and ensuring all bed areas are dug over before the re-inspection.

A cultivation notice relates to the percentage of the plot you are cultivating. The drop-down reasons in your notice will state that you are not cultivating your plot in line with allotment rules. Cultivation notices can be issued due to excessive areas of lawn or grass pathways and overgrown and non-cropped bed areas – including overgrown hedging and bramble-infested areas.

In order to avoid a cultivation notice, you need to be cultivating at least 60 per cent of your allotment area. However just cutting back weeds or covering beds with weed-suppressing material is not enough to pass inspection. Of the two, the cultivation notice will tend to require more work to put right. However both notices can lead to the termination of your tenancy.

Allotment waste notice Tenants often bring building materials or green waste from their home or work onto the allotment. Often this is in breach of rules and results in a waste notice. Any amount of non-allotment green waste will result in a waste notice and any materials brought onto the allotment that is not being used to cultivate crops will also be liable to a waste notice. If you have a notice then the council expect you to remove all the materials that are not being used for cultivation from the plot. Particular problem materials include broken glass or glass windows or frames, unused plastic materials (including play equipment) furniture, metal waste, or any painted wood or MDF. Also any organic material that is causing a health risk will result in a waste notice.

When will I be re-inspected and how does this process work? Re-inspections are undertaken no earlier than 28 days from the date printed on the letter, but at any time up to three calendar months after the notice date if the issues raised relate to cultivation or weed infestation.

If you have a notice relating to any other misuse of plot, say for waste materials, or having over sized structures or oversized or poorly maintained flock of hens or cockerels, then that notice remains active until the issue is resolved.

Normally the officer making the re-inspection will expect to see a considerable improvement. If this is the case but you are still not in line with allotment rules then you may receive a second notice; however if your initial rule breach was serious and on re-inspection you have taken no noticeable action then your tenancy may be ended at the first re-inspection.

Ideally a tenant will respond swiftly to a notice, as the longer an issue like weed infestation or poor cultivation is left, the harder it gets to put it right. Strimming and tidying the plot to reduce overgrown vegetation is not sufficient to be viewed as the required 'considerable improvement' and could result in a second notice being issued, although not termination, on re-inspection.

If a tenant is exploring methods for killing weeds over time, the use of quality black plastic or woven weed mat is recommended, rather than carpet, which we would ask tenants not to use.

I have received a notice but I am struggling to keep up with the work and I'm afraid I might lose my plot, what action should I take? If you have a double plot (eg 250m²) then you should consider having your plot split. A 125m² plot is ample for growing crops and is often more manageable for allotment growers.

We have also found that tenants who take on smaller plots are far less likely to receive future notices. If you wish to split your plot then you should contact the council to arrange it.

I received a notice but I am unable to take action because I have been ill, or have other mitigating personal reasons. What can I do to avoid failing my follow-up inspection and having my tenancy terminated? Firstly, you need to inform the council of your situation by calling the customer contact team on 0344 980 3333 well in advance of the expiry date on the notice. In exceptional circumstances, such as a medical condition or family bereavement, then the tenant may be allowed extra time to resolve the issues. If you need more time to move large quantities of materials, such as those identified in a rubbish notice, then extra time can be arranged to allow you to remove waste but this must be by agreement with the council.