

Checklist for Unexpected Hospitalisation

Home – Within first week

Summer

Turn hot water system off	
Check windows not left open/insecure	
Check electrical appliances not on standby/running unnecessarily (TV, DVD player, pc, fans/aircon, electric shower etc)	
Check fridge for food that could go off	
Check bins that might need emptying	
Check card meters – if they run down to emergency credit it could trigger fridge/freezer to defrost	
Let neighbours know that the person is hospitalised so that any noises from the house should be reported to the police	
Make landlord aware – in case of reports about abandonment	
Check for subscription deliveries - from food, milk, magazines, music	

Winter

Turn heating water system to very low – to avoid risk of frozen pipes	
Check windows not left open/insecure	
Check electrical appliances not on standby/running unnecessarily (TV, DVD player, pc, fans/aircon, electric shower etc)	
Check fridge for food that could go off	
Check bins that might need emptying	
Check card meters – if they run down to emergency credit it could trigger fridge/freezer to defrost or heating to disconnect and pipes to freeze	
Let neighbours know that the person is hospitalised so that any noises from the house should be reported to the police	
Make landlord aware – in case of reports about abandonment	
Check for subscription deliveries - from food, milk, magazines, music	

After a Month

Summer

Check post for 'red' bills	
Check for benefit/pension letters – housing benefit could be stopped if no response to a letter meaning that home could be at risk	
Run taps in bathroom and kitchen to clear bacteria from the pipes – flush toilet	
Check fridge and freezer still running and that no food is at risk of decomposing	
Check fruit bowls and bread bins	
Be aware that overgrown gardens are a target for burglars	
Check for signs of interference – scrapes at doors or windows could indicate attempted break in – notify police and/or landlord if concerned	
Check for subscription deliveries – from food, milk, magazines, music	
Ask about subscription services – TV packages/broadband/telephone bundles – these may be on direct debit unnecessarily	
Give neighbours contact details if they need to report a problem with the home	

Winter

Check post for 'red' bills	
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Check for benefit/pension letters – housing benefit could be stopped if no response to a letter meaning that home could be at risk	
Run taps in bathroom and kitchen to clear bacteria from the pipes – flush toilet – this will also reduce risk of pipes freezing	
Check fridge and freezer still running and that no food is at risk of decomposing	
Check fruit bowls and bread bins	
Check for signs of interference – scrapes at doors or windows could indicate attempted break in – notify police and/or landlord if concerned	
Check for subscription deliveries – from food, milk, magazines, music	
Ask about subscription services – TV packages/broadband/telephone bundles – these may be on direct debit unnecessarily	
Give neighbours contact details if they need to report a problem with the home	

After a month there should be a discussion about whether the person can/will return home. If yes, within the next three months, then consider ways to reduce bills building up – in the case of card meters ensure they are kept topped up

If no – not within 6 months or maybe not at all – consider

Cancelling phone line	
Speak to landlord to check tenancy conditions – social landlords may discuss a ‘negotiated surrender’ of the property with a plan to allocate suitable accommodation once the person is fit to leave hospital/care – make sure you ask about ‘tenancy incentive schemes’ as your person may be entitled to compensation for leaving a larger property if they will be downsizing to sheltered or residential accommodation	
Be aware that housing benefit is only available if there is a genuine ‘intention to return’ to that property	
Cutting off utilities to reduce costs	
Speak to Housing Benefit/Universal Credit/Pension Credit – continuing to claim housing rent payments for a property that will not be returned to could cultivate a claim for fraud for your person – or you as the executor. You are only allowed to claim attendance allowance/pension credit for a set number of weeks when hospitalised.	
If the property is owned speak to Council Tax as there may be a reduction for an empty property	
Empty fridge and freezer of all food. If power is disconnected ensure that the fridge is left with door open to avoid build-up of gases.	
Consider removing possessions to storage to handover property and reduce outgoings	