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Information for tenants living in private rented homes

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Your rights and responsibilities

It is important that you are clear about your rights as a tenant living in a private rented home, and to be aware of your responsibilities.

You can [find out more about your rights and responsibilities as a private tenant](#) in this simple guide. You can also get free, confidential and independent advice from your local [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#).

Starting your tenancy

When you become a new tenant your landlord must provide you with a tenancy agreement and the information below:

- Gas safety certificate if there is gas at the property, updated every 12 months
- Deposit paperwork. If you have provided a deposit, the landlord must protect it in a government approved scheme
- Energy Performance Certificate advising you on the likely costs of your energy bills, except for Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Electrical inspection records. All electrical appliances must be safe and checks every 5 years are recommended

Paying your rent

If you live in rented accommodation you must pay your rent on time in order to keep your home; if you get into arrears with your rent your landlord may evict you.

If you are having trouble paying your rent, you should contact your landlord or letting agent as soon as possible before the situation gets any worse. It may be that your landlord is willing to negotiate with you; for example, you may be able to pay off an agreed amount each week or month.

If you find that you are getting into debt, it can be difficult to know which bills to pay first. Please remember that paying your rent should always be your first priority because you are at risk of losing your home if you do not pay it.

For further free confidential advice on how to deal with rent arrears and manage other forms of debt, please contact the [housing options and advice service](#) or your local [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#).

Keeping your property in good repair

If repairs to your property are required, you must report these to your landlord. By law your landlord has to keep your home in a good state of repair. If your landlord fails to carry out essential repairs to your property within a reasonable time of you reporting them, then the council's housing enforcement team may be able to help.

If repairs have not been carried out, they can inspect the property and ensure that your landlord keeps it to legal standards.

To contact the housing enforcement team telephone 01253 478382 / 01253 478394 / 01253 478442 / 01253 476841 or email

Notice to leave

If your landlord serves you with a notice asking you to leave your home, you need to seek advice before doing anything. Even if you have been given a court order or bailiffs' warrant, it is not too late to do something about it.

If you have been given a notice to leave and have nowhere else to go, you should contact the [housing options and advice service](#) as soon as possible. The sooner you get advice, the better chance you have of resolving the problem. Do not leave your home without getting proper advice.

If you do so it may affect the decision the council makes if you need to apply as being homeless.

If you live in your landlord's home as a lodger you will have fewer rights and your landlord may only have to give you verbal notice to leave.

Protection from harassment and illegal eviction

It is important that you understand your rights as a private sector tenant, particularly if your landlord has already served you with a notice to leave. Your rights will depend on the type of tenancy you have.

It is illegal for your landlord to make you leave your home without following the correct legal procedure. If your landlord threatens you, forces you to leave, physically throws you out, or stops you from getting into your home - for example by changing the locks, you have been evicted illegally.

If landlords put pressure on tenants by actions such as cutting off their water supplies, entering their home without permission, or interfering with their belongings, this is harassment and it is illegal.

For more information about your rights and your tenancy, please contact the [housing options and advice service](#). They can also talk to your landlord in order to try to sort out any problems that have led to any harassment or you being illegally evicted.

You can also get free, confidential advice and information from your local [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#) or from the charity [Shelter](#).

Additional information

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