

Is your home fit to live in?

Landlords must make sure that rented homes are fit for human habitation.

Your landlord is responsible for making sure your home is safe and fit to live in:

- when you move in
- during the time you are a tenant

If it isn't, they must do whatever work is needed to make it fit to live in.

Reasons your home might be unfit

Your home might be unfit to live in if poor conditions are affecting your health or put you at risk of harm. For example, because of:

- damp and mould
- unsafe electrics
- gas safety risks
- rats, mice or other pests
- structural or internal disrepair

Minor problems that don't put you at risk won't mean your home is unfit. You should still ask your landlord to carry out any repairs that are needed.

When this rule doesn't apply

Most rented homes have to be fit to live in, including if you rent from the council, a housing association, or a private landlord or letting agent.

If you have a fixed term tenancy which began before 20 March 2019, you'll only be covered if you either sign a new agreement or stay on after the fixed term ends.

You may not be covered if you are a lodger or live in a hostel.

Factsheet

Report the problem

Tell your landlord about the problems in your home. Your landlord usually won't have to do anything until you do. If you speak to them on the phone, you should also put it in writing or an email so you have proof they were told.

Some private landlords may take steps to evict you if you complain.

Contact the council

You can complain to your local council's environmental health team if your landlord won't do the work.

They could order your landlord to carry out work if there's a risk to your health or safety.

Apply for a court order

You can take court action if your home isn't fit to live in. The court can order your landlord to carry out the work or pay you compensation.

Court action should be a last resort. You'll need to show you've tried to sort out the problem with your landlord first.

You'll usually need legal advice from a solicitor and there may be costs involved.

You can get further advice from [england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice](https://www.england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice.

If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice and information on your options. Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.

