

Poor Conditions in Private Rented Housing

If you rent your home from a private landlord and it is in a poor state of repair, is unsafe or has insufficient kitchens or bathrooms, the council can help you.

You can contact environmental health (see below) if your home is unsatisfactory because:

- it is damp or the roof leaks
- the drains are blocked
- the windows are broken or rotten
- a gas fire or water heater makes you feel unwell or has soot marks
- electric sockets are blackened or blow frequently
- there is other disrepair that affects you
- the gas, electricity or water has been cut off because the landlord has not paid the bill.

If you live in a shared house, bedsit, or hostel you should also call environmental health if:

- there are no fire doors or the fire doors are wedged open, or the fire alarm is not maintained
- your accommodation is very cramped or overcrowded
- the shared parts of the house are unsafe

GETTING THE PROBLEM SOLVED

You should tell your landlord or landlady first, but if they do not do the repairs you should call the environmental health.

A council officer will visit you within three weeks, or sooner if the problem is urgent. They will identify the defect(s) and decide what action they can take, if any.

The officer will contact your landlord or landlady if the condition of your home is below the minimum legal standard. The standards are specified in the Housing Act 2004, or under public health legislation, most commonly the statutory nuisance section of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

In some cases where the house is shared, in bedsits, or is a hostel and five or more people live there, your landlord will need to apply for a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licence. For more details see the council's website or contact environmental health (see below).

Your landlord or landlady will be given an opportunity to carry out the repair work within a specified period of time, unless the conditions threaten your health. A legal notice will be served where there is a threat to health, or where the landlord or landlady does not carry out the works voluntarily. The notice will state what works are needed and a time period for completion. A copy of the notice will be sent to you.



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In some cases the owner may request an extension of time. This will be granted if the owner is taking steps to solve the problem and there is a genuine reason for the delay. The owner may carry out different works to those on the notice; this is acceptable providing the council agrees they will solve the problem.

If the time allowed for the works expires and no works have been done, the owner will be given a final warning. If the works are still not done the council will take legal action against the owner, which can result in a fine in the Magistrates' Court. In cases where there is a threat to health, the council will carry out the works on behalf of the owner and charge the cost of the works, plus an administration charge, to the owner.

Your case officer will inform you of the progress with your case.

Please note: The council is only able to offer the above service to private tenants. Owner-occupiers and long leaseholders should seek legal advice and council tenants should contact their local area housing office.

For more information

See the council website at:

www.islington.gov.uk/housing/private_housing

Contacts

Residential Environmental Health

By telephone on **(020) 7527 3083**

By post to **222 Upper Street, London N1 1XR**

By fax to **(020) 7527 3097**

By email to residential.envh@islington.gov.uk

If you wish to come to the office please telephone to make sure someone will be available to see you.

Your Rights as a Tenant

If you need advice on your tenancy or are experiencing harassment or threatened eviction from your landlord or landlady, you should contact:

Housing Advice Centre, 38 Devonia Road, London, N1
Telephone (020) 7527 2000.

Complaints about the Service

If you are not satisfied with the service you receive, you should contact:

Jill Ellenby, Service Manager - Residential, Environmental Health,
222 Upper Street, London N1 1XR. Telephone (020) 7527 3083.

Email - residential.envh@islington.gov.uk