

Harassment and illegal evictions

Harassment is a crime. It can be anything a landlord does, or fails to do, that makes you feel unsafe in the property or forces you to leave.

Your landlord may be guilty of illegal eviction if you:

- * aren't given the notice to leave the property that your landlord must give you
- * find the locks have been changed
- * are evicted in any way other than by bailiffs following a court order.

What you can do

If you think you're being harassed or threatened with illegal eviction, or the property you rent is being repossessed, talk to your local council.

Getting your tenancy deposit back when you leave

Contact your landlord at the end of your tenancy and ask for your deposit. If your home is managed by a letting agency, you'll need to contact them instead.

You'll have a better chance of getting all or most of your deposit back if you leave the property in the same condition as when you moved in.

Money your landlord might take from your deposit

You might not get the full amount of your deposit back if, for example:

- * you owe rent
- * you've damaged the property - this could be something like a spill on the carpet or a mark on the wall where you've hung a picture
- * you've lost or broken some items from the inventory, like some cutlery or mugs

Money your landlord shouldn't take from your deposit

Your landlord shouldn't take money from your deposit, for example, to:

- * replace a worn carpet with a new one if it's worn out gradually over time
- * fix any damage caused by a repair they didn't do when they should have, for example a leak you told them about that got worse and damaged the floor
- * decorate a whole room if there are a few scuff marks on a wall that have appeared while you've lived in the property.

To find more go to <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



Published March 2019

Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. Registered charity number 279057.

Problems renting privately?



Your rights

As a tenant, you have the right to:

- * live in a property that's safe and in a good state of repair
- * get your deposit back when the tenancy ends – and you may also have the right to have it protected during your tenancy
- * challenge any charges (e.g. for electricity) you think are too high
- * live in the property undisturbed
- * see an Energy Performance Certificate for the property
- * be protected from unfair eviction and unfair rent
- * have a written agreement if you have a fixed-term tenancy of more than 3 years. If you have a tenancy agreement, it should be fair and comply with the law.
- * know who your landlord is. If you don't know who your landlord is, write to the person or company you pay rent to.

When you start a new assured tenancy, your landlord must give you a copy of the 'How To Rent' guide.

Your responsibilities

You must:

- * take good care of the property, so that nothing is damaged
- * pay the agreed rent on time, even if you're in dispute with your landlord
- * pay other charges as agreed with the landlord, such as Council Tax or utility bills
- * repair or pay for any damage caused by you, your family or friends

- * only sublet a property if the tenancy agreement or your landlord allows it
- * give your landlord access to the property to inspect it or carry out repairs. Your landlord has to give you at least 24 hours' notice and visit at a reasonable time of day, unless it's an emergency.

Your landlord has the right to take legal action to evict you if you don't meet your responsibilities.

Tenancy agreement

A tenancy agreement is a contract between you and a landlord.

It lets you live in a property as long as you pay rent and follow the rules. It also sets out the legal terms and conditions of your tenancy. It can be written down or it can be a spoken agreement.

Most private tenants have an 'Assured Shorthold Tenancy' but there are also other types.

Repairs

Your landlord is responsible for most major repairs to your home if you rent privately. This includes:

- * the structure of the property, for example walls, roof, windows and doors
- * sinks, baths, toilets
- * pipes and wiring
- * heating and hot water, such as the boiler
- * safety of gas and electrical appliances

You'll be responsible for minor repairs, for example changing fuses and light bulbs. You'll also have to fix anything you've damaged. But do not do other sorts of repairs yourself unless the tenancy agreement says you can.

Write to your landlord as soon as you notice a problem. You could be held responsible if it gets worse. It's best to put it in writing - send it to your landlord and keep a copy yourself.

If a letting agent manages the property for your landlord, write to them and they should talk to your landlord.

If your landlord won't do the repairs

Keep paying your rent. If you don't, you'll get into rent arrears and your landlord might then try to evict you.

It's best to speak to your landlord first to solve your problem. If this doesn't help there are other steps you can take.

It is a good idea to seek advice about what these are.