

## What are my rights as a tenant?

We recommend you read this FAQ in conjunction with A1 (Renting from a Private Landlord) and where appropriate A6 (Getting Released from a Tenancy). This sheet aims to give information on dealing with disrepair in a rented property and also what standards you have a right to expect from your landlord. It also briefly looks at your responsibility as a tenant.

### What safety standards can I expect in my rented property?

All houses must have a gas safety certificate which your landlord must provide for you to see on request. Landlords are also responsible for the safety of electrics in the house however at present there is no safety certificate required. However if you think your electrics are faulty or dangerous then you should seek advice and refer to the disrepair section below.

Smoke alarms should be fitted and although there is no mandatory requirement for this or for fire extinguishers/ fire blankets to be provided most landlords should at least install smoke alarms, especially if they are part of a landlord accreditation scheme.

It is your responsibility as a tenant to keep fire exits safe and free from clutter, to keep batteries in smoke alarms and behave sensibly with candles and sockets etc.

All furniture in your rented accommodation must be made of materials that have passed flammability tests.

### Repairs need doing to the property I am renting, what do I need to do?

The landlord is responsible for maintenance and repair of the structure and exterior of the property – responsibility for other repair depends on what is agreed however usually repairs to things such as the washing machine or cooker is the landlords responsibility unless it states otherwise in the contract. The landlord is not responsible for repairing things you have damaged. If you want a repair doing we advise you take the following steps

- Make a formal request in writing (dated and signed by all tenants) for work to be done, keep a copy of all correspondence and where possible send recorded delivery
- Give the landlord a reasonable period in which to do the work, if it is something which is affecting your health and safety it may be reasonable to ask for it to be done within three days, however where it is not urgent work it is usual to request it be done within

2 – 3 weeks.

- If it is still not done after the time you stated come and seek advice from the Student Support Centre or the Solicitor at the Students Union Advice Centre

If the damage is affecting your health it may be worth contacting the Cardiff County Council (Housing Enforcement) office on 029 20 871762 who can insist the landlord takes action. If the damage isn't covered by Housing Enforcement you could take the landlord to the County Court.

You should not withhold rent as a reaction to your landlord's failure to carry out repairs as this voids your contract and can lead to your being evicted.

It is also worth noting that you have a responsibility to report the damage as soon as possible as if it gets worse or causes further damage you become responsible for the resulting damage.

### **When can the landlord come round to the property?**

As tenants you have a right under the law to enjoy your accommodation without interference, also known as a right to quiet enjoyment. Your landlord has the right to inspect the premises however only with your consent, at reasonable time and with 24 hours notice being given. However if you are asking for a repair/ improvement to be done it is usually in your interest to be flexible about the landlord/ workmen entering the property.

At certain times of the year landlords will be showing prospective tenants round for the following year so it is reasonable to expect this however the landlord should still give you notice.

Harassment from your landlord could be deemed a criminal offence and lead to their prosecution. If you think you are being harassed by your landlord or being forced to leave the property unfairly you should seek advice from either ourselves or the Students Union Advice and Representation Centre, 3rd Floor Students Union. You could also phone the Housing Help Tenancy Relations Officer at Cardiff Council on 029 20 871050.

### **What are my responsibilities to the landlord?**

You have a responsibility to act in a 'tenant like fashion', this means you must not purposely damage the property. If damage occurs you have a responsibility to report it ASAP and to mitigate any subsequent damage.

You must also pay your rent on time, although if you are having problems meeting a rent payment one month you should inform your landlord and see if there is a way they could wait for payment.