

## Tenants responsibilities

- Use the property in a tenant-like manner - this means that you must not damage or neglect the property or allow others to do damage to the premises;
- Do small jobs to maintain the property such as unblocking sinks, cleaning windows and keeping the dwelling in a good decorative order;
- Make good any disrepair to anything you are entitled to remove from the property.

## How to report your disrepair problem

When you believe your landlord is responsible for a problem **do not stop paying rent**. Your obligation to pay rent as a tenant is independent of the landlord's responsibility to carry out repairs.

If you have a problem:

- Inform your landlord that there is a repair problem as soon as is practically possible. It is best to do this in writing, as this establishes the landlord's liability. Date and sign any paperwork and keep a copy of it.
- You can get help and advice from our Housing Options officers.

It is important that you:

- Give the landlord reasonable time in which to do the work - usually four weeks;
- Write again if the landlord fails to complete the repair as requested.

You could consider enclosing copies of estimates for the repair from reliable trades' people and ask that the work be completed by a certain date.

## Arranging the repair yourself

Check with your landlord if they are happy for you to do this. Some landlords provide contact details of local trades' people that they expect you to use. You could then get the work done and deduct the cost from future rent or have the invoices sent to the landlord.

Remember if you do the work yourself you cannot charge labour costs.

Keep copies of any correspondence relating to the disrepair. Where necessary take photographs of any damage that occurs as a result of the defect.

You have a responsibility to inform any visitors to the property about any defect that could cause them injury.

### **Dealing with problems with your landlord**

If the landlord fails to respond to several requests to do repairs you should contact us using the telephone number provided and ask for advice from a Public Health and Housing Officer/ Environmental Health Officer.

You can choose to take the landlord to court but this option can be expensive if you are not entitled to Legal Aid.

If you withhold rent to pay for repairs your landlord could take you to court and may seek possession on arrears grounds. You will need to make a decision whether or not to pursue your repairing rights if there is a real danger of subsequently losing your home.

**Always seek advice first.**