



MOVING-IN

GETTING ADVICE

Getting Advice

Repairs

Whose responsibility is it?

Your contract should set out who is responsible for different repairs or odd jobs around your rented flat or house. The law also implies various duties on landlords to keep the property safe and in good repair. It is not always easy to determine exactly who is responsible for certain repairs. Your rights and responsibilities may vary depending on the type of letting agreement that is in place. Speak to your landlord/ estate agent, if you are not sure about the situation in your rented flat or house.

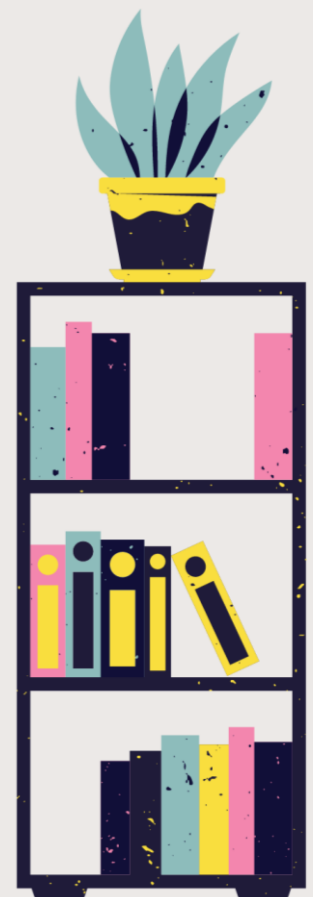
Landlord's Responsibilities

In general, the big things.

- Heating and hot water supply
- Basins, sinks, baths/ showers, toilets
- Structure of the property including windows, external doors, drains and gutters
- Gas appliances (cooker, boiler)
- Fixed electrical installations (wiring, electrical sockets and fittings)

Tenant's Responsibilities

- Report repair issues to the landlords or estate agency
- Change light bulbs
- Test smoke alarms periodically and change batteries when required
- Keep the property (and garden if there is one) clean and in good order



Reporting it

Do this in writing – email is best (unless the landlord/ estate agents have an internal ‘maintenance request procedure’).

Report the details that are relevant:

- What has stopped working?
- When did it stop working?
- Is it affecting anything else in the property?

Keep a record of any emails or messages sent and received and keep back-up copies of photos and other important documents/ files.

It is also important to keep notes on relevant dates and events. For example:

- Appointments arranged for the landlord or engineer to visit the property
- Any diagnosis of the problem from an engineer
- Estimates of how long it will take to fix the problem, order parts etc.
- The date on which each problem is finally resolved.

Usually, the landlord should fix problems in your rented property within a reasonable time. What is ‘reasonable’, however, will vary depending on the circumstances. If you think things are taking too long and are not sure of how to proceed, you should seek advice.

Follow-up

If the problem does not get fixed within a ‘reasonable’ time, (or at all...) the landlord may be in breach of the tenancy agreement. You may also have a claim for compensation.

At this stage, it might help if you:

- Write a follow-up letter
- Seek advice from the [Students’ Union Advice Service](#)
- Get external support from [Citizens Advice](#) or [Shelter England](#)

FAQ’s

❖ Can I do the repairs myself?

It is very risky for tenants to take on repairs themselves, even if directly employing a contractor. You would be responsible for any defects in the work and the landlord may be unwilling to reimburse you for the money you have spent.

Always get the landlord’s written permission before carrying out any work at the property.

❖ Can I move out if the problems do not get fixed?

Not usually. You should seek advice about your situation before you take any action.

❖ Can I withhold rent?

This is not usually advised. Your obligation to pay rent is separate from the landlord’s obligation to carry out repairs. Your landlord can evict you if you withhold rent, even if there are repairs to be done.

Seek further advice about your situation before taking action.

Damp & mould

You might have a problem with damp or mould in your rental property if there are:

- Musty smells
- Dark or discoloured patches on walls or ceilings
- Evidence of mould growth

It is not always easy to identify the cause of a damp and mould problem and, in turn, who is responsible for fixing it.

Causes for damp and mould:

- Condensation due to poor ventilation
- Lack of insulation of the property
- Leaking pipes
- Rain water coming through cracks in the roof or external walls
- Blocked guttering or drains which are overflowing
- Water rising from the ground due to inadequate damp-proofing

As a tenant, you can consider the following, in an attempt to tackle condensation and reduce the risk of mould growth:

- Wipe down condensation you see on walls and windows
- Check that the extractor fans are working correctly
 - You can test this by holding a piece of paper over it. If the fan holds the paper in place, then it is likely to be working well
 - If the extractor fan is not working, report this to your landlord.
- Keep the property adequately heated and ventilated

Reporting it

If you experience problems with damp or mould you should report it to your landlord. You might find that landlord or estate agents are quick to put the blame on the tenants and their use of the property as being the cause of the problem, so make sure you let them know:

- Steps you have taken to tackle the condensation
- Size and location of any damp patches on walls or ceilings (provide photos where possible)
- Any changes or updates to the situation, especially if the mould problem begins to get worse

You can also report any signs of damp or mould to [Leicester City Councils Environmental Health department](#).

Remember to always take photos of any issues and send them to your landlord/ estate agent. Keep the photos for your records too!

Infestations

No one likes the idea of pests in their home. If you identify a problem, you should concentrate on two main points:

1. How to get rid of them

- In the first instance, report it to your landlord/ estate agents. A delay in seeking advice might limit your options in resolving the situation.
- [Leicester City Councils](#) provides services for treating rodent or insect problems through its Environmental Health department.
- Supermarkets and hardware stores usually sell traps or treatments to help tackle problems.
- Private pest control companies are more expensive than shop-bought treatment methods, but will generally be more effective.

2. How to prevent it from reoccurring

- What the landlord can do
Blocking or filling in any holes or gaps through which mice or rats can gain entry. If a hole in a wall or floor is a result of disrepair, then this is the landlord's responsibility.
- What tenants can do
Make sure the property is kept in a clean and tidy condition. Empty the rubbish bin regularly and do not leave food lying around.
Report problem to the landlord as soon as they arise.

It can be difficult to determine who is responsible for getting rid of an infestation. Generally, if the problem is present from the start of the tenancy, it would be the responsibility of the landlord. However, if the problem only occurred after the tenants have been living there for a few months, it may be difficult to prove that they did not cause or contribute to the problem. If you are unsure of where the responsibility lies, seek advice.

Where to get Advice

Students' Union Advice Service

Email: advice@le.ac.uk

Phone: +44 (0) 116 223 1132/ 1184/ 1109

Website: leicesterunion/support/housing

UoL Free Legal Advice Clinic

To book an appointment you will need to complete the [Initial Client Details Form](#) and send it to lawadviceclinic@leicester.ac.uk to have your case considered.

The clinic dates and times are available at leicesterunion.com/support/a-z/timetable/

Shelter England

Charity providing expert advice and support regarding housing.

Free helpline (8am-8pm on weekdays and 9am-5pm on weekends): +44 (0) 808 800 4444

Online chat: england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat

Housing advice pages: england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice provides free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems.

Phone: +44 (0) 300 330 1025

Website: citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/

Location: 60 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FB



Leicester City Council

The City Council offers support services and advice to private tenants and landlords.

Phone: +44 (0) 116 454 1001

Website: leicester.gov.uk/your-community/housing/renting-private-housing/

Gov.Uk Advice

The government website offers information in regards to landlord responsibilities when renting out their property. This information is available here: gov.uk/renting-out-a-property

Ombudsman schemes

For ongoing unresolved problems and complaints about letting agents/ agencies you can also contact the organisations below (and also about landlords if they are members of the Ombudsman scheme).

- [Property Ombudsman](#)
 - [Property Redress Scheme](#)
 - [Property complaints - Which](#)
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leicesterunion.com/advice

Advice Service

advice@le.ac.uk

0116 223 1132/1184/1109



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