

A housing guide for refugees in Scotland

Repairs

Leaflet 5 – November 2009

If you have received leave to remain and are living in temporary accommodation or renting your home, this leaflet is for you. It explains who is responsible for making repairs and gives you general guidance on how to report a repair.

Every home will need repairs at some stage. When you rent your home, your landlord is responsible for some repairs, and you are responsible for others. For details about your own home, you should also look at your tenancy agreement and any other information your landlord has given you.

Find complete guidance and advice about repairs on the Shelter Scotland website:

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice/advice_topics/repairs_and_bad_conditions

Your rights and responsibilities in temporary homeless accommodation

If your local council has accepted a homelessness application from you, it has a duty to provide you with temporary accommodation that is suitable for you and your family. It should have adequate fire safety provisions and should not be damp or in need of major repair work.

What are my responsibilities?

You should keep your accommodation clean, take care of any furniture and equipment provided and report any problems to the Council promptly. You should also allow the Council or property manager into your accommodation to make repairs.

How do I report repairs?

If you think that there are repairs needed, you should report these to the Council.

Your rights and responsibilities in a home rented from the council or housing association.

Your landlord must make sure that your home is fit and safe for you to live in. This is called the 'tolerable standard'. Your home must protect you properly from the weather, be safe and not likely to cause you ill health. Appliances must work properly and there should be working smoke detectors. You can find more information about this standard on the Shelter Scotland website.

Your landlord must also repair certain things if they wear out, break or go wrong. This includes:

- the outside of your home – roof, windows, walls, drains
- the heating system or fire, flues and chimneys
- water pipes, gas pipes and wiring
- toilet baths and sinks
- any appliances or furniture supplied by the your landlord

What are my responsibilities?

You must do five things:

- look after your home by keeping it clean and reasonably warm;
- take care of any furniture and equipment that belongs to your landlord;
- deal with minor repairs – such as replacing a light bulb;
- report any problems promptly – for instance a damp patch or crack, or any damage; and
- allow your landlord to come into your home to make repairs.

You are responsible for looking after furniture and equipment that belongs to you. You will probably be responsible for decorating your home – your tenancy agreement will tell you if you are.

How do I report a repair to my council or housing association home?

Your tenancy agreement or tenant's handbook will give you detail about this. Usually you will phone or call in at your local housing office.

Your rights and responsibilities in a home rented from a private landlord.

Your landlord must make sure that your home is fit and safe for you to live in. Your landlord does this by meeting two standards – the ‘tolerable standard’ and the ‘repairing standard’. Your home must protect you properly from the weather, be safe and not likely to cause you ill health.

Appliances must work properly and there should be working smoke detectors. It should be in good general condition. You can find more information about these standards on the Shelter Scotland website.

What are my responsibilities?

You should take good care of the property by:

- keeping your home reasonably clean and warm;
- keeping the fittings, appliances and furniture in good condition; and
- carrying out minor maintenance (for example, checking smoke alarm batteries and changing light bulbs)

You must also allow your landlord reasonable access to your home to carry out repairs.

You are responsible for looking after furniture and equipment that belongs to you. You may be responsible for decorating your home – your tenancy agreement will tell you if you are.

How do I report a repair?

You should write to your landlord, explaining the problem. If you phone your landlord, you should also write a letter confirming the details. Keep copies of your letters in case you need to follow up your report.

My landlord hasn't carried out the repair. What can I do?

The answer to this depends on your tenancy agreement. The first thing you should do is get advice. You can contact:

Scottish Refugee Council's Refugee Housing Team

Phone this number free for advice or to make an appointment with an advice worker: 0800 085 6087

Shelter Scotland

Phone this number free advice: 0800 800 4444

Positive Action in Housing

Phone this number for information about its services: 0141 353 2220

A local law centre

Call the GAIN Helpline on 0808 801 1011 to get details of your nearest centre