Housing Rights

https://www.housingrights.org.uk/landlords/repairs/council-enforcement

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Council enforcement

This information is for private landlords of properties in Northern Ireland.

If you are a tenant, you can find advice here.

If you are a landlord or letting agent in Northern Ireland seeking advice, you can:

- send a message to Landlord Advice, or
- call 028 90 245 640 (Option 1)

Landlords must make sure a property meets minimum fitness and safety standards.

If you do not carry out essential repairs, your tenants may ask the local council to intervene.

Environmental health inspection

All properties rented to private tenants must meet minimum fitness standards.

Your tenants might ask you to carry out repairs. If you don't do the repairs, the tenants might contact environmental health.

Every council has an environmental health department. They can investigate if they do not think properties are up to standard.

An environmental health officer can visit to carry out a fitness inspection.

If the issue is not very serious, the council may first try to resolve the matter informally. You will be asked to complete repairs within a reasonable timeframe.

Try to do what the environmental health officer asks you. If you don't, the council might serve you a notice. This could be a notice of unfitness or a notice of disrepair.

Notice of unfitness

A notice of unfitness is sent to you if your property does not meet minimum fitness standards.

Your tenants will also get a copy of this notice.

You can appeal a notice of unfitness within 21 days. You can contact a solicitor if you need help appealing.

Rent control

Sometimes a property can become rent controlled. This can happen if:

- the property was built before 1945, and
- you are served a notice of unfitness

Rent control means that the rent you can charge will be restricted. This will happen until your property meets standards again.

You need to have a certificate of fitness before renting out your property if it was built before 1945.

Notice of disrepair

You might receive a notice of disrepair. This means:

- the environmental health officer thinks the property meets basic fitness standards, but
- the officer has decided it is in a state of disrepair

Your tenants will also get a copy of this notice.

You can appeal a notice of disrepair within 21 days. Ask a solicitor if you need help appealing.

Getting a notice of disrepair does not affect the amount of rent you can charge.

Carrying out repairs and re-inspection

The notice you get includes:

- a list of repairs you must carry out, and
- the date the work must be done by

The deadline should be at least 21 days from the date on the notice.

After the deadline passes, the council will check the property.

The council can take court action against you if you have not done what they asked.

More advice

- Rental property standards
- Carrying out repairs
- Rent control