Housing Rights

https://www.housingrights.org.uk/landlords/repairs/rent-control

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Rent control

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)

The Rent Officer for Northern Ireland can restrict the amount of rent you can charge if:

- there is a protected tenancy, or
- the property does not meet fitness standards

In these cases, there will be rent control. You cannot charge whatever rent you want. Only the Rent Officer can set the rent amount.

Unfit properties becoming rent-controlled

Properties built before 1945 need a certificate of fitness**.** If you need one, you should ask the council. However, the council can sometimes:

- refuse to issue a certificate of fitness, or
- issue a notice of unfitness

If this happens, the council will inform the rent officer who will:

- restrict the rent you can charge until repairs are carried out
- add your property details and the restricted rent to the rent register

The rent restriction will end once:

- necessary repairs are complete
- the council inspects the property
- the council issues a certificate of fitness

Protected tenancies and rent control

Protected tenancies are also rent-controlled, even if there is no disrepair. The Rent Officer for Northern Ireland decides what the maximum rent should be.

Rent amounts for rent-controlled tenancies do not automatically increase. But the rent officer can review rents to decide whether or not they should be increased.

Determining the amount of rent

The rent officer determines the maximum rent that can be charged based on the:

- overall condition of the property in terms of fitness standards
- amount of rent the Housing Executive would charge for a similar property
- tenancy terms and what repairs the tenant is responsible for
- improvements carried out by the landlord

If the rent officer hasn’t set a rent for your property since 1 April 2007, the maximum rent you can charge is:

- the amount registered with the Housing Executive before 1 April 2007, or
- £1 per week if the tenancy was not registered before 1 April 2007

You can apply to the rent officer for a rent assessment if you think your rent is too low.

This booklet has more information on rent control in protected tenancies.

More advice

- Council enforcement
- Carrying out repairs
- Protected tenancies