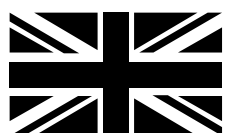


# Health and safety at home

**This factsheet looks at what the council's environmental health service can do if your home suffers from problems that affect your health or safety.**



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## Shelter

Registered charity in England and Wales (263710)  
and in Scotland (SC002327).

**Note**  
Information contained in this factsheet is correct at the time of publication. Please check details before use.

The council can help you if your home suffers from problems affecting your health or safety such as:

- damp
- noise
- pests
- unsafe electrics.

### Responsibility for fixing problems

Your landlord must ensure that the heating, plumbing and electrics in your home are working and safe, and must fix problems with the structure of the building.

Report problems to your landlord first. If your landlord doesn't help, contact your council's environmental health service.

### Contacting the council

When you report a problem to the council, an environmental health officer should inspect your home. Explain how you are affected by the problem.

If there is a serious risk to your health or safety, the council should inspect your home quickly, otherwise you may have to wait for a visit.

An environmental health inspection is free, but there may be charges for certain services.

You can find the environmental health service's details on your council's website. The service may be part of another section, like housing standards or housing advice.

### What environmental health can do

The environmental health service can advise your landlord what to do or order them to carry out the work. In some cases environmental health will do the work itself and charge your landlord.

Environmental health can also give you helpful advice about what you can do.

### Council tenants

If you are a council tenant, environmental health can only advise your housing officer about what needs to be done. If problems continue, get advice.

### Damp

Damp living conditions can lead to health problems such as breathing difficulties or skin rashes. Damp has many causes and environmental health can find out why your home is damp. They can advise you on steps you can take and may order your landlord to take action to remedy the problem.

### Noise

Noise can affect your health, for example if you can't sleep because of neighbours playing loud music. Environmental health may be able to take action against the person responsible for the noise if they won't turn it down. Record the noise if you can. Keep a diary of when and how often it happens before you report the problem.

### Pests

Some pests and vermin can spread diseases and can worsen health conditions like asthma and eczema. Rats and mice can chew through electrical wires, increasing the risk of a fire or electrocution. Environmental health can find out why you have the problem in your home and decide who is responsible for removing the infestation. This could be you, your landlord, or even your neighbours. For more information on dealing with pests in the home, see the factsheet [Dealing with pests in the home](#).

### Eviction warning

If you live in privately rented housing, your landlord might start eviction proceedings if you complain to the council. There is some protection against 'revenge evictions' if your tenancy started or was renewed on or after 1 October 2015. See the factsheet [Section 21 notices: restrictions](#) for what to do if your private landlord tries to make a 'revenge eviction'.

### Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free\* housing advice helpline (0808 800 4444), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice office, or by visiting [england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice)

\*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.