

# Harassment by a private landlord

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Harassment is behaviour that interferes with your rights or causes you alarm or distress. It's a criminal offence for anybody to harass someone else. Call the police if your landlord or anyone else is threatening or using violence.

## What is harassment?

Behaviour by anyone, including a landlord, agent or neighbour, could be harassment if it involves:

- violence, threats or intimidation
- abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- abuse because of gender, race, disability or sexuality

## Harassment by landlords and agents

As a tenant you have special protection from harassment by your landlord or landlord's agent if it is aimed at making you or anyone else in your household:

- leave your home
- stop using part of your home
- not report problems with the property to the council

A private landlord could commit an offence by:

- forcing you to sign an agreement to take away your legal rights
- pressuring you to leave without following the correct legal process
- cutting off your gas, water or electricity or interfering with your post
- visiting you at home without notice or late at night

Harassment usually happens if your landlord carries out the action more than once. Some actions, like cutting off your fuel, might only happen once. If your supply is affected over a period of days or weeks that also counts as harassment.

## Factsheet

### Explain your rights

Your landlord might not understand what rights you have as a tenant. Show your landlord this factsheet to explain:

- you have the right to live in the property without interference
- they may be breaking the law

### Get help if your landlord is harassing you

Contact your local council and ask to speak to the person who deals with harassment by private landlords. Some councils have a dedicated Tenancy Relations Officer who can speak to the landlord on your behalf. Speak to the council straight away if it is not safe for you to stay where you are.

A housing adviser or solicitor can help you get a court order called an injunction. An injunction can stop your landlord from doing anything stated on the order, such as threatening you, cutting off your power supply or changing the locks. Ask about claiming compensation, especially if you left the property as a result of the harassment. You may be able to claim your deposit back if you've left.

If your landlord says they are going to evict you, contact your local council and ask to speak to the person who deals with illegal eviction.

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You can get further advice from [england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice](https://www.england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice.

If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice and information on your options. Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.

