

Who are we and what do we do?

The Private Sector Housing Division is part of the Development & Neighbourhood Services Directorate of Stockton Council.

Our role is to improve the standard of private sector housing including accommodation rented from private landlords. We do this by providing advice and assistance to both landlords and tenants.

We respond to tenants who have concerns regarding their living accommodation and we also provide advice to landlords to encourage higher standards of management.

This leaflet is aimed at those who occupy family homes rented from private landlords. A separate leaflet is available for people living in flats, bedsits etc.

How we can help?

If you feel your home is in disrepair or unsafe we will visit and carry out a full and detailed inspection both inside and outside the property. We will need access to all parts of your home.

Following the inspection, if we feel that your housing conditions pose a risk to your health and safety or to that of any other occupier or visitor to the property; we will work with your landlord to improve conditions within your home.

Firstly we may contact your landlord to inform them of the problems found and request that they carry out the work within a reasonable timescale.

If your landlord does not improve conditions with an agreed timescale (please note that the timescales involved will depend upon the type and amount of work required) we may serve legal notices on your landlord which will detail the work to be carried out and when it should be started and completed.

If your landlord fails to comply with this notice we may arrange for the work to be undertaken and recharge your landlord the full cost of doing so.

The process of ensuring your landlord undertakes improvement works at your home can sometimes be difficult and lengthy but we will try to keep you fully informed of how your case is progressing.

How you can help?

Before you contact us for help you should tell your landlord, preferably in writing, about the problems at your home. You should then give your landlord the opportunity to undertake the works you require.

This is very important as we may need to inform your landlord of our intention to inspect your home. If your landlord receives this notification from us and you have not given your landlord the opportunity to put things right, you could possibly damage your tenant/landlord relationship.

You can also help us ensure the process of improving your home is undertaken as quickly as possible by;

- Keeping all appointments that are arranged with you.

- Ensuring that the officer visiting your home can access all rooms and other parts of the house such as the loft, yard etc.
- Allowing your landlord entry to your home (at reasonable and pre arranged times) to assess and undertake the works.

What should you expect from your Landlord?

As well as undertaking repairs within a reasonable period your landlord should:-

- Provide you with a Gas Safety certificate on an annual basis.
- Behave reasonably and not harass you.
- Give you at least 24 hours notice (in writing) if access to your home is required, and to make arrangements for such access at a reasonable time.

What your Landlord will expect from you?

As well as giving your landlord the opportunity and access to your home at reasonable times to carry out inspections, repairs, etc you must also ensure that:-

- You pay your rent
- You, your family and visitors to your home behave reasonably, and do not cause nuisance or anti-social behaviour.
- You do not damage any furniture, fixtures or fittings belonging to your landlord