

1 Recent developments

The *Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 2009* became law in July 2023. It paves the way for a number of changes to the way social housing is regulated and managed. It is expected that these will start to take effect during 2024. Changes include:

giving the Regulator of Social Housing stronger enforcement powers, introducing new consumer standards and a regular inspections regime for social landlords

giving the Housing Ombudsman new powers to issue wider orders to address individual complaints and require landlords to address wider

A local authority must provide a DFG if certain conditions are met. The disabled person must intend to live in the property as their only or main home for at least five years after the works are completed (the '*grant condition period*') unless special circumstances apply. The grant must be requested for a specific purpose, including those set out above.

The local authority must be satisfied the following apply:

the works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, and

it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and condition of the property.

Homeowners and tenants can apply for DFGs, as well as some park homeowners and occupiers of houseboats. The applicant does not have to be the disabled person for whose benefit the works are required, so a landlord can apply to have a property adapted for a disabled tenant.

The applicant must provide the authority with a certificate stating the disabled occupant will live in the property as their only or main home throughout the grant condition period.

If the disabled occupant is a tenant, the authority requires a certificate from the landlord (if different from the applicant) to verify this. Private tenants may find this difficult. A disabled occupant can not get a DFG if the property is not their main home.

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2.1.2 Housing Renewal Assistance

Your local authority may provide other housing-related grants, loans, or services. These may be used to top up a DFG, speed up the delivery of adaptations, or improve the home in other ways. In law, this help is called ‘[Housing Renewal Assistance](#)’, but your local authority may use a different name, so ask what they provide.

Housing renewal assistance is for help with:

repairs, improvements, and adaptations

the demolition of accommodation and rebuilding costs

securing new accommodation if the authority buys your current home, or decides it is not economically viable to adapt or improve it.

Help can be provided ‘[Housing Renewal Assistance](#)’, so you may be able to get grants, loans, labour, discounted materials, or temporary accommodation. Help may be provided by a third party, such as a Home Improvement Agency. It may be provided unconditionally, or subject to certain conditions such as repaying all, or part, of a loan, or making a contribution towards the costs. Loans may be provided as part of an equity-release style scheme.

Local authorities must have a formal policy in place before providing this help and can only provide help in line with the policy. Not all authorities have a policy, but a full version should be available for inspection at their main office if they do. You can ask for a summary to be sent by post, for which a reasonable charge can be made. This should tell you:

the type of assistance available

whether you are eligible to apply

how to make an enquiry or application

any conditions attached and terms of repayment if these apply

target timescales for operating different parts of the process

advice and assistance from a local Home Improvement Agency.

When providing help, the local authority must:

set out in writing the terms and conditions under which it is being given

ensure you receive appropriate advice or information about the extent and nature of any obligations (financial or otherwise) you are taking on

take account of your ability to make any repayments.

Most local authorities have a complaints procedure if you are unhappy with the way your application is treated.

If you are unhappy with the authority’s response to your complaint, you can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

What help do you get under ECO and the Great British Insulation Scheme?

Under ECO you can get help with insulation work or heating-related improvements such as the installation of ‘[oil](#)’ central heating.

You may get a broken boiler repaired or replaced if you are an owner occupier, but not if you are a tenant. This is because landlords are responsible for keeping tenants’ boilers in repair and proper working order. You may be able to get an inefficient heating system upgraded.

5 Gas and electrical safety

If you are a tenant, your landlord must carry out an annual gas safety check and make sure electrical installations and wiring are safe. If you are a homeowner, you may qualify for a free annual safety check from your gas supplier, if you are in receipt of means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit Guarantee Credit and:

over pension age, or

live with a disability or long-term health condition, or

live with children under five.

If you do not live with children under five, you must live alone or with others all over pension age, disabled, chronically sick M

6.1.1 Repairs

If your tenancy was granted on or after 24 October 1961 for a ' ' of less than seven years, you are entitled to have certain repairs carried out by your landlord under section 11 of the @ H 5 -,). This includes ' ' tenancies that roll on from week to week or month to month, even if you have lived in your home for more than seven years. There are limited exceptions to these rules, so seek advice if you are unsure.

If section 11 applies, your landlord is responsible for repairs to the:

6.1.4 Gas safety

The landlord of a property let on a ' ' must ensure gas piping and flues serving the property are checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Any gas appliances provided by the landlord must also be checked. The tenant is responsible for their ownU y the lb y - ia

The landlord must check the alarms are in proper working order on the first day of a ‘
’, which is a tenancy that is not a renewal of a previous tenancy.

These obligations do not apply if you live with your landlord or their family, or live in a hostel, refuge, or care home. They do not apply if you have a tenancy with a fixed term of seven years or more that does not have a break clause.

6.1.6 Furniture

Upholstered furniture provided by your landlord must be fire resistant, unless made before 1950 or supplied to you before 1 March 1993. New furniture should carry a manufacturer’s label confirming it is fire resistant.

6.2 Social tenancies

Most local authority tenants have a right to be compensated if certain small repairs (‘
’) are not carried out in set timescales. For a repair to qualify, the defect must be set out in the G H
@ 5 F F F -- (The authority must estimate the works will cost less than £250. Defects covered include loss of electric power, water or gas supply, a leaking roof, and an insecure external window, door, or lock.

There are different timescales for repairing different defects. For example, if you experience a total loss of electric power, the local authority’s contractor should complete repairs within one working day. If your roof is leaking, it has seven working days to complete repairs.

If the contractor does not complete the repairs on time, you can request a new contractor. If they fail to meet the required timescale, you are entitled to compensation of up to £50 for any one job. It is unlikely you will be compensated if you missed an appointment or refused access.

Housing association tenancies

Housing associations are not required to operate a ‘
’ scheme. Some do and these schemes often run along the lines set out above. If you need to report disrepair, check whether your landlord has its own repairs scheme, as this may give you additional rights.

6.3 Private tenancies – energy efficiency

A minimum energy efficiency standard applies in the private rented sector – a tenancy should not be granted or renewed if the property has an EPC rating below band 'E'. EPCs give recommendations as to how a property’s rating can be improved.

From 1 April 2020, landlords should not let or continue to rent out properties breaching this standard. They must improve a sub-standard property or face a fine.

However, it is possible to register an exemption, meaning a property can continue to be let. Situations where an exemption can be registered include if a tenant refuses consent, or where the cheapest improvement recommended on the EPC would cost more than £3,500.

If a landlord cannot improve a property to EPC 'E' for £3,500 or less, they should make all recommended improvements up to that amount. Note, the standard only applies to properties requiring an EPC (most properties that have been marketed for sale or rent, or modified in the past 10 years), so older private tenancies may not be covered.

For more information, see www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance

6.4 Houses in multiple occupation

If you live in rented accommodation and share a kitchen, toilet, or bathroom with other tenants who are not family members, it is likely you live in a ' ' (HMO). Common examples of HMOs are shared properties or houses converted into bed-sits.

'A ' and occupiers of HMOs have specific legal duties, although some HMOs, such as those managed by a local authority or housing association, are exempt. The manager is the person who owns or leases the property and receives rent payments from the occupiers, or would do had they not entered into an arrangement whereby another person receives the rent payments.

If you live in an HMO, in addition to the above, the manager must: provide contact details to each household and have them on display

HMO licensing

Certain HMOs must be licensed by the local authority. These are properties with

The first stage of the no-fault procedure is the landlord serving a possession notice on the tenant, called a section 21 notice. The second stage is the landlord applying to the court for an ‘

Private assured shorthold tenants have some limited protection against retaliatory eviction. Under these rules, a section 21 notice cannot be served within six months of a local authority serving an ‘

These are notices issued under the 5 (, as per sections 2.3 and 6.5.5. A section 21 notice served after a tenant complains to their landlord is invalidated if the local authority subsequently serves a notice.

Be aware, a local authority is only able to serve a notice if specific hazards are identified, so not all complaints result in a notice being served. It is the local authority’s choice as what notice it serves.

Administrative delays may mean your landlord can bring possession proceedings before the authority are in a position to inspect your property and serve a notice. Even if a notice is served, you will not be protected if it is your fault that the property is in a poor condition. As such, it is important to seek advice before doing anything that may jeopardise your security.

6.5.5 How the local authority can help

The local authority is responsible for dealing with health and safety risks in the local area. It is usually the Environmental Health team that does this. You can involve Environmental Health if your landlord is refusing to carry out repairs

6.5.6 Doing repairs yourself

You can carry out or pay for repairs yourself if your landlord does not accept responsibility for works, but you have no right to be reimbursed

8 The Social Fund

If you are on means-tested benefits, you may be able to get a Social Fund loan to help with the cost of minor home improvements. This is a ' ' if you receive Universal Credit and a ' ' if you receive other means-tested benefits.

Apply at your Jobcentre Plus Office

Useful organisations

Citizens Advice

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

www.lgo.org.uk

Telephone 0300 061 0614

Investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities.

Regulator of Social Housing, The

www.gov.uk/topic/housing/social-housing-regulation

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Next update March 2025

The evidence sources used to create this factsheet are available on request. Contact [4](#)

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