



If you need this information in large print, Braille, other language or on audio cassette please contact: 01785 619 000

Stafford Borough Council

COMPLAINTS ABOUT REPAIRS - HOUSING

HOW STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL CAN HELP WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT DISREPAIR

Customer Contact Centre

☞ 01785 619 000

Housing Standards Team

Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre, Riverside
Stafford ST16 3AQ

☞ Email

housingadvice@staffordbc.gov.uk

☞ Website

www.staffordbc.gov.uk



This leaflet explains:

What to expect from Stafford Borough Council when you make a complaint about a repair issue.



➤ Introduction

Most landlords want to manage their property well. It is in their financial interest, but sometimes things do go wrong and often the Housing Standards Team can help. We are independent, that is we will not take sides either for or against you. We will make all judgements on what we discover. Sometimes this may mean we agree with the landlord or that we can only get things repaired and not replaced or improved.

➤ What to do before calling the Housing Standards Team

If there is disrepair in your property or something stops working then contact your landlord or agent and tell them what is wrong. If you get no response then contact us.

➤ What the Inspector will do when he visits the property

The Inspector will listen to your concerns and then look at all the issues highlighted. The Inspector will survey the property and look for anything that could be described as defective.

➤ What does the Inspector ignore?

The law says that the Inspector cannot consider issues that you yourself can deal with. These are issues such as drying clothes on radiators that is causing condensation in the house or a tripping hazard on the stairs caused by items being stored on the landing.

➤ And then what happens

The law says that the Inspector has to write everything down and decide if any of the issues noted will cause a hazard to you, your family or visitors. The Inspector then makes a calculation set out by law and decides if there is a serious risk to health, safety or welfare. If there is, then the Inspector will contact the landlord to ask for things to be repaired or replaced. If the risk is minor, all the Inspector can do is advise the landlord that it would be a good idea to do repairs.

➤ So, it isn't a serious hazard, what else can I do?

The landlord has certain duties to maintain the house; the Inspector can advise you of your rights in these cases and this may involve you taking private action and getting advice from the CAB or a solicitor.

➤ What else can't you do?

It is not our role to recommend re-housing or arrange for "points" to be awarded if you are on a Housing Association waiting list. Our aim is to improve your housing to make it reasonably healthy and safe for your use.

➤ How do I deal with other problems?

If the landlord or agent fails to do repairs then you MUST keep paying the rent. If you stop paying, the landlord is likely to evict you, it will be difficult for you to get another home and it may also cause problems with future borrowing and credit. If the landlord or his workmen let themselves into your house without your permission or knowledge then contact us, but remember, refusing access will only slow down the completion of repairs and may be a breach of your tenancy agreement.

➤ My tenancy has expired and the landlord refuses to grant me another tenancy

The most common type of tenancy is the Assured Shorthold Tenancy, it has a minimum length of 6 months. Many landlords do not renew this tenancy. If your landlord does nothing, you can remain in the property, if the landlord wants you to leave he has to follow a strict legal process and normally give you 8 weeks notice that he wants you to leave the property.

➤ The landlord wants me to leave

The landlord has to follow a strict legal process if he wants you to leave. It is a criminal offence for a landlord to harass you or force you out of the house without following this process.

➤ You are unhappy in the house and want to leave

The Assured Shorthold Tenancy is a legally binding contract and the landlord can demand that you pay the rent owed up to the end of the contract. The agreement should tell you how much notice you have to give to the landlord and if you do not follow the proper procedures you may end up being taken to Court for not paying rent and your entitlement to future Housing Benefit may be at risk.

➤ How to contact us

If you ring 01785 619 000 our contact centre will take your details and an officer will ring you back as soon as they can, or you can call in or write to us at Housing Standards Team, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, ST16 3AQ.