

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The Housing Ombudsman's guide for residents on how social housing landlords should protect your rights.

Protecting your rights

Social housing landlords must follow laws that protect your rights. These laws include the Equality Act, Care Act, and Human Rights Act. However, landlords should not stop there. Landlords should make sure all residents, especially those who need extra help, are taken care of and that there are no delays or interruptions to your services.

In our Spotlight report on attitudes, respect and rights, the Ombudsman said that landlords who provide homes for people must focus on making sure residents are at the centre of everything they do. Just doing what the law says is not good enough; landlords should try their best to give services that fit what their residents need.

Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability, you can ask for changes to be made to your home to make it easier for you to live there. These changes, which are called 'reasonable adjustments' under the Equality Act 2010, could include asking for your rental information to be sent by mail or having support rails added to your home.

Your landlord only has to make changes that are reasonable after you've asked for them. You need to clearly explain what changes you need and why they will help you. This guide is here to help you learn about how your landlord should treat you well and respect your rights as a resident.

YOUR LANDLORD MUST

- ✓ Treat you fairly, promptly, effectively and sensitively.
- ✓ Allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of residents and prospective residents into account.
- ✓ Make sure your needs are considered in the way you need services and communicate.
- ✓ Provide you with choices, information, and communication that is appropriate to you.
- ✓ Be open and accountable with you for example you should be able to take part in surveys, consultations, groups and panels.
- ✓ Publish their performance information, for example, the average time it takes to complete a repair.
- ✓ Only limit talking to you if they can show you have been acting inappropriately towards staff. They also need to make sure you can ask for another look at the situation. They have to explain how you can ask for help or say if something is wrong while they limit talking to you.
- ✓ Take responsibility for any contractors that enter your home and they should also treat you with fairness and respect.
- ✓ Be trained on how to deal with any additional needs you may have to give you confidence in approaching them.
- ✓ Never blame you for the condition of your home without fully investigating the issue – there may be some changes you need to make but the landlord needs to focus on its responsibilities first.
- ✓ Listen to your feedback and complaints and admit when something goes wrong, take responsibility, and show they are committed to fixing the issue to stop it from happening again.
- ✓ Focus on their relationship with you.
- ✓ Help you find more support such as managing your money or finding a job.
- ✓ Provide you with a home where you feel safe, respected and supported.