

repairs to your home

LIVE
WELL

a guide to responsibility for repairs in your home

landlords' responsibilities

By law the landlord is responsible for the structure and exterior of the dwelling. This includes the windows, window frames, external doors, brickwork, guttering and any other direct consequences of external or structural problems.

They are responsible for all installed fixtures and fittings such as the basins, sinks and baths. They are responsible for the heating and hot water installations such as any central heating system and fixed heaters, the safety and good working order of all gas installations and the home's electrics.

Under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act, if the house or flat you rent is not fit for human habitation, you may be able to take your landlord to court. "Unfit for human habitation" means that your health is being seriously affected, there are parts of the property you can't use, or there is a risk of physical harm or injury. Talk to us if you think that the problem is so bad that it is not safe to carry on living in your house.

The landlord cannot pass on any of their liability to the tenant.

The landlord must carry out repairs within a reasonable time of a problem being reported to them. What is a reasonable time depends on the nature of the problem. A minor cosmetic repair would not be urgent, but if the boiler is broken and you have no access at all to heating or hot water (especially in cold weather), that would be urgent.

If the landlord wants to send someone round to assess a repair, or carry one out, he should give you 24 hour's notice in writing, unless it is an emergency. Sometimes it will be in your best interests to allow access at short notice, to get work done quicker.

tenants' responsibilities

Tenants have a duty to take care of the property and to use it in a responsible way. This means not damaging any of the furniture, fittings or appliances provided and using things in a sensible manner. If the tenant causes any damage they will ultimately be responsible for it and may lose all or part of their deposit.

A tenant may have to undertake repairs if the tenancy agreement specifies it. If your tenancy agreement says you have to carry out significant repairs, talk to advice(su) as the clause could be unfair.

As a tenant, it is one of your responsibilities to report repairs that are needed promptly. If you don't report a problem promptly and it gets worse and/or causes other damage, the landlord could deduct money from your deposit to pay for it.

We recommend that you report repairs in writing (or follow up a phone call with an email or text). This means you have a written record of when you reported the issue and it will help later if you need to chase up a repair. Make sure you keep copies.

getting repairs done

It is important to work out who is responsible for paying for the repair before taking any action.

If your landlord is responsible, contact them as soon as you notice a problem. The housing and homelessness charity, Shelter England, has a template letter which you can download [here](#) and use as a guideline.

You should include a detailed breakdown of all the repairs and give a reasonable timescale in which you expect the landlord to have carried out the repairs.

If the landlord does not respond or does not satisfactorily carry out the repairs contact [advice\(su\)](mailto:advice(su)@uea.ac.uk) for further help and advice.

We advise against refusing to pay rent or making deductions from rent without taking advice first.

If you think that the problems in your house are so serious that it is not fit for habitation, come and talk to us.

Serious problems can include

- lack of heating or damp so bad that you have suffered health problems requiring medical treatment
- dangerous electrical wiring
- gas leaks
- fire risks
- risk of injury from structural damage
- infestations of vermin which could be prevented if damage was repaired
- lack of adequate sanitation

Possible routes to resolve these issues, if your landlord won't respond to your concerns, could be:

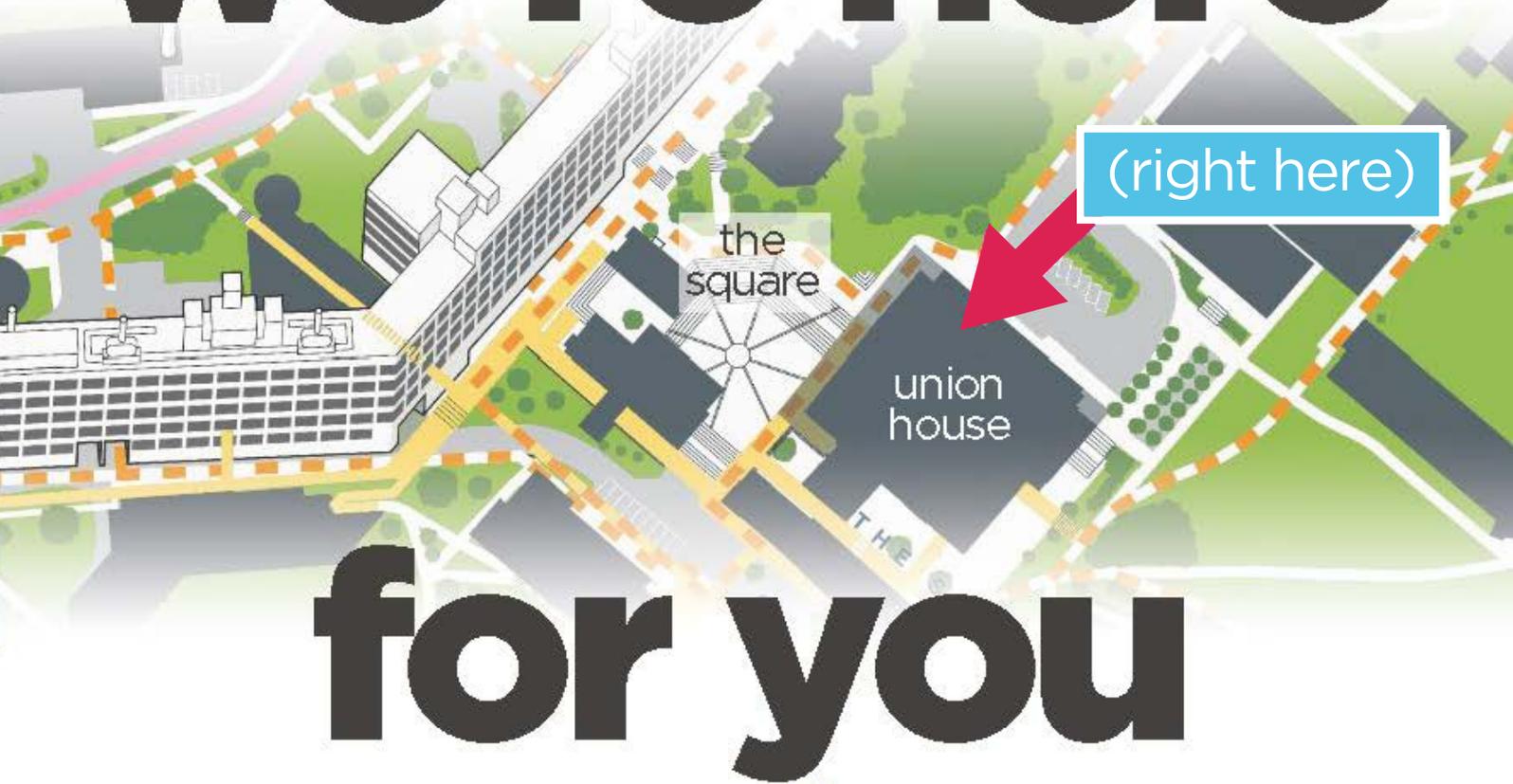
- contacting [Norwich City Council](#)
- making a formal complaint about your letting agent
- taking legal action to force the landlord to do repairs

You can't take action if the reason the house is not fit for habitation is something you have done yourself.

It's always best to try and resolve matters informally if you can. We can help you to do this and advise on next steps if informal resolution isn't possible.

www.uea.ac.uk/livewell

we're here



**free, confidential,
impartial advice**

mon - fri
10.00 - 16.00

advicecentre@uea.ac.uk
uea.su/wellatuea



MARKS OUT OF
TENANCY

