

GUIDANCE ON HOUSING CONDITIONS

How to Use the Housing Conditions Letters

These letters are designed to help tenants report serious housing problems clearly and correctly.

1. Things You MUST Change in All Three Letters

These items must always be checked and updated so the letter matches your own situation.

A. Text in Blue (if shown in your version)

- Read it carefully
- Change it to match your situation
- OR delete it if it does not apply

B. Text in *Italics*

- These are instructions
- Remove the italics
- Replace them with your own information
- OR delete the instruction if it does not apply

C. Text in Square Brackets [like this]

- Read the text inside the brackets
- Decide if it applies to you

If it applies:

- Remove the brackets and keep the words

If it does not apply:

- Change the wording or
- Delete the entire bracketed section

Examples:

- [NAME OF LANDLORD] → replace with your landlord's name
- [Photos of the disrepair] → remove brackets and list what you have
- [Set out the nature of defects...] → remove the instruction and write your own list

2. Sections That Only Apply to Some People

Some sections are optional and only apply to certain tenants.

Ask yourself: Does this apply to me?

- If YES → keep it and remove brackets/instructions
- If NO → delete the entire section

Examples of optional sections:

- *Complaints Handling – Social Housing* (council or housing association tenants only)
- *Special Damages* (only if belongings were damaged)
- *Personal Injury* (only if health has been affected)
- *Alternative Accommodation* (only if the home is unsafe to live in)

3. Things You MUST NOT Remove

These sections are legal requirements and must stay in the letters:

- Legal names of the Acts (Awaab's Law, EPA 1990, LTA 1985, FFHH Act 2018)
- Landlord deadlines
- Explanation of your legal rights
- Request for inspection
- Request for disclosure (documents)
- Conclusion sections
- Dates of access
- Overall structure of the letter

These sections protect you legally. Do not delete them.

4. Information You MUST Add Yourself

Every letter must include:

- Your full name
- Your address
- Your landlord's name and address
- Your phone number

- **Dates you gave access**
- **A clear list of problems in your home**
- **The impact on your health or daily life**
- **Evidence (photos, messages, letters, receipts)**
- **Write “Yours sincerely,” or “Yours faithfully,” (both are acceptable) and add your name**

5. Keep All Three Letters Consistent

To avoid confusion, apply the same rules to every letter:

- **Same approach to brackets**
- **Same approach to instructions**
- **Same approach to optional sections**
- **Same format for personal details**
- **Same approach to evidence**
- **Same removal of blue or italic text**

This keeps the letters clear and easy to complete for everyone.

6. Extra Guidance for Community Use

These points help people with limited English:

- **Keep sentences short**
- **Use simple words**
- **Ask someone to help read the instructions if needed**
- **No legal knowledge is required**
- **You only need to describe what is wrong in your home**
- **Perfect spelling is not required**
- **Letters can be handwritten or typed**
- **Letters can be sent by email or post**

7. Final Checklist

Before sending, check:

- **Have all brackets been removed?**

- **Have all instructions been replaced?**
- **Have you deleted sections that do not apply?**
- **Have you kept all legal sections?**
- **Have you added your own details?**
- **Have you listed the problems clearly?**
- **Have you included your evidence?**

If yes, your letters are ready.

GUIDANCE ON LAW

1. General Repairs

Section 11 – Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

Use this route for basic disrepair, such as:

- **Leaking pipes or roof**
- **Broken boiler or heating**
- **Faulty windows, doors, or electrics**
- **Damaged flooring or plaster**
- **Breaches of repair duties under the tenancy**
- **Small cracks in walls or ceilings**
- **Loose handles, hinges, or cupboard doors**
- **Minor leaks that do not cause damage**
- **Peeling paint or worn flooring**
- **Dripping taps**
- **Broken tiles**
- **Sticking windows or doors**
- **Low-level mould in a small area**
- **Faulty extractor fans**
- **Minor draughts**

This route uses the Housing Conditions Protocol, which includes:

- Sending a Letter of Claim
- Allowing time for inspection
- Requesting repairs and compensation
- Court action if unresolved

2. Environmental Hazards

Environmental Protection Act 1990 & Section 7A LTA 1985

Use this route for statutory nuisances or health hazards, including:

- Damp and mould affecting breathing
- Infestations (rats, mice, cockroaches)
- Sewage leaks, drainage issues or foul smells
- Unsafe hygiene or sanitation
- Noise or pollution
- Heat, Cold & Safety Hazards
- Water Leaks & Moisture

Enforcement routes include:

- Sections 79 & 82 EPA 1990 (statutory nuisance)
- Sections 9A & 10(1) LTA 1985 (health and safety risks)

You may contact Environmental Health and/or send the EPA letter.

You may also apply to the Magistrates' Court.

3. Emergency or Serious Hazards

Awaab's Law – Section 10A LTA 1985

Awaab's Law currently applies only to social landlords. There is no confirmed date for extension to private landlords.

Use this route for urgent, dangerous hazards or those that pose a risk of serious harm, such as:

- Damp and mould in sleeping rooms or causing breathing problems
- Mould affecting babies, the elderly, the disabled, or medically vulnerable tenants
- Gas leaks or carbon monoxide

- **Electrical safety (immediate risk of shock or fire)**
- **Fire Safety Hazards (serious and immediate)**
- **Risk of structural collapse or Falling Elements**
- **Water Supply & Sanitation (Dangerous Failures Only)**
- **Exposed live wires**
- **No heating or hot water for vulnerable tenants**
- **Emergency Rodent Issue that carries disease, contaminates food, or chews wires**

Landlord deadlines under Awaab's Law:

- **Investigation within 24 hours for emergency hazards**
- **Written findings within 3 working days**
- **Repairs within 5 working days, where possible**
- **If not possible: repairs must start within 12 weeks**
- **Alternative accommodation must be offered if the home is unsafe**

You do not need to follow the Housing Conditions Protocol for Awaab's Law. These duties are statutory and automatic.

4. Working With Your Landlord

Try to stay respectful and calm. Many landlords face pressure, limited staff, limited legal knowledge and budget constraints. You can help by:

- **Giving access for inspections and repairs**
- **Explaining problems clearly**
- **Being polite with surveyors**
- **Avoiding confrontation**
- **Asking for fair compensation**

6. A Word of Wisdom

Landlords are people, too. Many are doing their best in difficult conditions. Clear, reasonable, and calm communication increases the chance of repairs and fair outcomes. These letters are about solving problems, not creating conflict.