

Social housing and your rights

Social housing is housing run by councils
and housing associations

Information for disabled people





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About this information



This information is for disabled people.

It is about renting **social housing** and your rights.

What is social housing?



Social housing is houses or flats that are owned by:

- Your local council
- Organisations called **Housing Associations**
- Charities and some other organisations

With social housing:

- The rent is usually less than for other homes



- You can usually stay there for a long time



- It can be easier to make changes to your home if you need to.



But there is not enough social housing.

And it can be hard to find social housing that is right for you and your disability.



How to get social housing



1. Be clear about what housing you need and where it should be.

You can make a list of things that are important for you and your disability.



2. You usually have to put your name on a list to get social housing.

The list is called a **housing register**.



You can join the housing register if you are disabled.

Speak to the housing people at your local council about it.



You can find your local council if you type your postcode into the **gov.uk** website.



3. Ask your council how to get social housing and how they decide who gets it.

For example, will you need to choose a house you like and then see if you can get it?

Or will the council choose a house for you?



4. Show the council why social housing is important for your health or disability.

Get good information to show this.

For example, you could get information from your doctor, social worker or other health and support people.



5. Find out if the social housing you want to move to is right for your disability.

If not, can it be changed to make it easier to live in?

You don't have to live in social housing that is just for disabled people.

Your rights as a disabled person



Councils and housing associations should make it easy for disabled people to ask for social housing and live in social housing.



There are laws and rules about this.

For example, a law called the **Equality Act 2010** says that you have some rights.

1. Asking for social housing

Your council or housing association should help you if you need:

- Support to understand how to get social housing and how it works
- Support to fill in the form to ask for social housing.



Your council or housing association should help you if you need:



- Help to understand information.

You have to fill in a form to ask for social housing.

And you have to sign a document called a **tenancy agreement** if you move in somewhere.

You can ask for these documents in a way you find easy to understand.

For example, in easy read or another language.



Your council or housing association should also help you if you need:



- More information about a home to find out if it is right for you and your disability
- Information about how to complain about social housing.



You can also ask the council if they can:

- Help you visit homes you like to see if they are right for you



- Give you another way to ask for social housing if you find the internet hard.

For example, by phone or in person.

If you are not happy with the council's decision



You can say if you don't agree with the council's decision about:

- How quickly you need social housing
- The home they want to give you if you think it is wrong for you.



You can write to the council to ask them to look at their decision again.



If that doesn't work you can ask other people to look at the decision for you.

They may be able to help.



For example, you can get in touch with:

- Someone who speaks up for people in your local area. Like your local Councillor, MP or MSP in Scotland

- Organisations that can give you advice.

For example, Citizens Advice Bureau and Shelter.

You can find out how to get in touch with them at the end of this leaflet.



2. Making changes to your home



You may need to change some things in your home because of your disability.

For example, if you find it hard to get into your home or use things in it.



The law says your landlord has to change some things for disabled people. But not everything.



There is more information about this in a leaflet called:

Making changes to your home because of your disability.

It is available on our website.

Where to get help

1. If there is a problem with your home



Speak to the people who own your social housing first.

If this doesn't work you can write to them to complain.



2. If you are unsafe where you live or you think you may have nowhere to live

Speak to the housing people at your local council.



3. For information and advice about social housing and your rights

For example:

- Paying for social housing
- Benefits
- Problems with social housing.

You can speak to:

Citizens Advice

They can give you advice about the law and your rights.



You can find the nearest Citizens Advice place to you on **the Citizens Advice website**.



Or on the **CAS** website for Scotland.



Shelter

They give people advice about housing.

You can phone them on 0808 800 4444 in England and Scotland.

Or 0345 075 5005 in Wales.

4. Help to speak up

Someone called an **advocate** can help you speak up about housing.

Your local council can help you to find an advocate.

If you have a learning disability

You can speak to a charity called Mencap in England and Wales:

Phone: 0808 808 1111

Email: helpline@mencap.org.uk

Or People First in Scotland:

Phone: 0131 478 7707

Email: admin@peoplefirstscotland.org





If you think you have been treated unfairly because of your disability

You can speak to the **Equality Advisory Support Service**.

Phone: 0808 800 0082

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

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