

## Your rights as a tenant

It's important to realise that you have lots of rights as a tenant that are protected by law. Here are some of the most important ones:

- o If the property comes with something like a fridge or a TV – and it breaks – then the landlord is legally obliged to fix it. You don't have to pay for it unless the damage was caused by you during misuse. In fact, the entire home has to be kept in a reasonable state of repair, and this is at the landlord's cost.
- o The landlord has to install working smoke alarms.
- o The landlord has to arrange an annual gas safety check (if you have gas).
- o The landlord has to give at least 24 hours notice of any visits: they cannot just come around whenever they like.
- o A landlord cannot increase the rent unless it says they can in the tenancy agreement.
- o The landlord has to make sure that the structure and exterior of the premises, including drains, gutters and external pipes, are in working order.
- o The landlord has to make sure that the water and gas pipes and electric wiring (this includes taps) are in working order.
- o The landlord has to make sure that the basins, sinks, baths and toilets are in working order.
- o Any furniture the landlord provides should be fire-retardant. It is easy to check this by looking for labels on beds and sofas etc. It is illegal to remove these safety labels from an item of furniture.
- o The landlord has to make sure that fixed heaters (for example, gas fires) and water heaters are in working order.
- o Your landlord is normally also responsible for repairs to common parts of the building like stairways and lifts.

This area is quite complicated, and there are many more areas where you have detailed rights. If in doubt, you should seek help from your local Citizens Advice.