



## Your Home and your Child's Health

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- ✓ *Did you know that the environment inside your home can actually have more of an effect on your child's asthma than the environment outside?*
  - ✓ *Do you have persistent mould and damp in your home that could be affecting your child's asthma?*
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Recognising that your home environment may be affecting your child's asthma is important, but it's only the first step in improving it. In order to force change, there are a number of processes that need to be followed involving your child's Health Care Professionals and the Social Housing Association. These are not straight forward and can often seem completely baffling.

Please do not be put off by this. I have been through it, and hopefully I can make it all seem a little less daunting.

I have put together a summary of the steps you need to take to challenge the safety of your home environment. I have compiled this by researching the relevant legislation and writing it in an easy to understand format.

I have searched endlessly for easy to read versions of the confusing scripts of legislation that I have researched but they are simply not available. If you do want to look at legislation yourselves, it is best to pick out what is relevant and find an accredited website through a search engine that might be able to explain it in plain English that you can understand. The Citizens Advice Service is a very good website to visit. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

These pages will be mainly applicable to families living in social housing and privately rented accommodation as private landlords have a **Duty of Care** to ensure that your property meets certain standards and does not pose a threat to you or your families health under the Housing Act 2004, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/notes/contents>

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- ✓ *Do you feel that your landlord isn't taking your child's health seriously? Even after letters from their consultant.*
  - ✓ *Do you have mould and damp in your home, that your landlord isn't repairing to the correct standard? Or at all?*
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I am going to go through how to get your landlord to listen to you and add some links to policy and legislation that will help to arm you when making contact.

- ✓ Firstly: Keep a diary of everything! I know that life is busy and trying to find the time to log information into a diary can be difficult, believe me it is worth it.
- ✓ If you have continuously been ignored and the problems in your home are not being resolved and your child's health is still suffering or you believe that your home environment is having an effect on your child's asthma then:
- ✓ Speak to your child's GP, Consultant, Specialist Respiratory Nurse – Ask if they will send a letter to your landlord.
- ✓ Contact the Citizens Advice Service 03444 111 444. - Make an appointment to speak to someone about your concerns. Do not sugar coat your child's Asthma. It is a potentially life-threatening condition; it should not be dismissed.
- ✓ Contact your local MP – They also have a Duty of Care to their constituents. – My local MP has been fantastic and continues to be to date.
- ✓ With the assistance from the Citizens Advice and the MP, go through the complaints procedure for your landlord. It's the first point to getting your voice heard. Doing this will bypass your housing officer and repairs team and go to a senior member of staff who has to now go through the complaints procedure to ensure that your home is fit for your child to live in
- ✓ Your landlord is allowed up to 10 working days to respond, allow them no more time than this.
- ✓ On response from your landlord, inform your advisor at the Citizens advice and send an email to your MP (if you have contacted them). Make a note in your diary of dates, times, name of the person who contacted you and the response that you received. Keep a paper trail. Ask for everything to be sent in writing to your home address or email.
- ✓ You are covered under the Housing Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, especially if your child is receiving Disability Living Allowance.  
[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/search?text=housing&f0\]=search\\_api\\_aggregation\\_3%3A33](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/search?text=housing&f0]=search_api_aggregation_3%3A33)



Know your rights, know your child's Asthma, the more you know the better it is for you. The people that you are communicating with do not know and do not understand the severity of Asthma.

You may not have to go any further with your complaint as your landlord will hopefully put a plan in place to ensure that your home is of a decent standard for your child to live in and all hazards or risks to your child's health will be dealt with in a timely manner.

If you feel that you are still being ignored or dismissed due to your landlord's lack of education and understanding of your situation, do not give up. Keep in contact with your MP, the Citizens Advice and if you need to, ask the Citizens advice to recommend a solicitor who can give you expert advice.

If you are unhappy with the advice that you have been given from your landlord, the work that has been undertaken or the issues have reappeared then you can consult a specialist in your own right. You DO NOT need permission from your landlord to consult an expert to come to your home to give you expert advice to alleviate the problems in your home.

We as parents/carers of children with Asthma need to raise awareness where we can, so that we are not dismissed and our children remain safe and healthy. This means housing associations too. These organisations have no idea and also need educating and I feel that we as advocates for our children need to not give in and accept that everything we are told is correct and challenge the decisions that are being made.

Do not give up. I am living proof that one voice can be heard and can make a difference to ensuring that social landlords follow the correct guidelines, policy and legislation that is put in place to keep us all safe as individuals.



Some links to extra guidelines, policy and legislation

<https://www.gov.uk/housing-association-homes/standard-of-your-home>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/disrepair-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/disrepair-what-are-the-landlord-s-responsibilities/>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/inquiry-housing-disabled-people>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/70/section/11>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7853/safetyratingsystem.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7853/safetyratingsystem.pdf)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7812/138355.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7812/138355.pdf)

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice/>

<http://www.dampdetectives.co.uk/areas/ian-blaikie-and-kristine-reilly/?q=TD15>