

## The law and decent homes

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a new risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to the health and safety of occupants in residential properties in England and Wales.

If you think you are living in bad or unhealthy conditions in your private rented accommodation - we may be able to help you.

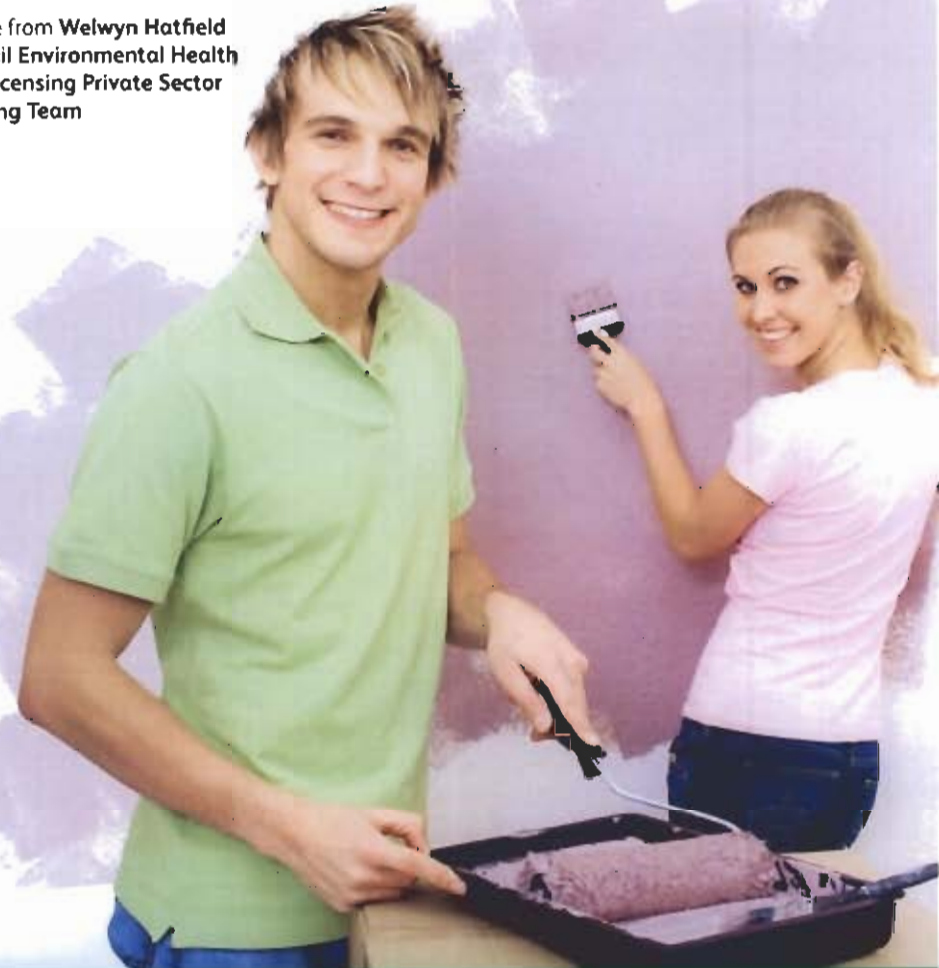
If you are renting a room/ flat / house and believe that any of the following conditions exist, you may need to contact us for an inspection of your property:

- Damp
- Inadequate or no Heating
- Inadequate or no Fire Precautions
- Safety Issues (for example low level glazing, dangerous steps)
- Inadequate or no natural light or ventilation
- Dangerous electrics or gas
- Overcrowding
- Poor security
- Inadequate facilities (such as kitchen and bathroom)

Welwyn Hatfield Council Environmental Health and Licensing Private Sector Housing Team 01707 357242  
env.health@welhat.gov.uk

## Your guide to renting a “Warm, Safe and Secure” house

Advice from **Welwyn Hatfield Council Environmental Health and Licensing Private Sector Housing Team**



Putting people first.

[www.welhat.gov.uk](http://www.welhat.gov.uk)

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## Top tips when Privately Renting

### Questions to ask when you find the property you want to rent:

- How long is the contract ? How much notice will I / we need to give before we move out?
- Work out the rent for the whole contract period to find the best deal.
- Read the contract before you sign it and insist on a copy once it has been agreed. Verbal contracts are still legally binding.
- If the accommodation is on 3 floors and there are 5 or more people sharing it must be licensed with the Environmental Health Department of the Council. Check with them on 01707 357242.
- The property must have an up to date gas safety certificate. Ask to see the up to date gas safety and current electrical safety certificates for the property.
- Ask about the insulation standards of the property. Is there cavity wall insulation?

- In older property – has the loft had additional insulation to bring it up to modern standards. If this work is not done your fuel bills will be high.

### Is there a problem with your home?

**Homes can be bad for our health. Your rented home should be safe, dry and warm to live in.**

You've found a house to rent – before you sign up check that there are:

- Locks on windows and good mortice locks on external doors.
- Smoke/fire detectors in the house and a fire blanket in the kitchen.
- Refuse storage, refuse bins and recycling bins. If there are none ask the landlord to supply them.
- Working heating and hot water systems.
- No damp patches or mould in the rooms – this may need action by the landlord

If you are renting a room in a house there should be a lock on your bedroom door.

### The paperwork – what you sign

- You may be asked for a deposit, returnable at the end of your tenancy. This must be held in a recognised " Tenancy Deposit Scheme". Ask for details from your landlord or letting agent.
- You will be given an inventory of the contents and furnishings of the house/flat to check and sign. Check the condition of decoration and fittings etc and that the list of items supplied by the landlord is accurate before you agree it.
- If there are stains on carpets, damage etc. take a picture and include it with the inventory otherwise you may lose your deposit.
- Inform your landlord in writing immediately there is a problem.
- You should think about arranging insurance for your possessions.

## Problems with your home. Who can help?

Complain in writing to the landlord or letting agent first. (Allow a reasonable period for the problem to be sorted out).

If the work is not done you can contact the local Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Private Sector Housing Team who enforce decent home standards in rented housing.

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