

Private rented sector enforcement – evidence summary 2021

Survation survey

Generation Rent commissioned Survation to conduct a survey via online panel between 23 and 25 February 2021. A total of 1008 UK residents aged 18+ who are living in private rented accommodation responded to the survey.

A selection of questions are summarised below.

Q1. Did you know that your local council can help with certain problems you might have with your landlord, letting agent or home?

	Respondents	%
Unweighted Total	1008	
Weighted Total	1008	
Yes, I did know this	542	54%
No, I did not know this	466	46%

Q11. Which of the following do you remember receiving at the start of your tenancy? Please select all that apply.

	Respondents	%
Unweighted Total	1008	
Weighted Total	1008	
Written tenancy agreement	703	70%
Information about where your deposit was protected	472	47%
Gas safety certificate	441	44%
Electrical safety record	371	37%
Energy Performance Certificate	367	36%
Government How To Rent guide	234	23%
None of the above	49	5%
Don't know	69	7%

Q12. Have you experienced any of the following problems in the past five years? Please select all that apply.

	Respondents	%
Unweighted Total	1008	
Weighted Total	1008	
Mould or damp	369	37%
Heating and hot water not working	304	30%
Leaks or draughts	253	25%
Faulty electrics	179	18%
Infestation (for example mice, cockroaches)	112	11%
Unfair fees	86	9%
Deposit disputes	84	8%

Harassment	83	8%
Gas or carbon monoxide leak	58	6%
Illegal eviction	17	2%
None of the above	319	32%

Q13. If your home felt unfit to live in but your landlord wasn't responsive what would you do to resolve the problem? Please select all that apply.

	Respondents	%
Unweighted Total	1008	
Weighted Total	1008	
Look for somewhere else to live	447	44%
Contact your local council	351	35%
Arrange for repairs yourself	231	23%
Withhold rent	208	21%
Take legal action	185	18%
Seek help from a renters' union	181	18%
Other	16	2%
Nothing	45	4%
Don't know	76	8%

Q14. If you wanted to learn about your rights as a renter, where would you go first for information?

	Respondents	%
Unweighted Total	1008	
Weighted Total	1008	
Citizens Advice	260	26%
Web search (e.g. Google)	258	26%
Local council	120	12%
Landlord or letting agent	103	10%
Friends/family	67	7%
Social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)	44	4%
Shelter	42	4%
Renters union	29	3%
Other advice organisation	24	2%
Generation Rent	16	2%
Don't know	46	5%

Freedom of Information requests

Every year Generation Rent sends Freedom of Information requests to the 100 councils in England with the largest private renter populations according to the 2011 Census, representing approximately two thirds of the country's private renter population.

The requests seek information about each council’s activities relating to enforcement of safety standards in private rented homes. Data for the past three years is available [at this link](#).

In 2020, Generation Rent also sent Freedom of Information requests to the same councils, seeking information about their enforcement of the Protection from Eviction Act and their use of powers to access data about local private rented properties. The data is available [at this link](#). One question asked how many people each council employed to enforce the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, but the quality of the data did not permit straightforward analysis, so this has been simplified to whether the council employs any such officers or not.

Council website audit

Generation Rent volunteers have tested websites for each of the 100 councils with the largest private renter populations to understand how easy it is to find information about what renters should do if their landlord is failing to fix disrepair in their home. A summary spreadsheet, with links to registers of licensed private rented properties, [is available here](#).

Supporter survey

Between 27 January and 24 February Generation Rent ran a survey of its supporters via Typeform. The survey included the following questions.

What would you be most likely to do if your home felt unfit to live in but the landlord wasn’t responsive?

Most likely approach	Respondents	%
Arrange for repairs yourself	154	15%
Contact your local council	308	31%
Move out	200	20%
Nothing	60	6%
Seek help from a renters' union	152	15%
Take legal action	51	5%
Withhold rent	78	8%
Total responses	1003	

Let’s assume all the options below are effective in getting results if your home feels unfit to live in and your landlord is not responsive. What would you prefer to be able to do?

Preferred approach	All	%
Arrange for repairs yourself	144	14%

Contact your local council	187	19%
Move out	150	15%
Seek help from a renters' union	170	17%
Take legal action	117	12%
Withhold rent	229	23%
Total responses	997	

If your home was found to be unsafe and your landlord failed to fix it, which of the following outcomes would you most like to see happen?

Preferred outcome	All	%
Council finds you a new home	192	19%
council seizes property, makes repairs and lets you stay if you want to	445	44%
Landlord is fined two years' rent	86	9%
Landlord is jailed	34	3%
You get one year's rent back	244	24%
Total responses	1001	

If there was a national register of landlords and their properties that you could access online, what three pieces of information would be most useful to you before choosing a home?

Information included on landlord register	Respondents selecting option in top three	%
Energy efficiency rating	255	25%
Confirmation of no criminal convictions	295	29%
Confirmation of gas safety	347	35%
Confirmation of electrical safety	287	29%
Confirmation of rent level	564	56%
History of landlord's claims on tenant deposits	575	57%
Licence to let to certain types of household	152	15%
Membership of professional bodies (such as the National Residential Landlords Association)	418	42%
Total responses	1002	