

I have been living in rented accommodation for four months. When I moved in there were problems with the hot water. The landlord promised to fix it, but four months on, it is still not working. I have approached the landlord in writing and on the phone to remind him, but now he says he will evict me if I continue to hassle him. Can he throw me out?

A landlord usually can't evict you (throw you out of your home) without warning. If they want you to leave, they must follow a set procedure, which includes giving you written notice telling you when you must go (the notice period).

Even if you do not leave by this time, the landlord must usually go through a procedure called 'possession proceedings' before they can evict you.

The exact procedure your landlord must follow, including how much notice that they must give you depends on the type of tenancy you have. It also depends on why the landlord wants you to leave. For example, the procedure is different if they want you to leave because you haven't paid your rent rather than if they want to move back into the house or flat themselves.

In most cases, your landlord needs an order from the court before they can evict you. If they evict you without following the right legal procedure, they could be breaking the law.

If your landlord threatens to make you leave, or if you receive a notice to leave, get free, independent advice straight away from a Citizens Advice Bureau (see www.adviceguide.org.uk for contact details), your nearest housing aid centre, or the Shelter helpline on 0808 800 4444 (see www.shelter.org.uk for more information on tenants' rights and eviction). The sooner you seek advice, the easier it will be to help you.