



## Information for the single homeless and private tenants

Irish people and Irish women in particular have for years relied on the private rented sector for housing. Today, Irish people depend upon this sector for housing more than many other ethnic minority groups. Yet this sector contains some of the worst housing in the country. And although it is now illegal for landlords to display signs in their accommodation stating 'No Irish, no Blacks', the problems that confronted Irish people in the 1940s and 50s are as prevalent today as ever. Disrepair, harassment and rocketing rents are widespread throughout London. It is now practically impossible to find decent affordable accommodation to rent and as cutbacks in housing services continue, it has become harder to challenge landlords with the support of the Local Authority. In this climate it becomes all the more important that we know our rights and work collectively to defend them.

This leaflet is intended as a Guide for single homeless people and private tenants. Even if you are not eligible for Local Authority housing, we strongly advise you to put your name down on the Council's Waiting List. This may come in useful in case you ever need to prove that you have a Local Connection as a criteria for obtaining accommodation. It is also very important that policy makers recognise the extent of the housing crisis and the disproportionate numbers of Irish people who are affected by it.



# Finding somewhere to live in London



If you haven't already got somewhere to live, the search for accommodation in a capital which has 64,500 single homeless people is not going to be an easy one. The following tips are worth remembering.

## *Be prepared*

Irish women coming to London for the first time should try and arrange to stay with a friend or relative beforehand. Make sure that they have agreed to put you up *before* you set off. Check that they haven't moved or gone on holiday.

If this isn't possible, look for London flatshares and lodgings in the Irish papers. **Emigrant Advice, Dublin** (00 353 1873 2844) and **Belfast** (01232 328 295) give information on short-term hostel accommodation in London. **Womens Link** (0171 248 1200) publish lists of hostels who accept self referrals.

Failing that, there are emergency hostels and nightshelters in London, including refuges for women who are fleeing domestic violence and abuse. (See Appendix.)

Make sure you bring your full Birth certificate and other means of identification, eg. passport, cheque card, driving licence. The Department of Social Security (DSS) will not accept copies of Birth certificates or Baptismal certificates as valid identification. You will also need references and at least £500 to cover initial accommodation costs. It is best to arrive during weekdays when the DSS and Housing Advice Agencies are open to the public.

Securing a safe temporary base for yourself will make the search for longer term accommodation a lot less stressful. It will also make it easier for you to make friends and contacts and hopefully find a place through word of mouth.

## *Consider all your options*

The private rented sector can mean anything from living with a family and sharing meals, to having your own self contained flat with a tenancy agreement. It can also include Housing Association, Housing Co-op, Short Life Housing and Hostels, all of which may be safer and more suited to your needs. (See pp.18 and 19.)

A small number of schemes cater specifically for Irish people in mixed or women only houses. Others provide places for particular groups, eg. lesbians, women with disabilities, ex-offenders, women with alcohol/drug dependencies, mental health problems, or HIV/AIDS.



## Advice Agencies

It is a good idea to contact Irish and general Housing Advice Agencies as part of your search for housing. These provide a free and confidential service and they may be able to refer you to a Housing Association or Hostel. Irish and Housing Advice Agencies are listed in the Appendix.

## The Local Authority

You may also be entitled to help from your local Council.

**Part 3 of the Housing Act 85** places a legal responsibility on Local Authorities to provide accommodation for you if:



- **you are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days**
- **you are in 'priority need', and**
- **you have not made yourself homeless 'intentionally'.**

The legislation states that you are in priority need if one or more of the following apply:



- **you are pregnant**
- **you have children under 16, or under 19 in full time education**
- **you have been made homeless by fire, flood, or other disaster**
- **you are vulnerable because of old age, poor mental health, have severe learning difficulties, a physical disability or for some other special reason.**

Councils might also consider you to be in priority need, if you are:



- **a woman in a violent relationship (even if you don't have children)**
- **a young woman who could be taken advantage of, sexually or financially**
- **a woman who is experiencing or threatened with racial/sexual harassment and abuse.**

If you think you may be eligible for housing by the Local Authority, you should go to the Council's Homeless Persons Section (HPS).

If you are under 18, you can also contact the Council's Social Services Department for help.

**The Children Act 1989** places a housing duty on Social Services to assist children and 16 and 17 year olds. They also have discretionary powers to assist 16–20 year olds, eg. those in full time education.

If this applies to you and the HPS refuses to help, it is possible that the Social Services may have a legal duty to assist.



It is best to contact an Advice Agency before approaching your Local Authority to find out how that Council interprets its legal duties towards homeless people.

It is also worth reading Irish Women's Housing Action Group (IWHAG) leaflet 'What to do if you are Homeless' and familiarising yourself with your rights under the Homelessness Legislation.

This is obtainable from the London Irish Women's Centre (LIWC) and other Irish Advice Centres.

And finally, even if you are 'non priority' homeless, you are legally entitled to 'advice and assistance' from Local Authorities in your search for housing.

This assistance varies from Borough to Borough.

Some Authorities have Housing Aid Centres and give out lists of Bed & Breakfasts, hostels and nightshelters. Others allow homeless applicants to look through the **London Hostels Directory** and to use their telephones in booking accommodation.

## **Where to look for housing**

There are a number of ways you can look for accommodation to rent. Generally, the further you move out from Central London, the cheaper this accommodation will be.

### **1. Personal contacts**

Ask friends if they know anybody who has a room to rent.

### **2. Newspapers and magazines**

Many newspapers and magazines have sections advertising accommodation to let. You can even place advertisements yourself. Loot offer free advertising facilities.

Look for adverts in daily papers such as the Evening Standard and Loot. You can also try the weekly locals published in different areas of London

Other weekly magazines and papers advertising accommodation include:

**Time Out** – Tuesdays

**Irish Post / Irish World** – Thursdays

**The Pink Paper** (lesbians) – weekends

**Midweek and Girl About Town** – freely distributed



### 3. Capital Radio

Capital Radio publish a list of flatshares every Tuesday at 11.00am, Euston Tower (opposite Warren St Tube). There are also local flatshare lists for people in specific areas. For example, **The Threshold Centres** in Wandsworth (0181 682 0321) and in Hammersmith (0181 749 2925) collate lists of local lettings on Tuesday afternoons. **The Portobello Project**, Kensington (0171 221 4413) produces a list on Monday afternoons.

### 4. Shop windows and public buildings

Newsagents shops frequently have window displays advertising accommodation, particularly in areas like Archway, Camden Town, Finsbury Park and Kilburn. You will also find adverts on notice boards in public buildings – in libraries, community centres, women's centres, churches, hospitals and colleges. It is worthwhile checking these boards regularly and using the facilities to advertise your own housing needs.

There are Women Only accommodation noticeboards at the **London Irish Women's Centre**, 59 Stoke Newington Church St, N16 0AR and at the **Silver Moon Bookshop**, 64–68 Charing Cross Rd, WC2. There is also a Lesbian and Gay Men accommodation noticeboard at **First Out Cafe**, 52 St Giles High St, WC2.

'DSS Welcome' notices mean the landlord is willing to rent property to people on benefits.

### 5. Estate Agents and Accommodation Agencies

Estate Agents keep lists of accommodation and sometimes have separate sections for private lettings.

Accommodation Agencies are private businesses which landlords use to advertise flats and rooms. Using their services can be a good way of finding somewhere to live *but you need to be careful.*



- **Never part with any money to an Accommodation Agency until you have accepted and signed for the accommodation which was offered to you through the Agency.**
- **Ask for and keep all receipts for any money paid out. You will not be able to get any help from the DSS for accommodation agency charges.**

Some Councils keep lists of local Accommodation Agencies, including ones providing a 'free' service.

Always be careful about signing any Guarantor or other agreements with Accommodation Agencies. Get advice first.



## Discrimination problems

If you experience discrimination whilst applying for accommodation, you may have grounds for legal action.

It is illegal under the **Sex Discrimination Act 1975** and under the **Race Relations Act 1976** for non-resident landlords to carry out sex/racial discriminatory practices.

If you believe a landlord or letting agency has 'treated you less favourably' because you are an Irish woman, or a Traveller or because you have children, contact a Law Centre or the local Council.

You can also complain to the **Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)** (0171 828 7022) or the **Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)** (0161 833 9244).

Councils can refuse to publicise Accommodation Agencies and to use landlords who are guilty of discriminatory practices.

## Moving into accommodation: things to check

Once you're interested in a place, make sure you think carefully before accepting it. Even if you are desperate to take any accommodation, it is important that you know what you're letting yourself in for. Don't be afraid to ask questions of the landlord and agent.

The following checklist may come in handy when you are viewing accommodation:

### 1. Health and safety

Take a good look at the condition of your accommodation.



#### CHECK:

- **Are there any essential repairs outstanding, eg. dampness, leaking roof?**
- **Do the gas, heating, lighting and plumbing appliances work?**
- **Would you be able to escape safely in the event of fire?**
- **Are the locks on the doors and windows secure?**
- **Will anybody else have access to the keys?**
- **Is public transport close by, particularly if you work late nights?**

Tell the landlord/agent if you want repairs and improvements made before or as soon as you move in and keep a record of your request.



## 2. Money

Always ask for and keep receipts on payments made to your landlord. If possible, use a cheque for deposits, rents and for all transactions.

### *Deposits*

A deposit is meant to guarantee your landlord against any damage done to the property, or in case you leave without paying outstanding bills or rent. It is usually equivalent to four weeks rent.



#### **CHECK:**

- **How much is the deposit? Can a lower one be negotiated?**
- **What is the deposit for? Get written details of this and the circumstances under which it can be withheld when you leave.**

### *Rent*

Most landlords ask for four weeks rent in advance of you moving in. If you are on Income Support, you may be able to get a Social Fund Crisis or Budget Loan for this from the DSS.



#### **CHECK:**

- **How much is the rent?**
- **When is it payable?**
- **Will you get a rent book or receipts for each payment made? Tenants paying rent weekly are legally entitled to have this.**
- **What does the rent include – eg. does it include service charges, gas, electric, water rates?**
- **How and when are these bills to be paid if they are not included in the rent?**
- **If you're sharing with others, how will bills be calculated and what happens in the event of someone not paying their share?**

## 3. Inventory

You will need to get an inventory or a list of the contents of the accommodation in order to re-claim your deposit when you leave. Before you sign this



#### **CHECK:**

- **Is it correct?**
- **Is the furniture in good condition?**



Ask your landlord to sign the list and keep it safe for when you move out.

If your landlord refuses to repay your deposit when you leave, get advice. You may be able to take action to get it back, eg. in the small claims court.

#### 4. Contract with the landlord

Last but not least in importance is the agreement you make with your landlord when you move into accommodation. When you accept accommodation, you may be asked to sign a written Contract. Don't worry if you don't sign one of these. Verbal agreements are just as legally binding.



##### **CHECK:**

- **Do you understand the agreement? If not, get advice before you sign anything.**
- **What is the landlord's name, address and telephone number?**

If your landlord insists upon you signing a Contract after you have moved in, get advice. Especially if the Contract compares unfavourably with what you have already verbally agreed.

The most common forms of tenancy are listed below. These tenancies can exist whether you are renting on your own or sharing with flatmates.

You may find that none of them apply to you. Again, don't worry if this is the case. Just as there are many different types of living arrangements in the private rented sector, so are there many different types of agreements. The Law is very complicated in this area and if you are unsure about your own agreement, it's best to get advice.

### Protected tenancies

These are agreements made before 15th January 1989.

They usually exist:



- **if you pay rent**
- **if you have exclusive use of at least one room**
- **if you don't share any of the accommodation with the landlord.**

These tenancies have greater security and better rights than tenancies created after that date.

If you are a protected tenant, you can apply to the Local Rent Officer to have a Fair Rent registered.

Your landlord can only force you to leave for very specific reasons, eg. non payment of rent, and only after they have served a written Notice to Quit and obtained a Court Order.



These tenancies are being increasingly phased out, but many Irish women, particularly older tenants, remain protected. These women should guard against any attempts to get them to leave or to accept a new agreement.

*If your landlord asks you to leave or gives you a written notice, get advice immediately.*

## **Assured and assured shorthold tenancies**

These agreements are made on or after 15th January 1989.

They usually exist:



- **if you pay rent**
- **if you have exclusive use of at least one room**
- **if you don't share any of your accommodation with your landlord.**

**Assured Tenancies (AT)** can be verbally agreed. They can be for a fixed term or for an indefinite period. This is the best agreement that you can hope for these days.

**Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST)** have to be in writing. Your landlord must issue you with a Notice of Assured Shorthold Tenancy before you move in. The tenancy must be for a period of at least six months. This is the most common form of tenancy agreement that you are likely to come across.

Landlords of AT and AST can charge market rents for the accommodation.

If you have an **Assured Tenancy**, you have the right to remain in your accommodation at the end of the initially agreed period. Landlords of Assured Tenancies have wider grounds for possession than landlords of protected tenants, but they still have to apply to court if they want you to leave. So stay put if you receive a written Notice of Seeking Possession and get help to defend yourself in court.

If you have an **Assured Shorthold Tenancy**, you have security of tenure for the initially agreed period but landlords of AST can automatically regain possession at the end of the fixed term provided that they follow the correct legal procedures. They must give you at least two months notice to leave and they *must* obtain a Court Order.

Once your Fixed Term expires you can continue to remain in the accommodation paying rent. But the landlord can obtain possession at any time by simply giving two months notice and obtaining a Court Order. Always seek advice if you are facing eviction. You may be able to challenge your landlord in court, particularly if the correct procedures have not been followed.



## Tenants with a Resident Landlord

If you have lived in the same house as your landlord since your tenancy began and the accommodation is the landlord's only or principal home, you will most likely have a Resident Landlord.

Resident Landlords can usually charge whatever rent they like and the tenants have limited security of tenure.

If you have a Resident Landlord and you moved in after 15 January 1989, your rights will depend on whether or not you share living space with your landlord.

If you *do not* share living space (eg. bathroom, kitchen) with your landlord or a member of the landlord's family, your landlord must give you a Notice to Quit if they want you to leave. When this runs out, your landlord must obtain a Possession Order from the Court.

If you *do* share living space with your landlord or a member of their family (ie. you have an **Excluded Contract**) – the landlord may not have to give you a Notice to Quit. You should still be given at least *reasonable notice* before you have to leave, but this may be verbal and the landlord does not need to obtain a Court Order to get you out.

If you are thinking of renting accommodation in the same house as your landlord, or are already doing so and are asked to leave, get advice. Your rights may be limited, but they are always worth defending.

## General rules for all fixed term tenancies

If you have a fixed term tenancy and want to leave before the term expires, you will only be able to do so if your contract allows you to. If you ignore the contract, you risk losing your deposit and may be liable for rent. Get advice if you want to leave. It may be possible to negotiate a settlement with your landlord.

## Other letting arrangements

It is not possible to cover every situation in this leaflet. There are many kinds of accommodation which are not classed as tenancies as well as several types of tenancy which are very complicated. For example:



- **You may live in a hotel or hostel and receive meals and services.**
- **Your accommodation may be tied to your work, eg. nanny, pub worker.**
- **You may live in a Nursing Home or a College or University.**
- **You may have a 'licence' to lodge with friends or live in short life housing.**



Whatever the case may be, it is important to check out your rights if you are unsure about your living arrangements.

*And remember – always get advice if you are told to leave.*

Some landlords may insist that you are not entitled to a court order when you are. And if you leave accommodation in which you are legally entitled to remain, *you could jeopardise your eligibility for rehousing as a homeless person.*

## **Repairs**

**Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act, 1985** makes most landlords responsible for maintaining and repairing the fabric and structure of the building, ie. leaking roofs, dampness etc.

They are also supposed to keep installations such as heating and hot water in proper working order.

The tenancy agreement often sets out the rights and obligations of both landlord and tenant and may include procedures for getting work done.

Don't worry if you don't have a written agreement. The landlord's legal responsibility for major repairs exists regardless.

### **Getting repairs done**

If you need a repair done, tell your landlord or the person who collects the rent what is required.

If possible, put your request in writing and keep a copy of the letter.

Your landlord is normally entitled to enter your accommodation to inspect or carry out repairs. However s/he should give you at least 24 hours written notice before doing so.

Repairs should be carried out at reasonable times and should not interfere with your peace and comfort.

If your landlord asks you to move out whilst repairs are carried out, get advice before signing anything.

You will need to be sure that any temporary accommodation offered is suitable and that you are not forfeiting your right to return to your original home.

### **If your landlord fails to do repairs**

If your landlord will not repair your home, you can take action to force them to do so.

Before doing so, check your tenancy.



Repairs, especially those concerning your health and safety are of paramount importance.

But if you are worried about your security of tenure or about landlord harassment, get advice first.

### *1. Complaining to the Council*

The **Housing and Public Health Acts** give Local Authorities responsibility for and extensive powers to tackle bad housing.

These powers have been strengthened under the **Environmental Protection Act, 1990**.

If you need help getting the landlord to do repairs, contact the Environmental Health Department. *Tell them if you don't want your landlord to know you have complained.*

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are allowed to do spot checks on any properties in the Borough. They can serve Notices to make landlords carry out urgent and essential repairs, and to install basic amenities.

If landlords refuse to comply with Council notices:



- **They can be taken to court and fined.**
- **The Local Authority can carry out the repairs and charge the landlord.**
- **In extremely bad cases the Council can take over control of the house (if it is a multi-occupied house). They can also compulsorily purchase the property or close it down, in both cases taking responsibility for rehousing the tenants.**

In practice, Councils vary enormously in the amount of assistance they are willing to give private tenants.

Cutbacks in public spending have meant that Environmental Health Departments are poorly staffed and many are reluctant to use the legal powers available.

So, you have to be persistent if you want the Local Authorities' help.



- **Contact the Council's Environmental Health Department by telephone, letter or by visit. Early morning is the best time to phone as officers go out on visits.**
- **Take careful note of the officer(s) dealing with your case.**

Get together with other tenants if you have similar problems. Campaigning collectively is much more effective than fighting on your own. Private Tenants Groups listed in the Appendix can advise on how to organise a Tenants Association.



If the Council fails to act or drags its feet, don't give up!



- **Ask your local councillors to help.**
- **Get a magistrate to make a complaint to the Council under section 606 Housing Act 85. This forces your Council to at least inspect your home.**
- **Make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.**
- **Tell the local press about your housing problems.**

*Whatever you decide to do, don't put up with bad housing.*

## *2. Taking Court action yourself*

You can also take your landlord to Court if necessary to force them to do repairs.

The County and Magistrates Courts can order landlords to do repairs and award damages to tenants.

Taking legal action yourself may be a last resort if the Council are unhelpful.

It can also be an effective alternative to Council intervention, particularly if you are eligible for legal aid and want quick results.

If you do decide on this course of action, get the support of a housing solicitor. S/he can advise on the most appropriate legislation to use and can seek Injunctions to get urgent repairs carried out.

Always make sure you check what costs are likely to be incurred before you proceed with legal action.

## *3. Doing the repairs yourself and withholding rent*

You may in desperation consider carrying out the repairs yourself and withholding rent to cover the costs.

Get advice first before you take this kind of action. There are risks involved, particularly as rent arrears are a grounds for eviction.

## **Rent**

Rents are astronomical in London. You can expect to pay from £40 per week for a room and from £80 per week for a one bed roomed flat.

Paying your rent regularly is important if you want to remain in your accommodation. But this can be difficult particularly if your landlord increases the rent and you're unsure of your rights.



## **What to do about rent increases**

If your landlord wants to increase your rent, get advice. Your ability to fend off the increase will depend on the type of agreement you have and on how amenable the landlord is to negotiation.

### *Protected tenants (pre-15/1/89 tenants)*

These have full security of tenure and can resist unlawful rent rises without fear of eviction. You can apply to the Rent Officer to have a fair rent registered. This will confirm your protected tenancy status and your rent will be set in line with other fair rents rather than market rents.

Get advice first. A 'fair' rent may work out higher than what you are paying now.

*To contact the Fair Rent Officer, ring your local Council.*

### *Assured tenants (on or after 15/1/89)*

These are usually charged market rents. You pay the rent agreed at the start of your tenancy. If your landlord wants to increase the rent, they will have to serve written notice on a special form.

In most cases, landlords cannot propose a new rent for at least a year. You can also refer the landlord's increase to the Rent Assessment Panel if the proposed increase is too high. This will assess whether the rent is a 'fair' market rent, but again, get advice first; otherwise you might find that your rent goes up even more.

*To contact the Rent Assessment Panel, ring 0171 580 2000.*

### *Assured shorthold tenants (on or after 15/1/89)*

AST are also charged market rents. The rent you pay is the amount stated in your contract. If your landlord wants to increase the rent and offers you another agreement, get advice.

You may be able to apply to the RAP, but only during the original fixed term of your tenancy, and since your landlord can regain possession of your home fairly easily, careful consideration is needed here.

### *Resident landlords and other lettings*

Most tenants of resident landlords can be charged whatever rent the landlord chooses. The rent payable is that agreed at the start of the letting.

Get advice if you live with a Resident Landlord or occupy another type of letting and your rent is increased. Your rights may be very limited, but it may



be possible to negotiate directly with the landlord with the help of an experienced adviser.

### **Rent books and information for tenants**

**Weekly paying** tenants have a legal right to a rent book which includes the name and address of the landlord.

If your landlord fails to provide this, get advice. S/he may be committing a criminal offence and you will need to check your security of tenure before considering what action to take.

The **Landlord & Tenant Act 1987, s48** entitles *all* tenants to receive an address from their landlord which is in England or Wales and to which legal notices can be sent. You have the right to withhold your rent until this information is made available, but again, get advice before taking any action.

If you don't have a rent book, make sure you get a receipt every time you pay your rent and keep the receipts somewhere safe.

### **What to do if your landlord stops collecting the rent**

If your landlord stops collecting your rent, *you need to be on your guard*. Some landlords do this deliberately so that their tenants fall into arrears and are then liable for eviction.



- **Make sure you hold on to your rent if it is not collected.**
- **Write to your landlord stating that you want to pay the rent and keep a copy of the letter.**
- **If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit, ask the Council to keep the money until the landlord asks for it.**

These actions may be important if you are taken to Court at a later date for non payment of rent.

### **Help with paying the rent: Housing Benefit**

If you are on a low income or in receipt of Income Support or other benefits, you may be able to get help with paying your rent.

This is called Housing Benefit.

Housing Benefit is paid by the Local Council. It covers your rent only.

You cannot get any money for heating, hot water, lighting or fuel costs. And you have to apply separately for Council Tax Benefit if you need help with your Council Tax Bill. (Tenants of multi-occupied houses, whose landlords have responsibility for collecting the Council Tax will find that special rules apply. Get advice.)



Full time students are not eligible to claim Housing Benefit unless they are single parents, or have a disability. Neither are people who have over £16,000 or more in savings.

Part time students are entitled to claim HB if they have a low income or are in receipt of benefits.

### *How to claim*

To claim Housing Benefit, contact the Housing Benefit Section at your Local Council. Ask for a Housing Benefit claim form.

Answer the questions on this form and return it to the Housing Benefits Section with evidence of your income and accommodation costs.

Don't delay in applying for Housing Benefit if you haven't got the evidence to hand or have difficulty completing the form.

As long as you send the completed form back within four weeks of receiving it, you can get Housing Benefit backdated to when you first made contact with the Council.

Get an Advice Agency to help you complete the form if necessary and send in photocopies of evidence, rather than the original documents.

If you are making a new claim for Income Support, tell the DSS that you want to claim Housing Benefit.

They should then inform the Council that you are getting Income Support by sending the Housing Benefits Section a stamped NHB1 form.

You will need to check that they have done this. If you think your NHB1 form *hasn't* been forwarded, get a copy of the form from the DSS and bring it along to the Council yourself.

### *Delays*

Don't be surprised if there are long delays in dealing with your claim. If you begin falling into arrears as a consequence, and are experiencing problems with your landlord, you can *insist* that the Council makes you an **interim payment**.

If the Council refuse to pay this, get advice.

### *Reviews*

The Council can refuse to pay sufficient Housing Benefit to cover your rent if they consider it to be 'unreasonably high'.

If this causes you hardship, and especially if you are pregnant, over 60 or incapable of work, get advice immediately.





- Ask the Council to give you a written explanation for their decision.
- Ask for the decision to be reviewed by Senior Officers and Councillors.
- The same applies if the Council refuses to backdate a late Housing Benefit claim and you have special reasons for being late, eg. illness.

No matter how offputting the bureaucracy may seem, if you think you are in the right, don't give up! Be prepared to challenge the system at all levels.

## Harassment and unlawful evictions

The **Protection from Eviction Act 1977** makes it a criminal offence for a landlord to harass or illegally evict their tenants.

Harassment is any action taken by any person which interferes with your peace and comfort and which is likely to make you want to leave your accommodation:

It can be obvious:



- Interfering with the gas, water or electricity supply.
- Threatening or using physical violence to make you leave.
- Racial or sexual harassment, or harassment on grounds of sexuality.

And it can be subtle:



- Pressure to make you sign agreements which undermine your rights.
- Failure to collect your rent or to carry out repairs.
- Interfering with your mail and other possessions.

Unlawful eviction is where a landlord or other person forces a tenant to leave without going through the Court procedures.

To know whether your landlord has acted illegally, you will need to get advice and to check how much security of tenure you have.

It is a *criminal offence* for anyone to use harassment or physical violence to make you leave your home.



## What to do if you are being harassed



- **Keep a diary of times, events, what was said and who witnessed it.**
- **Get a friend to stay with you as a witness if the harassment is occurring overnight.**
- **Check if other tenants in the house are suffering harassment. It may be possible to set up a Tenants Association and to combat the harassment collectively.**
- **Put complaints of harassment to your landlord in writing and keep copies.**
- **Report all incidents to the Council or an Advice Centre with a housing solicitor.**
- **If you are being harassed or illegally evicted outside office hours, contact the Council's Emergency Service and report the matter to the Police. Make sure they log a report. You have a right to protection and Police records can be used in any further legal action.**

## *Councils*



- **Many Councils have Tenancy Relations Officers or Housing Aid Centres who can help you tackle these problems.**
- **Councils can warn your landlords of the consequences of harassment.**
- **They can advise you of your rights to take civil action and to claim damages.**
- **They have powers to re-connect your gas or electricity.**
- **They can take out a criminal prosecution against your landlord.**
- **And if your landlord is found guilty, s/he can be fined or even jailed for up to two years.**
- **In cases of very serious harassment in multi-occupied properties, councils have the power to serve a Control Order and to take over the running of the house from the Landlord.**



Help is given with structural repairs but you are normally expected to decorate and maintain the accommodation yourself.

Short life housing is unfurnished, although landlords can sometimes help you obtain free or low cost furniture. The DSS can also provide grants and loans.

The advantage of this type of accommodation is that it is cheap.

You pay a weekly fee as rent.

But the accommodation is only temporary and while some Associations will help you find alternative move on accommodation, there is no guarantee of this.

## **Housing Co-ops**

Housing Co-ops are set up by people who manage, and nearly always own, their own housing.

There are only a small number in existence, but it is possible to find ones which suit your particular needs. There are for example women only co-ops, lesbian co-ops and so on.

The advantage of co-op housing is that you have more control over your own home and have a say in setting rent levels etc.

However, you are also expected to contribute your time and energy to running the co-op and this can be difficult if you have other commitments.

Support Agencies for women who are interested in establishing their own co-ops can be contacted at these numbers.

North London	<b>Catch</b>	<b>0171 372 7990</b>
West London	<b>Co-op Home Services</b>	<b>0181 994 2226</b>
East London	<b>Solon Co-op Housing Services</b>	<b>0171 702 7350</b>
South London	<b>Chisle</b>	<b>0181 694 1840</b>

## **Shared ownership schemes**

Some Housing Associations run shared ownership schemes which are funded by the Department of Environment (DOE).

These schemes are run by some Housing Associations.

They assist people who want to own their own home but who cannot afford to buy it outright.

Shared ownership schemes enable you to buy a share of the property, while you pay rent on the remainder.

For details of Housing Associations who run these schemes, contact:

**The Housing Corporation:** London Region **0171 292 4400**



## Squatting

If in desperation you are considering squatting:



- **Don't do it alone.**
- **Don't just squat anywhere, check it out first.**
- **Contact the Advisory Service for Squatters. They can advise you of your rights and put you in contact with local Squatters Groups.**
- **Squatting in itself is not illegal, but you don't have many rights and you can be evicted very quickly.**
- **If you move into a squat, always make sure that the gas, electricity and water are securely connected.**
- **If possible, leave someone in the property at all times. Check who is calling before answering the door.**

Squatters can be evicted with or without a Court Order, depending on the circumstances.

Councils and Housing Associations frequently use **Section 7 of the Criminal Law Act** to evict squatters by issuing 'Protected Intending Occupier' (PIO) certificates to prospective tenants.

This enables them to bypass the Courts and to recover the properties quickly.

If you receive a PIO certificate, contact the ASS or Law Centre immediately. If it is genuine, you will have no alternative but to move out.

Squatters can claim Income Support and have some rights to essential services such as gas and electricity.

You also have some legal protection from being physically thrown out. It is a criminal offence for any landlord to use physical violence to make you leave.

Advice and help with squatting can be obtained from:

**Advisory Service for Squatters: 0171 359 8814 Mon-Fri 2-6pm**

## Sleeping rough



- **Never sleep rough.**
- **Always try and find an Emergency Hostel first.**

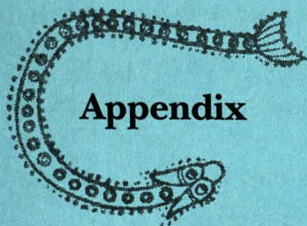


If, as a last resort, you have no choice but to sleep rough remember:



- **Never sleep directly on the ground.**
- **Keep your head covered; most body heat is lost through your head.**
- **Avoid being alone. You will be safer with a group of people.**
- **Drink and eat hot meals.**
- **There are Day Centres for the Homeless throughout London. These provide laundry and washing facilities, health care, housing advice and so on. Some of these are listed in the Appendix.**





## Appendix

### HOUSING ADVICE AND HELP WITH FINDING ACCOMMODATION

#### TELEPHONE ADVICE LINES

The following give housing advice and information on hostel vacancies.

**Piccadilly Advice Centre**

(0171 434 3773)

2-5pm, 6-9pm daily

**Shelter Nightline**

(0800 446 441 – free)

6pm-9am daily, w/ends

**SHAC Hostels Vacancy Project**

(0171 404 2614)

10am-8pm, Mon-Fri

*(Emergency accommodation advice for single non-priority homeless)*

**Women's Link (0171 248 1200)**

10am-4pm, Mon-Thurs

1-4pm, Fri

*(Help with finding hostels)*

**Women's Aid (0171 251 6537 – 24 hrs)**

*(For victims of domestic violence)*

For **Local Authority Homeless Persons Sections** – see telephone directory.

#### DIRECT ACCESS HOSTELS

These are Emergency Hostels which provide limited accommodation for a few nights.

**Arlington House Women's Resettlement Unit (0171 278 6466 – 24 hrs)**

4 Birkenhead St, WC1

(Kings Cross Tube)

*(For women 17-60)*

**Centrepoint Shelter (0171 287 9134)**

25 Berwick Street, W1

(Leicester Sq Tube)

24 hours

*(For women and men 16-21)*

**Riverpoint (0181 746 0091)**

160 Coningham Road, W12 8BY

(Shepherd's Bush Tube)

6pm-9am

*(For women and men 18-59)*

**Providence Row Night Refuge (0171 375 3915)**

50 Crispin Street, E1

(Liverpool St Tube)

24 hours

*(For women and men 17-60)*



## **DIRECT REFERRAL HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS**

These are Housing Associations you can contact yourself if you are homeless or in extreme housing need.

### **An Teach (0181 365 1751)**

Short life housing for young single Irish. Mixed, women only, lesbian and gay houses.

*(For Irish women and men 18-30)*

### **Homeless Action (0171 251 6783)**

Medium and long term accommodation for single women. Priority for women who are unemployed/low paid/or with support needs.

*(For women 18-60)*

### **Single Homeless Project**

Medium and long term accommodation for single people who have support needs.

*(For women and men 25-60)*

Local SHP Teams can be contacted in the following areas:

West London	<b>0181 993 4450</b>
Islington/Hackney	<b>0171 609 9170</b>
Lambeth	<b>0171 498 9797</b>
N E London	<b>0181 519 1717</b>

*(Must have 3 years residency in Westminster)*

### **Peabody Trust (071 928 7811)**

Long term accommodation for single women and men over 25.

*(Must have lived in London for 6 months)*

### **April Housing Co-op (071 254 8129)**

Short and long term accommodation for lesbians and gay men.

## **NACRO Housing in London (071 378 7876)**

Short and medium term accommodation for single homeless. Mixed, women only, lesbians houses, quota for ex-offenders, low support needs.



## **IRISH ADVICE AGENCIES**

These give housing advice and help with finding accommodation. They may also be able to refer you to a Housing Association or Hostel.

### **Brent Irish Advisory Centre**

**(0171 328 1188)**

76-82 Salisbury Road, NW6 6NY  
*(Queens Park Tube)*

### **Cairde na nGael (0181 519 5089)**

Durning Hall, Earlham Grove,  
Forest Gate, E7 9AB  
*(Forest Gate Tube)*

### **Camden Irish Centre (0171 916 2222)**

52 Camden Square, NW1 9XB  
*(Camden Town Tube/Camden Road BR)*

### **Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre**

**(0181 741 0466)**

Blacks Road, Hammersmith, W6 9DT  
*(Hammersmith Tube)*

### **Haringey Irish Centre (0181 365 1125)**

Pretoria Road, N17  
*(Wood Green Tube)*

### **Haringey Irish Community Care Centre**

**(0171 272 9230/7594 & 0171 263 4194)**  
72 Stroud Green Road, N4 3ER  
*(Finsbury Park Tube/BR)*



**Irish Chaplaincy in Britain**

(0171 263 1477)

St Mellitus Church, Tollington Park,  
N4 3AG  
(Finsbury Park Tube/BR)

**Irish Families Project (0171 733 6291)**

South London Family Service Unit,  
5 Baldwin Crescent, Camberwell,  
SE5 9LQ  
(Kennington/Oval Tube)

**Irish in Greenwich Project**

(0181 305 2545)

144 Greenwich High Road, SE10 8NN  
(Greenwich BR)

**Irish Women in Islington**

(0171 609 8916)

12 Hornsey Road, N7 7BP  
(Holloway Tube)

**Kilburn Irish Youth Project**

(0171 372 1764)

Kingsgate Community Centre,  
107 Kingsgate Road, NW6 2JU  
(West Hampstead Tube)

**Lewisham Irish Centre (0181 695 6264)**

2a Davenport Road, SE6 2AZ  
(New Cross Tube)

**London Irish Women's Centre**

(0171 249 7318)

59 Stoke Newington Church Street,  
N16 0AR  
(Stoke Newington BR/Dalston Kingsland BR)

**Roger Casement Centre**

(0171 281 3225)

131 St John's Way, Islington, N19 3RQ  
(Archway Tube)

**Safe Start Foundation (0181 452 0181)**

71 Cricklewood Broadway, NW2 3JR  
(Kilburn Tube)

**South London Irish Welfare Association**

(0181 540 0759/543 0608)

138-140 Hartfield Road, SW19 3TG  
(Wimbledon Tube)

Irish Housing Associations CARA and  
INNISFREE accept housing referrals  
from Irish and other Housing Advice  
Agencies:

**CARA (0181 800 2744)**

**INNISFREE (0181 451 5199)**

**AN TEACH (0181 365 1751)** accept  
direct referrals.

**Action Group for Irish Youth (AGIY)**

(0171 700 8137) produce a **Guide to  
London** for young Irish people which  
includes useful housing and other  
information.

**BIAS (0171 328 1188)** and **Federation  
of Irish Societies (0171 916 2725)** also  
produce Information Directories.



**DAY CENTRES FOR SINGLE  
HOMELESS PEOPLE IN  
TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

These Centres provide services ranging  
from health care and training to  
washing and laundry facilities. They also  
have women only drop-in facilities.

**Cricklewood Homeless Concern**

(0181 208 1608)

60 Ashford Road, NW2 6TU  
(Brent)

Women and men 17 yrs and over  
Women only drop-in, Tues 12-4pm



**Arlington Day Centre (0171 267 4937)**

15 Parkway, NW1

*(Camden)*

Women and men 16 yrs and over

Women only drop-in, Tues 2-4pm

**Baron's Court Project (0171 603 5232)**

69 Talgarth Road, W14 9DA

*(Hammersmith)*

Women and men 16 yrs and over

Women only drop-in, Fri 10-12pm

**Cardinal Hulme Day Centre**

**(0171 222 1602)**

3-7 Arneway St, Horseferry Road,

SW1P 2BG

*(Westminster)*

Women and men 16-21 yrs

Women only drop-in Tues 11am-4pm

**The London Connection**

**(0171 321 0633)**

12 Adelaide Street, WC2N 4HW

*(Westminster)*

Women and men 16-25yrs

Women only drop-in, Mon 6-9pm

**North Lambeth Day Centre**

**(0171 261 9622)**

St John's Crypt, 73 Waterloo Road,

SE1 8UD

*(Lambeth)*

Women and men any age

Women only drop-in, Wed 11am-3pm

**St Botolphs Crypt Centre**

**(0171 283 1670)**

Aldgate, EC3N 1AB

*(City of London)*

Women and men 16-80 yrs

Women's group, Mon and Wed

6.30pm-7.30pm

**White Chapel Mission (Cavell St)**

**(0171 247 8280)**

212 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BJ

*(Tower Hamlets)*

Women and men all ages

Women only drop-in, Wed 11-4pm



## HOUSING ADVICE FOR PRIVATE TENANTS

### TELEPHONE ADVICE LINES

**SHAC (London Housing Aid Centre)**

**(0171 404 6929)**

10am-1pm, Mon-Fri

**CHAS (0171 723 5928)**

9.30am-1pm, Mon-Fri

2-5pm, Mon

**Shelter Nightline (0800 446 441)**

### PRIVATE TENANTS RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

**Camden Federation of Private Tenants**

**(0171 383 0151)**

**Brent Private Tenants Rights Group**

**(0181 451 2970)**

**Hammersmith & Fulham Private**

**Tenants Rights Project (0181 563 0002)**



**Kensington & Chelsea Private Tenants  
Rights Project (0171 370 7069)**

**Private Tenants Project (0181 800 2630)**  
Finsbury Park Action Group



## **LEGAL ADVICE**

**Rights of Women (0171 251 6577)**

12 noon–2pm, Tues, Thurs, Fri

3–5pm, Wed

7–9pm, Tues, Wed, Thurs

**Legal Advice Surgery at Camden Irish  
Centre (0171 916 2222)**

10.30am–12.30pm, every Sat

**Legal Advice Sessions at LIWC  
(0171 249 7318)**

Contact LIWC for details

## *Law Centres*

**Brent Community Law Centre  
(0181 451 1122)**

389 High Road, Willesden, NW10 2JR

**Brixton Law Centre (0171 737 0440)**

506/508 Brixton Road, SW9 8EN

**Camden Community Law Centre  
(0171 485 6672)**

2a Prince of Wales Road, NW5 3LG

**Central London Law Centre  
(0171 437 5854)**

47 Charing Cross Road, WC2

**Greenwich Law Centre (0181 853 2550)**

187 Trafalgar Road, SE10 9EQ

**Hackney Law Centre (0181 985 8364)  
(0181 986 9891 Emerg.)**

236/238 Mare Street, E8 1HE

**Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre  
(0181 741 4021)**

142/144 King Street, W6 0QU

**Hillingdon Legal Resource Centre  
(0181 561 9400)**

12 Harold Avenue, Hayes, Middx,

UB3 4QW

**Hounslow Law Centre (0181 570 9505)**

51 Lampton Road, Hounslow, TW3 1JG

**N Lewisham Law Centre**

**(0181 692 5355)**

28 Deptford High Street, SE8 3NU

**N Islington Law Centre (0171 607 2461)**

161 Hornsey Road, N7 6DU

**S Islington Law Centre (0171 354 0133)**

131/132 Upper Street, N1 1QP

**N Kensington Law Centre**

**(0181 969 7473)**

74 Golborne Road, W10 5PS

**N Lambeth Law Centre**

**(0171 582 4373/4425)**

14 Bowden Street, SE11

**Newham Rights Centre (0181 555 3331)**

285 Romford Road, E7 9HJ

**Paddington Law Centre**

**(0181 960 3155)**

439 Harrow Road, W10 4RE

**Southwark Law Project (0181 299 1024)**

2 East Dulwich Grove, SE22 8PP

**Tower Hamlets Law Centre**

**(0171 791 0741)**

341 Commercial Road, E1 2PS



**Plumstead Community Law Centre**  
(0181 855 9817)  
105 Plumstead High Street, SE18

**Stockwell and Clapham LC**  
(0171 720 6231)  
57/59 Old Town, SW4 0JQ

**Tottenham Neighbourhood Law Centre**  
(0181 802 0911)  
15 West Green Road, N15 5BX

**Wandsworth Law Centre**  
(0171 228 9462)  
248 Lavender Hill, SW11 1LJ



## **LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Advice and help for private tenants is sometimes given from housing, environmental health and legal departments.

Some Councils have special provision for private tenants in Housing Aid/Advice Centres.

The services for private tenants vary between Councils. But all local Authorities have the same legal powers and responsibilities.

TRO means Tenancy Relations Officer. TROs deal with landlord harassment problems.

**Barking and Dagenham**  
(0181 592 4500 ext 2557/2411)  
2 Stour Road, Dagenham, RM10 7JF

**Barnet (0181 446 8511) x4757, TRO**  
Barnet House, 1255 High Road,  
Whetstone, N20 0EJ

**Bexley (0181 303 7777) x2484/2485**  
Civic Centre, Bexleyheath, DA6 7LB

**Brent, Private Housing Information Unit (0181 937 2772)**  
Hampton House, 16 Dyne Road,  
NW6 7XG

**Bromley Environmental Services**  
(0181 464 3333)  
Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, BR1 3UH

**Camden Housing Advice Centre (North) (0171 625 0251)**  
179-181 West End Lane, NW6

**Camden Housing Advice Centre (South) (0171 860 5801)**  
Bidborough House, 38-50 Bidborough St,  
WCI

**Croydon (0181 686 4433 ext 2159/2854)**  
Tabener House, Park Lane, Croydon,  
CR9 1DH

**Ealing Housing Advisory Service**  
(0181 758 8002)  
Town Hall Annexe, New Broadway,  
W5 2BY

**Enfield Housing Advice Centre**  
(0181 982 7684)  
Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield, EN1

**Greenwich Housing Aid Centre**  
(0181 854 8888 x2608 TRO)  
122-130 Powis Street, Woolwich,  
SE18 6NL

**Hackney Housing Advice**  
(0181 525 2000)  
Clarence House, 2-4 Clarence Rd,  
E5 8HB

**Hammersmith Environmental Housing Services (0181 748 3020 ext 1251)**  
50 Brooke Green, W6

**Haringey Housing Advice (West)**  
(0181 576 5679)  
13-27 Station Road, Wood Green, N22



**Haringey Housing Advice (East)**  
(0181 809 6000 x4309)  
Apex House, 820 Seven Sisters Road, N15

**Harrow Environmental Services**  
(0181 424 1380)  
Civic Centre, Station Rd, Harrow,  
HA1 2UT

**Havering (01708 772222)**  
Mercury House, Mercury Gdns,  
Romford, RM1

**Hillingdon Housing Advice**  
(01895 250111 x2038 & 01895 250381)  
Civic Centre, High St, Uxbridge,  
Middx, UB8

**Hounslow Housing Advice**  
(0181 862 6956)  
Treaty Centre, High St, Hounslow,  
TW3 1ES

**Islington (0171 226 1234)**  
Town Hall switchboard will direct you  
to Neighbourhood Office for your area

**Kensington & Chelsea**  
(TRO: 0171 937 5464 x2030/2143 &  
0171 361 2030/2143)  
or Housing Action Centre  
(0181 969 2433)  
140 Ladbroke Grove, W10 5ND  
(*independent agency*)

**Kingston-upon-Thames Housing Advice**  
(0181 547 5468)  
Guildhall 1, St James' Rd, Kingston,  
KT1 1EU

**Lambeth Housing Advice**  
(0171 926 4200)  
17 Porden Road, Brixton, SW2 1RP

**Lewisham Housing Advice**  
(0181 695 6000 x8691)  
Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, SE6

**Merton Housing Advice**  
(0181 545 3734)  
Crown House, London Road, Morden,  
Surrey, SM4 5DX

**Newham (0181 472 1430)**  
Town Hall switchboard will direct you  
to Neighbourhood Office for your area

**Reading Housing Advice**  
(01734 390 090)  
Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD

**Redbridge**  
(0181 478 3020 ext 5415)  
Environmental Health, 8 Perth Terrace,  
Perth Rd, Ilford, Essex, IG 6AT

**Richmond-upon-Thames Housing  
Advice (0181 891 1411 x7409/7486)**  
Civic Centre, 44 York St, Twickenham,  
TW1 3BZ

**Southwark Environmental Services**  
(0171 525 5717)  
The Chaplin Centre, Thurlow Road, SE17

**Sutton Environmental Health**  
(0181 770 5000)  
24 Denmark Road, SM5 2JG

**Tower Hamlets Housing Departmen**  
(0171 363 5363)  
3 Millharbour, E14

**Waltham Forest Environmental Health**  
(0181 520 0221)  
154 Blackhorse Rd, Walthamstow,  
E17 6NW

**Wandsworth Housing Advice Section**  
(0181 871 6840)  
17/27 Garratt Lane, SW18

**Westminster Housing Information**  
(0171 798 3598)  
64 Westbourne Grove, Bayswater, W2



## **SPECIALIST AGENCIES/ GROUPS**

### *Alcohol/drug dependency*

**Women's Alcohol Centre**  
(0171 226 4581)  
9.30am-5.30pm, Mon-Fri

**Alcohol Recovery Projects**  
(0171 403 3369)  
9am-5pm, Mon-Fri

**Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**  
(0171 352 3001)  
10am-10pm, daily

**Drinkline (0171 332 0202)**  
9.30am-11pm, Mon-Fri  
6-11pm, weekends

**City Road Drugs Crisis Centre**  
(0171 278 8671/2)  
24 hours

**Narcotics Anonymous (NA)**  
(0171 498 9005)

**Release (0171 603 8654)**  
Drugs and criminal law  
24 hours

### *Children*

**Children's Legal Centre (0171 359 6251)**  
2-5pm weekdays

**Childline (0800 1111)**  
Counselling/advice for children/  
young people  
24 hours every day

### *Counselling*

London-wide Irish Counselling Services:

**London Irish Women's Centre**  
(0171 249 7318)

**Camden Irish Centre (0171 916 2222)**

**Irish Chaplaincy Scheme**  
(0171 263 1477)

Other Counselling:

**Women's Therapy Centre**  
(0171 263 6200)

**Salvation Army (0171 383 4822)**  
(all ages)

**Brandon Centre (0171 267 4792)**  
(under 25s)

Contact LIWC (0171 249 7318) for  
details of local based, general and  
specialist counselling, or your GP.

### *Domestic violence/rape*

**Solas Anois, Irish Women's Domestic  
Violence Project (c/o 0171 251 6537)**

**Women's Aid (0171 251 6537)**  
Refuge contact for victims of domestic  
violence  
24 hours

**Women's Aid, National Helpline**  
(0117 963 3542)

**Rape Crisis Centre (0171 837 1600)**  
For women and girls who have been  
sexually assaulted, raped or abused  
10am-11pm, Mon-Fri, 24 hours w/ends



## *Disabilities*

**Greater London Association for Disabled People (GLAD)**  
(0171 274 0107)

**Disability Alliance (0171 247 8763)**  
Welfare benefits advice line

**Disability Law Service (0171 831 8031)**

## *Ex-offenders/prisoners*

**Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas**  
(0171 272 9843/0181 446 2577)

**Women's Prisoners Resource Centre**  
(0181 968 3121)

## *Health*

**Women's Health (Information Service)**  
(0171 251 6580)

**NHS Freephone Information Line**  
(0800 66 55 44)

## *HIV/AIDS*

**Positively Irish Action on Aids**  
(0181 983 0192/4293)  
9am-5pm Mon-Fri

**Positively Women (0171 490 5515)**  
10am-5pm Mon-Fri

**Terrence Higgins Trust (0171 831 0330)**  
**Helpline (0171 242 1010)**  
12 noon-10pm every day

## *Lesbians*

**Cairde (0171 837 2782)**  
c/o London Friend  
Irish lesbian social group

**London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard**  
(0171 837 7324)  
24 hours

**Lesbian Line (0171 251 6911)**  
7pm-10pm, Tues, Wed, Thurs

**Gay & Lesbian Legal Advice**  
(0171 976 0840)  
7-9.30pm, Mon-Fri

**Stonewall Housing Advisory Service**  
(0171 359 5767)  
12noon-4pm, Tues  
9am-12.30pm, Wed  
9.30am-12.30pm, 1.30-4.30pm, Fri

## *Mental health*

**MIND (0181 519 2122)**

**Samaritans (0171 734 2800)**  
24 hours

**Saneline (0171 724 8000)**  
2pm-midnight every day

**National Schizophrenia Fellowship Advice Service (0181 974 6814)**  
10am-3pm, Mon-Fri

## *Older women*

**Age Concern (0181 679 8000)**

**Pensioners Link (0181 691 0938)**



**Camden Irish Elderly Support Network**  
(0171 428 0471)

**Greenwich Irish Pensioners Group**  
(0181 852 8445)

Contact Irish Centres or Federation of Irish Societies (0171 916 2733) for details of other local Irish pensioners' groups.

*Parents/carers*

**Parent Line (0170 255 9900)**

**Irish Families Project (0171 733 6291)**  
c/o South London Families Service Unit

**The Trasna Project, Young Irish Mothers Group (0171 328 9701)**  
c/o Kilburn Irish Youth Project

**Family Rights Group (0171 272 7308)**

*Single parents*

**Gingerbread (0171 240 0953)**

**National Council for One Parent Families (0171 267 1361)**

*Students*

**National Union of Students (0171 272 8900)**

**British Council Accommodation Unit (0171 389 4548)**

*Travellers*

**London Gypsy & Traveller Unit (0181 533 2002)**  
(Camden, Hackney, Haringey)

**Traveller Education Projects in London, c/o CLASS (0171 387 2699)**

**Trade – Education & Training for Travellers (0181 741 5567)**

Contact Irish Centres for details of local Travellers Support Groups

*Young women*

**Saoirse (0171 249 7318)**  
Social group for Irish women, 18–30 yrs  
c/o London Irish Women's Centre

Help and advice for young homeless Irish women and men at:

**Kilburn Irish Youth Project (KIYP) (0171 372 1764)**  
107 Kingsgate Rd NW6  
(West Hampstead Tube)  
16–25 years

**New Horizons Youth Centre (0171 388 5560)**  
68 Chalton St, NW1 1JR  
(Euston BR)  
16–21 years

**Alone in London Service (0171 278 4224)**  
188 Kings Cross Rd, WC1  
(Kings Cross Tube)  
16–21 years

**Basement Project (0171 373 2335)**  
4 Hogarth Rd, SW5 0PT  
(Earls Court Tube)  
16–25 years

**The Brandon Centre (0171 267 4792)**  
26 Prince of Wales Rd, NW5 3LG  
(Kentish Town Tube)  
12–25 years





This leaflet was written by Angie Birtill, Housing and Welfare Rights Worker at the London Irish Women's Centre.

It was compiled in conjunction with the Irish Women's Housing Action Group (IWHAG); Mary Connolly, Eibhlin Ni Duibheannaigh, Mary McDonnell, Claire McElwee, Biddy Mitchell, Kate Scannell, Maura Schley, Mary Walsh.

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The IWHAG was established at the Fourth London Irish Women's Conference in April 1988. In addition to producing information leaflets, we campaign on all housing issues that are relevant to Irish women. Our group is co-ordinated by the LIWC and meets on a regular basis. For further information, contact the LIWC on 071 249 7318 or write to IWHAG, c/o A. Birtill, Box 85, 59 Stoke Newington Church Street, London, N16 0AR.

*London Irish women's centre*

April 1995