

What action will the Council take?

The Council will arrange an appointment for you to see the designated officer(s) where further details will be obtained. We will try to prevent harassment and illegal eviction by resolving disputes between landlords and tenants.

We may be able to negotiate with your landlord to allow you to return to your home if you want to/or to stop the harassment.

Criminal Prosecution

Where informal negotiation has not been successful, then more formal action may be appropriate.

- Environmental Health can investigate your case
- West Oxfordshire District Council can prosecute landlords who harass and/or illegally evict their tenants
- Action will only be taken with your consent

Civil Remedies

- Environmental Health can advise you on how to obtain an injunction in the civil courts to get you back into your home and/or order the landlord not to harass you.
- The Civil Courts can also award you damages as compensation for the landlords actions

If you want to move or are homeless because of harassment and/or illegal eviction, Housing Services may be able to help you secure alternative accommodation.

Useful contacts:

Housing Services

Elmfield
New Yatt Road
Witney
OX28 1PB
Tel: 01993 861010
email: housing@westoxon.gov.uk

Environmental Health

Elmfield
New Yatt Road
Witney
OX28 1PB
Tel: 01993 861060
email: private.sector.housing@westoxon.gov.uk

Visit us at: www.westoxon.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Old Print House 31 High Street
Marlborough Lane Chipping Norton
Witney OX28 6DY OX7 5AD
Tel: 01993 705691 Tel: 01608 641367
Email: bureau@westoxfordshirecab.cabnet.org.uk

Thames Valley Police

0845 8505505

Shelterline

0808 8004444

This leaflet can be made available in a larger print size, electronically or in other formats. Please contact us if this is required.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Illegal Eviction & Harassment

Housing Services & Environmental Health



The Council is keen to ensure that both landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and will take all appropriate action to help you protect these rights.

What is illegal eviction?

This happens when your landlord, or any person acting on his/her behalf, forces you, or attempts to force you, to leave your home without following the correct procedure.

Some examples are:

- Changing the locks.
- Physically throwing you out.
- Stopping you from getting into part of your home.

Whether you have a written agreement or not your landlord must usually give you Notice that he/she wants you to leave and then get an order from the County Court for Possession.

If you share living accommodation with your landlord and/or his/her family you are still entitled to 'reasonable notice'.

The law makes it a **criminal offence** for a landlord to evict the majority of tenants without obtaining a Court Order.

What is harassment?

Harassment can include anything done by a landlord or someone acting on his/her behalf, which stops you living quietly and safely in your home. You may feel you have no choice but to leave your home. Harassment is difficult to define, but it can cover such things as:

- Interfering with your gas, water or electricity supply
- Threatening to make you leave your home
- Interfering with your possessions
- Entering your home without your consent
- Verbal or written threats of abuse
- Harassing you because of your gender, race or sexuality

If you are unsure of your rights, contact either Housing Services or the Citizens Advice Bureau for free advice.

What can you do if you're being harassed or illegally evicted?

If you are evicted, threatened with eviction or being harassed, contact Environmental Health on 01993 861379 or 01993 861375, or alternatively call Housing on 01993 861010 **immediately**.

If someone attempts to forcibly evict you at the weekend or in the evening you should **contact the police**. Make sure either you, or the Police, inform Housing Services or Environmental Health as soon as possible.

You can get an Injunction to stop your landlord harassing you, to get you back into your home and/or to return your possessions. Environmental Health can advise you.

You can claim compensation for acts of harassment and illegal eviction but you need to do this by taking your own civil action.

It will help if you keep a record of what happened:

- Names and address of those involved
- Any witnesses to the incidents
- If the Police are involved, the Police Officers name and/or number and report number

Help for your landlord

Your landlord can get advice on his rights and responsibilities from Housing Services, Citizens Advice Bureaux or a Solicitor. Housing Services can give landlords advice on any landlord/tenant problems.

