

Dear housing officer / housing association / landlord/ whom it may concern

I have asked _____'s family to pass this letter on to you as I have concerns that their current housing situation is having a negative impact on their health.

_____ has a diagnosis of asthma/wheeze. They also have severe allergic rhinitis and eczema. It is my belief that the family's current housing situation is significantly contributing to their health condition(s) and the amount of medication they are requiring to control them.

The National Review of Asthma Deaths published in 2014 and 2018 identify a number of risk factors for asthma death and below I will explain how several of these and other factors are relevant to _____ asthma and other health needs.

Critically, it was found that over 90% of deaths in children could have been prevented if the pre-existing risk factors had been identified and addressed by the agencies already involved in the child's care, including health, education, social care and other Local Authority bodies.

1. **The property is overcrowded.** This will increase dust mites which will cause more inflammation to the airways due to an allergic response causing allergic rhinitis. This will increase the risk of severe exacerbations of asthma/wheeze. Overcrowding also increases the likelihood of catching viral illnesses, which is a trigger for asthma/wheeze.
2. **There is significant damp and mould** which will cause airway inflammation due to breathing in mould spores. This will exacerbate asthma/wheeze and cause these children to have more exacerbations: www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/moulds-and-fungi
3. **Reducing humidity in the home environment is essential.** Works should be undertaken to correct any structural issues causing damp, including improving ventilation. A dehumidifier may be needed.
4. **People smoke near the property.** The family are able to smell smoke within their home which is a trigger for _____'s asthma causing an increased likelihood of an exacerbation and a severe attack.
5. **Asthma can be triggered by stress and anxiety.** They have expressed that their living environment is stressful which will exacerbate their asthma causing more attacks.

We are very concerned that this property is contributing to this child's asthma/wheeze episodes, increasing the frequency of their attacks, which could lead to a severe life-threatening asthma attack. Due to their ongoing exposure to environmental triggers in their home, we are unable to adequately control their symptoms with the medication we are prescribing.

_____ has a right to live in a property that is not detrimental to their health. Please provide this family with any support within your power to assist them with improving their current house or re-banding for new accommodation.

If repairs to the property are felt to be insufficient to protect this child's health (e.g. in circumstances where overcrowding is an ongoing issue), re-housing _____ and their family should be prioritised in order to protect _____'s future health and well-being. New accommodation should be:

- Free from damp and mould, well ventilated
- Has hard-flooring and blinds rather than carpet and curtains
- Does not require _____ to have bunk-beds in their room, as these are particularly problematic in house dust mite allergy
- Has its' own washing machine so bedding can be easily washed at 60C

Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 states that landlords have a duty to 'keep in repair: the structure and exterior of the dwelling, including drains, gutters, and external pipes. To keep in repair and proper working order the installation in the dwelling of the supply of water, gas, electricity and for sanitation. This includes drains, sink, baths and sanitary convenience and to keep in repair and proper working order the installation in the dwelling for space heating and heating water'

The Homes Act, March 2019 ensures tenants can expect their homes 'to be fit for human habitation', which means that it's safe, healthy and free from things that could cause anyone in the household serious harm. This Act also puts obligation on the landlord to ensure tenants are able to ventilate the property effectively.

I have provided the family with details of the following organisations who can help support them. I have made them aware that they can take this further using section 89 of the Environmental Act 1990.

- Information and support: www.england.shelter.org.uk
- How to make a complaint: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Legal advice, no win no fee: www.tenantsadvice.co.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information if this would be helpful. We look forward to your response and support.

Yours sincerely



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