

Know your rights: Rent increases

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Question

I have been renting an apartment for over a year and my landlord phoned me last week to tell me that he is increasing my rent. Does he have the right to do this?

Answer

The amount of rent payable for a property is agreed between the landlord and tenant at the start of a tenancy. If you are living in private rented accommodation, under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, your landlord must follow certain procedures if he wants to raise the rent.

Your landlord has the right to review the rent once a year. A rent review can result in an increase or reduction of the rent. Unless the accommodation has changed substantially, it cannot be reviewed more often than this, or during the first 12 months of the tenancy.

Your landlord must give you at least 28 days' notice of the amount of the proposed new rent and the date from which it is to take effect. The notice must be in writing. Emails, text messages and phone calls are not valid forms of notice.

Threshold, the national housing charity, publishes detailed advice on how to deal with rent increases, including a list of tips on dealing with your landlord. You can contact Threshold for advice on your particular situation by calling 1890 334 334 or through their website, threshold.ie.

The Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) deals with disputes between landlords and tenants, including disputes about rent reviews. If there is any dispute about the amount of rent being proposed, either side can refer the dispute to the PRTB. If the landlord has given you a valid written notice of the rent increase, you must contact the PRTB with your dispute before the date that the new rent comes into effect or within 28 days of getting the notice, whichever is later. There is no time limit if the notice is not valid.

You must continue to pay your current rent until the case has been determined by the PRTB. Know Your Rights columns cover topical subjects every month in a question-and-answer format. They are published by the Citizens Information Board online and syndicated through Citizens Information Services to local newspapers around Ireland.

Further information is available from Citizens Information Centres and from the Citizens Information Phone Service, call 0761 07 4000.