

General Information for Landlords

We believe that a good relationship with Tenants is the key to a smooth running tenancy. As your Property Manager, our main aim is to ensure a first class level of service with a friendly yet professional approach. We are committed to achieving a good relationship with Landlords and Tenants alike. It is important that Tenants should feel comfortable in their temporary home and that they are receiving value for money. A well maintained property in good decorative order will go towards this and also helps to achieve a higher rental return. Tenants are also more inclined to treat such a property with greater respect.

General Condition

Electrical, gas plumbing, waste, central heating and hot water systems must be safe, sound and in good working order. Repairs and maintenance are at the Landlords expense unless misuse can be established. Interior decoration should be in good condition and preferably plain, light and neutral.

Furnishings

We will be pleased to give you advice on whether to furnish or not and to what level. As a minimum, you will need to provide decent quality carpets, curtains and light fittings.

Personal Items, Ornaments Etc.

Personal possessions, ornaments, pictures, books etc. should be removed from the property, especially those of real or sentimental value. Some items may be boxed, sealed and stored in the loft at the owners risk. All cupboards and shelf space should be left clear for the Tenants own use.

Gardens

Gardens should be left neat, tidy and rubbish free with any lawns cut. Tenants are required to maintain the gardens to a reasonable standard, provided they are left the necessary tools. However, few tenants are experienced gardeners, and if you value your garden, or if it particularly large, you may wish us to arrange visits by our regular gardener.

Cleaning

At the commencement of a tenancy, the property must be in thoroughly clean condition, and at the end of each tenancy, it is the tenants responsibility to leave the property in a similar condition. Where they fail to do so, cleaning will be arranged at their expense.

Information for the Tenant

It is helpful if you leave information for the tenant, for example, how to operate the central heating and hot water system, washing machine and alarm system, and the day refuse is collected etc.

Keys

You should provide one set of keys for each tenant. Where we will be managing, we will arrange to have duplicates cut as required.

General Advice for Landlords

Mortgage

If your property is mortgaged, you should obtain your mortgagees written consent to the letting. They may require additional clauses in the tenancy agreement of which you must inform us.

Leaseholds

If you are a leaseholder, you should check the terms of your lease, and obtain any necessary written consent before letting.

Insurance

You should ensure that you are suitably covered for letting under both your buildings and contents insurance. Failure to inform your insurers may invalidate your policies. We can advise on Landlords Legal Protection, Rent Guarantee Cover and Landlords Contents and Buildings Insurance if required.

Bills and Regular Outgoings

We recommend that you arrange for a regular outgoings e.g. service charges, maintenance contracts etc. to be paid by standing order or direct debit. However, where we are managing the property, by prior written agreement, we may make payment of certain bills on your behalf, provided such bills are received in your name at our office, and that sufficient funds are held to your credit.

Council Tax and Utility Accounts

We will arrange for the transfer of Council Tax and Utility Accounts to the Tenant. Meter readings will be taken, allowing you closing of gas and electricity accounts to be drawn up. All these matters we will handle for you, however, British Telecom will require instructions directly from both the Landlord and the Tenant.

Income Tax

When resident in the UK, it is entirely the Landlord's responsibility to inform the Inland Revenue of rental income received, and to pay any tax due. When the Landlord is resident outside the UK during a tenancy, under rules effective from 6th April 1996, unless an exemption certificate is held, we as the Landlord's Agent are obliged to retain and forward to the Inland Revenue on a quarterly basis, an amount equal to the base rate of income tax from rental received, less certain expenses. An application for exemption from such deductions is available from this Agency, and further information is available from the Inland Revenue.

The Inventory

It is most important that an Inventory of Contents and Schedule of Condition be prepared in order to avoid misunderstanding or dispute at the end of a tenancy. Without such safeguards, it will be impossible for the Landlord to prove any loss, damage or significant deterioration of the property or contents. In order to provide a complete service, we will arrange for a member of our staff to prepare an Inventory and Schedule of Condition at the cost quoted in our Agency Agreement.

General Advice for Landlords

The following requirements are the responsibility of the Owner (Landlord). Where you have signed our Full Management Agency Agreement, they are also our responsibility. Therefore, where we are managing, we will need to ensure compliance.

Health and Safety – Gas

Annual safety check - Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 all gas appliances and flues in rented accommodation must be checked for safety within 12 months of being installed, and thereafter at least every 12 months by a competent engineer (i.e. CORGI registered gas installer).

Maintenance

There is a duty to ensure that all gas appliances, flues and associated pipework are maintained in a safe condition at all times.

Records

Full records must be kept for at least 2 years of the inspections of each appliance and flue, of any defects found and remedial action taken.

Copies to Tenants

A copy of the safety certificate issued by the engineer must be given to each new tenant before their tenancy commences, or to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being carried out.

Health and Safety – Electrical

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, and certain other regulations, electrical appliances and equipment provided in tenanted premises must be safe. It is therefore necessary to make a visual check to ensure that all electrical items, plugs and leads appear completely safe and undamaged, and remove or replace any faulty items.

Consumer Protection – Fire

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989 & 1993) provide that specified items supplied in the course of letting property must meet minimum fire resistance standards. The regulations apply to all upholstered furniture, beds, headboards and mattresses, sofa-beds, futons, and other convertibles, nursery furniture, garden furniture suitable for use in a dwelling, scatter cushions, pillows and non-original covers for furniture. They do not apply to antique furniture or furniture made before 1950, bedcovers including duvets, loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains, carpets or sleeping bags. Items which comply will have a suitable permanent label attached. Non-compliant items must be removed before a tenancy commences.

Smoke Alarms

All properties built since June 1992 must have been fitted with a mains power smoke detector alarm from new. Although there is no legislation requiring smoke alarms to be fitted in other ordinary tenanted properties, it is generally considered that the common law 'duty of care' means that Landlords and their Agents could be liable should a fire cause injury or damage in a tenanted property where smoke alarms are not fitted. We therefore strongly recommend that the Landlord fit at least one alarm on each floor (in the hall and landing areas).

We hope that the general points covered in this guide will be of assistance to you. If there are any aspects of which you are unsure, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01384 77877.