



Letting your leasehold property

Information for council leaseholders

In the terms of your lease you are required to tell us if you intend to let out your property. Please contact us and we will confirm our permission in writing. You should keep this letter safe in your records.

You are also required to provide us with your new address and contact details. If you are using a managing agent, we also require their contact details. We need to know who to contact in an emergency (such as a leaking pipe). Delays in being able to contact a key holder can result in greater damage being caused to the property and you could be held responsible.

As the leaseholder you are responsible for ensuring that anyone living in your flat abides by the terms of the lease.

This leaflet tells you about:

- Getting advice
- Mortgages
- Insurance cover
- Responsibility for bills
- Tenant references
- Your legal responsibilities
- Tips for being a good landlord

Getting advice

Before letting your property it is helpful to seek advice from a solicitor or Citizens Advice Bureau. They can help you prepare a suitable tenancy agreement between you (as a private landlord) and your tenant.

Your mortgage

If you have a mortgage on your leasehold property, you should tell your lender as you may need their permission to let out your home and they may want to change your mortgage to a 'buy-to-let' arrangement rather than a standard residential loan.

Insurance cover

If your flat is not lived in for more than 30 days in a row, you are no longer insured against malicious damage, damage caused by theft or attempted theft or by water leaks from fixed pipes or appliances. There are full details in your policy.

Responsibility for bills

We will still send you the bills for the ground rent, insurance, service charges and maintenance as you are still the leaseholder and so are responsible for these charges.

When your tenants change, you will be responsible for telling the Council Tax Department as they will need to set up a council tax account for your new tenants and amend their records to show that the old tenants are no longer responsible. Please let us have the old tenants' new address if you know it.

You should also tell the water, gas and electricity suppliers of any changes to who is responsible for paying their bills.

Checking tenant references

It is sensible to run checks on anyone you are thinking of letting your property to and by law you should check that your tenant has the right to rent property in the UK. You should ask for proof of identity and a reference from a previous landlord. This service is sometimes included if you employ a local lettings agent to help you find a tenant.

Your legal responsibilities as a landlord

- You must have an assured shorthold tenancy agreement between you and your tenant. This must reflect the latest laws and be correctly signed in two parts (the agreement and the counterpart).
- You should take out appropriate landlord insurance.
- If your property has any gas appliances, you must get a landlord's gas safety certificate each year to show that you have had a safety inspection carried out. The inspection checks that all of the gas appliances in the property are safe. You should show the certificate to anyone who is considering renting the property, and you should give a copy to your new tenant

once you have agreed the terms of the tenancy and you have both signed the tenancy agreement.

- You must make sure your tenants' deposits are protected and have in place a procedure for dealing with any disputes that arise. You should join a deposit protection scheme although this may be provided by a local lettings agent if you employ them to help you manage your property.
- Properties that are rented out must have a current energy performance certificate (EPC). You should show the certificate to anyone considering renting your property, and you should give a copy to your tenant once you have agreed the terms of the tenancy and you have both signed the tenancy agreement.
- As a landlord you have a legal duty to make sure that your property is safe for your tenants. Before you rent out your property, make sure that the electrics are safe. Also, your insurance may not be valid if the insurance company can prove that the property was not safe when the tenant moved in. You should ask a qualified electrician to check the electrics before your first tenant moves in and issue a certificate to confirm they are safe.

Some tips on being a good landlord

- Join a landlords' organisation such as the National Landlords Association or the Eastern Landlords Association. Membership offers many benefits including on-going support to help you deal with landlord-related matters.
- Make sure your tenants know who to contact if they need a repair.
- Companies such as British Gas offers breakdown cover for gas appliances and electrical, plumbing and drainage emergency cover. They can also provide your yearly landlord's gas safety certificate.
- You may prefer to use local tradesmen. Decide if you want your tenant to contact you if they need a repair or if you would prefer to give your tenant a list of contact numbers so they can contact the tradesmen direct.
- Decorate your property to a high standard. It will be much easier to rent out your property if it looks inviting and is tastefully decorated.

For more information about your lease or letting your leasehold property, please contact us by email at servicecharges@dacorum.gov.uk or by telephone on **01442 228000** and ask for **Leaseholder Services**.