



End of Tenancy Guide

We understand that moving home can be stressful. There are specific requirements when leaving a rented property which vary depending on which Letting Agency you have rented with. These requirements are not always obvious.

To make things easier and reduce the chances of having deductions from your deposit we have produced this step by step guide to help you check out of a Home County Rentals property.

It is of vital importance that you follow this guide carefully and make sure all steps are closely followed before your departure from the property as it can be expensive to have defects rectified retrospectively following your departure.

Please note: Should works be required following your Check Out, Home County Rentals will add an additional 10% administration charge for any repair or maintenance deductions taken from the deposit (with the exception of the inventory and clean).

Arranging works following check out can be extremely time consuming for our staff and have to take priority so that we can prepare the property to the standard that we require when we hand the property over to a new Tenant.

Quick Guide Checklist:

(Further details overleaf)

- 1. Notify us you are leaving**
- 2. Book a check-out date and time**
- 3. Prepare for check-out**
- 4. Professional cleaning (including steam cleaning of carpets)**
- 5. Window cleaning**
- 6. Rubbish collection**
- 7. Garden maintenance**
- 8. Replace missing/broken items**
- 9. "Making good"**
- 10. Batteries and bulbs**
- 11. Keys**
- 12. Meters**
- 13. Utility bills**
- 14. Rent payment**
- 15. Winter protection**
- 16. Check-out day**

1. Notify us that you are leaving the property

When your Tenancy Agreement is coming to an end, we will contact you to see if you would like to stay on at the property or if you will be leaving. We require at least two months' written notice (email is fine) that you do not wish to renew your tenancy.

Most of our tenancies are Assured Shorthold Tenancies, which means that both you and your Landlord make a firm commitment for the term of the tenancy. This means you can only leave the tenancy early if both you and your Landlord agree. Unless there are specific issues, we recommend to Landlords that they should agree to release Tenants from the tenancy once replacement Tenants have been found. In this case, the early departing Tenants are required to pay any extra costs their Landlord may face and the rent to the day before the new Tenants start, i.e. making sure the Landlord is no worse off than they would have been if the tenancy lasted the full term. We also have a Tenancy Surrender Fee that Tenants must pay.

2. Confirm a check out date and time

It is your responsibility to pay for the check out appointment of the property. Home County Rentals use an independent inventory and check out company for this. We can recommend a company and provide a quote for this. We will contact you to arrange a check-out time. We highly recommend that you attend the check-out meeting, however it is not absolutely necessary as there will be pictures taken to document any areas of concern.

It is very important that the property is ready to hand back to us when the check-out meeting starts, as it will not be possible for you to re-enter the property after the meeting. If the property is not ready to be handed over then we may reschedule the meeting and you will be charged accordingly.

3. Prepare for check-out

The requirement is for the property to be in the same condition at check-out as the condition recorded on the inventory on check-in. The only difference noted on the check-out report should be anything already agreed during the tenancy and fair, wear and tear.

The following points will help as a guide to ensure this.

4. Professional Property and Carpet Cleaning

As part of our tenancy agreements, it is non-negotiable that Tenants pay for a professional end of tenancy clean including steam cleaning of carpets, ovens and windows. We can provide details of recommended cleaning companies.

Receipts of these services will be required as proof that the professional cleaning has been carried out.

Please note that if you do not have the property and/or carpets professionally cleaned at the end of your tenancy, we will arrange for this to be completed after check-out and deduct the costs from your deposit.

5. Window Cleaning

The windows will need to be cleaned on both the inside and outside. If there is a conservatory or roof windows these will also need to be cleaned. We can recommend contractors for accessing difficult outside areas. A full professional clean should include the inside of the windows.

6. Rubbish

Please make sure all food waste and rubbish is removed from the property, including emptying wheelie bins and leaving them clean. If rubbish is not removed, we will have to instruct a contractor to attend the property and remove items that remain which will be at your cost.

7. Leave garden neat and tidy

It is the Tenants responsibility to maintain the garden throughout the tenancy. Therefore, it must be handed back to us in the same condition that you received it in.

All hedges must be trimmed, flower beds etc. must be weeded, leaves must be swept and it should be in good order. If this is not the case then we will have to instruct a gardening contractor to attend to the garden to tidy it up and you will be charged accordingly.

8. Missing or Broken Items

Tenants must make sure any missing or broken items are replaced with suitable items as agreed with us. If we need to repair or replace anything then you will be charged for this and our time. (We can provide details of contractors who can help with this.)

9. “Making Good”

Where you have fixed items to the walls, e.g. TV or satellite connections, or caused any damage to the walls, you need to properly fill the holes and use matching paint so the holes are no longer visible. If you do not do this, or the repairs are poor, we will instruct a handyman to make good the area and charge for these repairs.

10. Batteries and bulbs

Tenants must replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide alarms where needed and replace any missing or broken light bulbs. Unless the inventory shows they were not working on check in, it is assumed that they were all in good working order when you moved in. You will be charged for any replacements required.

11. Keys

When you check out, you must return the same keys you signed for at the start of the tenancy, plus any other keys received during the tenancy and any additional keys you have had cut. Missing keys may necessitate a change of lock which will be charged to you. Please make sure keys are clearly labelled and those internal are left near the door or

window to which they belong, provided that does not compromise security.

We will not accept your keys until the check out meeting as you remain responsible for the property until this point.

12. Meters

If your electric or gas meters have been changed to a pre-pay meter these should be returned to a normal meter before you leave. If this is not done you will be charged accordingly.

13. Utility bills

It is your responsibility to contact utility suppliers (electric; gas; water; phone; satellite/cable) to arrange your final bill.

You will also need to ensure you pay Council Tax to the last day of tenancy and notify them of your move.

14. Re-marketing and access

During the period of notice being served and you vacating the property, the property will be marketed and a board may be placed outside.

Where we need to arrange viewings of the property we will provide you at least 24 hours notice.

We would appreciate your help in presenting the property well for future Tenants and thank you for your patience during this process.

15. Rent payment

Rent is paid in advance so your last rent payment is due the month before your check-out date. Once this is paid it is your responsibility to cancel the standing order.

If you do make an overpayment of rent, it may take some time for our system to process and therefore there can be a delay in returning this to you.

16. Mail re-direction

We will not forward mail to you after you leave the property. Future occupants may

mark your mail as return to sender, but we cannot insist on this.

Please arrange with Royal Mail for all your mail to be redirected to your new address.

17. Winter protection

If the weather is cold, please leave the heating and hot water on a low setting to protect against freezing after you leave.

18. Forwarding Address

You must provide Home County Rentals with a residential forwarding address for our records.

19. Check-out day

An independent check out clerk will go through the inventory, noting any anomalies. They will also check meter readings and collect all keys.

Please remember, you will not be able to enter the property after this meeting as you have handed it back to us.

Deposits, Deductions and Disputes

1. Deductions from your deposit

We usually take check out charges and professional cleaning charges from your deposit unless you opt to arrange other payment methods. Other than these deductions, we aim to return your whole deposit. This demonstrates that you have looked after the property well and it is in good condition to hand over to the new Tenants! However, we will charge you where items are not as they are shown on the inventory:

- Anything which is missing or changed. Any replacements need to be agreed with us.
- Anything which is damaged or in poor condition as judged by the independent inventory clerk, unless it is fair, wear and tear. E.g. a few marks or scuffs on walls for each year of the tenancy would be fair, wear and tear. If you are in doubt over whether something would be considered wear and tear then please just ask!
- Gardening required to return gardens to same standard as when you move in. If weeding, trimming or tidying is required we will use a contractor for this.
- Professional cleaning for property and/or carpets. Stains which cannot be removed will be treated as damage.
- Unpaid Council Tax and utility bills.
- The charge for the check-out meeting.
- We are also entitled to deduct any overdue rent.

2. Deposit return

The check out report will be reviewed and any identified relevant deductions will be discussed with you and the Landlord.

Once agreed we will begin the process with DPS to release your deposit. DPS will send you an email to accept the amount and to authorise them to transfer your funds to you and any deductions back to us. On average this process takes 7-14 days. Once DPS have

released your funds, it can take between 3-5 working days to reflect in cleared funds in your bank account.

3. What happens if there is a dispute?

In the few exceptional circumstances where compromise is not possible, we will return the undisputed amount of the deposit and agree how we handle the disputed amount.

If you dispute the deductions from your deposit you can opt to use the Alternate Dispute Resolution process. They assess whether the deductions are fair and reasonable.

Home County Rentals are members of The Property Ombudsman scheme and ARLA - The Association of Residential Lettings Agents. These each have their own codes of practice, to which we subscribe and follow.

The Government's 'How to Rent Guide' and DPS guide that we send over with your Tenancy Agreement are also useful documents for you to review.

4. What happens if I want to stay in the property after I have given notice?

We understand that circumstances may change and you may for unforeseen reasons wish to stay in the property. The important thing is to let us know as soon as possible.

It is at the discretion of the Landlord whether or not you are able to stay in the property and extend/renew your tenancy.

Please be aware that you will be responsible for any charges that may have already been incurred including advertising and marketing and any referencing fees for prospective new tenants (if applicable).