



HOME
COUNTY

RENTALS

A First Time Guide to
Renting.

www.homecountyrentals.co.uk

info@homecountyrentals.co.uk

Tips for Finding the Right Property

1. Create a list of essential search criteria of what you are looking for in a property:

- How many bedrooms do you require?
- What is your maximum monthly budget for a rental property?
- Do you have a car and require off-street parking or a garage?
- Do you have pets?
- Would you like a garden?
- Do you need to be close to work, schools, transport links?

2. Use online tools to find properties that match your criteria:

- Use our rental search and adjust filters to narrow down the search to find exactly what you want and where you would like it
- Sign up for property alerts to find out about new rental properties.
- Contact us to talk through your requirements, or pop into our office so that we can discuss your needs and advise how best to match your criteria
- Look on rightmove.co.uk and onthemarket.co.uk and sign up for property alerts to see all properties advertised that match your requirements

3. Arrange Viewings

- Viewings are the best way to get a feel of a property and see what is out there

What to look out for during viewings

1. Checking how well the property is being maintained

- Have a look at the gutters, painting, windows, carpets (this will help you to see how well the Landlord looks after the property and if they are likely to help to keep it in good shape throughout your tenancy). Also consider how secure the property is and if you would feel safe living there.

2. Finding out what furnishings will be in the property when you move in

- Depending on whether the property is to be Let furnished or unfurnished, certain items of furniture may be left in the property or removed.

3. Check showers, taps etc

- Make sure the showers and taps are in working order and are sufficient for your use. Check the water pressure.

4. Talk to existing tenants (or property owners)

- If the current tenants are at the property ask them about the Landlord or Agent to get an honest review!

5. Check local transport links, nearby schools and amenities so you know whats around you.

6. Check how long the property will be available for - does the Landlord have any plans to return?

7. Private Landlord or Agent?

- Private Landlords are unregulated and don't need to be a part of a professional trade body or association.
- Agents can offer greater peace of mind and security, especially if they belong to bodies such as ARLA, which has a code of practice that members must subscribe to.

How to Budget for Your Tenancy

When considering which property to rent, it is important to take into account not only how much rent you are paying, but all other associated costs that are part of privately renting:

- A **tenancy set up fee** to conduct a credit check, seek references from previous landlords and employers, set up the tenancy agreement and protect your deposit
- Your **first month's rent** must be paid in advance
- Your **deposit** (usually one and a half times the monthly rental amount), which will be held in a Government Approved Scheme for the duration of the Tenancy. If you have pets this will usually be increased to two times the monthly rent amount.

Once you have moved in, you will have ongoing costs:

- Your monthly rental payments
- Your council tax payments
- Your utilities including gas, electricity and water
- Phone bills, broadband, TV licence and other utilities

Make sure you take all of these costs into account when you're thinking of renting a property. For full information on our fees throughout your Tenancy please download our Tenancy Fees sheet.

During the term of the rental, the Landlord will ultimately be responsible for maintenance and repairs, but the Tenant will be responsible for keeping the property in good condition and carrying out the smaller day to day repairs.

Assured Shorthold Tenancies

- Application Process

Once you have found a property that you like, you will need to make a formal offer in writing. This will need to include:

- The proposed start date
- The proposed monthly rental amount
- The proposed contract length (can be anywhere between 6 months and 7 years, but is usually 12 months)
- Any other information that is relevant regarding yourself and other applicants

The Agent or Landlord will then come back to you to let you know if the offer has been accepted and to confirm the terms of the Tenancy. You will then need to sign to confirm that you are happy for the necessary references and checks to be completed.

When this has been completed, we will send over the Tenancy Agreement. You must read the tenancy agreement carefully to understand your rights and responsibilities. If you have any concerns about the agreement, you must seek advice before you sign.

Check In and Inventory - Contacting the Agent

Either your Agent or Landlord should have organised a Check in Inventory. You will usually receive this on check in or shortly after. When you receive this, you must go through it very carefully and take photos of anything that is not already highlighted in the document.

This will make things easier if there is a dispute about the deposit at the end of the tenancy. Once you are happy with the inventory, sign it and keep a copy. Remember to take meter readings when you move in to ensure you don't pay for the previous tenant's bills.

At check in you should make sure you have all the necessary manuals for the appliances and have the contact details for the landlord or agent. Keep their details handy should you need them in the future.

Tenant Responsibilities

Your Responsibilities As a Tenant

1. The rent must be paid in full and on time. If you do not ensure this is done, you will be in breach of the tenancy agreement and at risk of losing your home.
2. The property must be well looked after. The tenant should maintain the property to a good condition, keep it clean and take care of furniture and appliances. Don't attempt any repairs or decorating without first contacting your Landlord or Agent to seek permission and guidance.
3. The tenant must notify the Landlord/Agent of any maintenance issues in good time. The tenant may be liable if they do not report maintenance that then causes further damage to the property.
4. In an emergency situation (out of office hours) for instance a pipe has burst, or the boiler has stopped working follow our emergency guide in order to get help.
5. Get familiar with how the boiler and appliances work. Find out where the stop cock, fuse box and any meters are located. It is much better to identify these things early on rather than waiting for an emergency when you may really need them!

Renewing Your Tenancy

If you wish to extend your tenancy after the initial fixed period, you should think about the following:

- What term you would like agree to
- If you would like a fixed term or periodic contract

The above will be subject to your Landlord's approval. Your Landlord may also wish to increase your rent, which can be done by agreement, as set out in your tenancy agreement or by following a procedure set out in law.

Should both parties wish to renew the tenancy, and terms be agreed, we will send out the necessary paperwork for the renewal.

Ending Your Tenancy

If you or the landlord want to end the tenancy:

- We require that tenants give at least two months notice if they are ending the tenancy or looking to renew.
- Landlords are legally required to give tenants proper notice if they wish to end the tenancy and gain back possession of the property.
- Normally, the Landlord must allow any fixed period of the tenancy to have expired, and they must have given at least two months' notice.
- For full information on Ending a Tenancy and how to prepare for this, please download our End of Tenancy Guide.