



# Guide for **Tenants**

## How do I find a property?

Although our website features properties to let, you should register your requirements with one of our offices and keep in touch with them by phone. Give us your details, a good description of what you are looking for, when and how long you will need it for. You can also download the Featherstone Leigh app, receive email updates and text messages. We will take you to see properties that might be suitable and hopefully find you the right thing.

If we are unable to find you a suitable property, you may wish to register with other Agents. If so, we would advise you to make sure that any other Agent you use is, like Featherstone Leigh, a member of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA).

## What happens next?

Properties can be let very quickly so you may not have much time before the Landlord lets it to someone else. You need to give us your "offer" which should include all information about the people who will be living there, any special requirements you have and how long you want to rent the property for. We tell the property owner about your "offer" who will give us their instructions about what they want to do.

## My offer has been accepted what do I need to do?

Your offer will have been accepted subject to references, right to rent and contract. You will be asked to make a commitment payment which would be returned to you in the unlikely event that the Landlord changes their mind. You will be also asked to supply details for referencing which is usually done by a specialist company. It is a good idea to let your referees know that they are going to receive a request and should reply quickly.

## Tenancy Agreement

We usually prepare a draft Agreement which is sent, by email, to you and your Landlord for consideration. You need to read the final document very carefully before signing it to make sure that it contains what you are expecting and you understand all your obligations.

## How much deposit will I need to pay?

You will usually be asked for a deposit equivalent to five weeks' rent, rising to six weeks' rent when the annual rent is in excess of £50,000 per annum. This is held by the Landlord or by us as stakeholder. You need to pay this, together with the first rent instalment in cleared funds before you can move in.

Most of the tenancies we arrange are Assured Shorthold Tenancies and the deposits are registered with the Tenancy Deposit Scheme ([www.tenancydepositscheme.com](http://www.tenancydepositscheme.com)). You know that your deposit is protected and that any problems at the end of the tenancy can be resolved by an independent arbitrator.

## How long can I rent a property for?

Most tenancies are initially for twelve months but any term can be agreed. There are set procedures and timescales for ending tenancies which need to be followed by you and your Landlord.

## How do I pay my rent?

It is your responsibility to ensure that the rent is paid (which means received by us) by the due date on the Tenancy Agreement. We ask Tenants to set up a standing order to ensure this is done. If we have not received rent on the due date, we automatically advise your Landlord. Non-payment of rent (other than due to banker's error) will be recorded and may affect future references. We do not take payment by direct debit or credit card.

## What bills will I be responsible for paying?

Under a normal tenancy agreement, it is likely the tenant will be responsible for paying all utility bills applicable for the whole period of their occupancy including council tax. Any service charge or block charge would usually be the responsibility of the landlord.

## What about insurance?

You should take out an insurance policy against accidental damage to the property or the landlord's contents as you will be responsible for any damage caused. You may also like to insure your own contents as these will not be covered under any insurance policy the landlord may have.

## There is a problem at the property, what do I do?

It depends on the sort of problem. Your Landlord is responsible for most major repairs (unless caused by you) and you should contact them or the Property Manager, who may be us. If it is something that is part and parcel of running a home (tap washers, light bulbs, creaking doors, blocked gutters/drains), you are expected to look after the property as a householder would.

Your Landlord, or us, will need to take care of those things that you are not responsible for. Those visits are usually during normal working hours and things will be repaired more quickly if you can be helpful about access.

## What if it is an emergency?

If you cannot contact your Landlord or us (if we are managing the property) and you feel something needs immediate attention, you should try to do whatever is necessary to make sure the occupants and the property are safe and to minimise any damage. Your Landlord would have to reimburse you for any expenses that they are responsible for.

## What happens when I leave?

Before arranging to leave you need to make sure that you can end the tenancy under the terms in your Agreement and if necessary, give notice. During the last weeks of your tenancy you will be asked to allow us to show future prospective tenants. We aim to let it as quickly as possible and cause minimum disruption to you.

## And when I move out?

At the end of the Tenancy you will need to make sure the property and any contents are as you moved in. If anything needs repairing, replacing or cleaning, this will probably result in a delay in returning your deposit.

Your landlord will probably have paid for an expert independent inventory to be prepared and for you to be "checked in" at the start of the Tenancy and may make arrangements for a "check out" at the end of the Tenancy.

## When do I get my deposit back?

As soon as we hear from your Landlord that there are no problems or costs that need to be deducted. As stakeholders, we are not able to release your deposit to you or your Landlord without agreement. As soon as we get the "all clear", we send the money to you usually by BACS but we can send a cheque if you prefer. Featherstone Leigh is a member of a registered deposit protection scheme and full details will be given to you before you move in.



## Potential Tenant fees and costs for Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs)

### During or at the end of a tenancy

	Costs	
• Changes to the Tenancy (eg. to add additional tenant to existing tenancy)	£50.00	Or reasonable costs incurred by landlord
• Early termination of the Tenancy		Reasonable costs incurred by landlord
• Default fees for late payment of rent		3% above Bank of England base rate
• Replacement of lost keys /access or security devices		Reasonable costs incurred by landlord
• Payment of monies owing in respect of utilities, Communication services, TV licence & Council Tax		Amount of monies owed

### Redress scheme

Featherstone Leigh are a member of: The Property Ombudsman.

### Deposit protection scheme

Featherstone Leigh are a member of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

### Client money protection scheme

Featherstone Leigh are a member of: Propertymark Client Money Protection Scheme.

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## Tenant fees for Non Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs)

A security deposit will be taken, normally equivalent to six weeks' rent but could increase if you have a pet.

### Prior to Move In

All tenancies will need initial monies paid prior to check in; usually consisting of the security deposit and first month's rent. Additional fees and charges are as follows:

VAT is charged @ 20%

	Inc. VAT	(Net charge + VAT)
• Holding deposit (usually equal to to one week's rent and deducted from moving-in monies)	Variant depending on rental figure	
• Referencing fees (per person)	£60	(£50 + VAT)
• To prepare documents for a new tenancy	£395	(£329.17 + VAT)

### During the tenancy

	Inc. VAT	(Net charge + VAT)
• To add additional tenant to existing tenancy	£390	(£325 + VAT)
• Administration for change of sharer to existing tenancy	£390	(£325 + VAT)
• Additional referencing fee (per person)	£60	(£50 + VAT)
• Rent demand letter (if applicable)	£60	(£50 + VAT)
• To prepare extension documents for an existing tenancy	£195	(£162.50 + VAT)
• Outgoing referencing (if applicable)	£25	(£20.84 + VAT)

### At the end of the tenancy

Tenants are expected to pay for the check out fees and for professional cleaning at the end of a tenancy. Quotes are available from independent clerks and contractors only as Featherstone Leigh are not directly affiliated with these services.





[featherstoneleigh.co.uk](http://featherstoneleigh.co.uk)