

Tenants Guide

Benham and Reeves provides a professional lettings service to tenants. If you are looking to rent a property in London, our lettings team will ensure everything goes smoothly, from helping you find the perfect property to moving into your new home. And of course, you'll be reassured to know that you're in safe hands as we are an ARLA Propertymark (Association of Residential Letting Agents) registered lettings agency.

1 FINDING THE RIGHT PROPERTY

We can show you the best rental properties across London's prime residential areas, many of which are available exclusively through us. You can register with us by calling at one of our ten lettings offices or alternatively, go to www.benhams.com to register for email alerts of new properties as soon as they become available.

2 TENANCY

Period of tenancy: the rental contract is usually between one and three years.

Types of tenancy: the Tenancy Agreement covers all the terms negotiated and agreed through Benham and Reeves Residential Lettings on behalf of you and the landlord. This also includes the statutory obligations of each party. Once drawn up, the contract is then signed by each party and exchanged.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST): most tenancies are ASTs, where the rent is less than £100,000 a year and the tenant is not a company.

Contractual Tenancy: if the rent is over £100,000 a year or if the tenant is a company, a contractual tenancy will be used.

3 IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED UNDER UK MONEY LAUNDERING LEGISLATION

Under the Government's Right to Rent Legislation, we have a legal duty to identify every applicant and check they have a valid Visa enabling them to live in the UK. Every tenant and every occupier over 18 years of age must physically bring their original Passport and Visa into our office so we can take a copy. We cannot accept certified copies and we are legally-obliged to see the original documents. It is therefore vital you provide these documents as soon as possible as we are unable to produce a tenancy agreement until we have seen the originals.

4 REFERENCES

We will obtain suitable references for all tenants, such as credit, employer and bank references. We may use a professional referencing agency to carry this out.

5 HOLDING DEPOSIT

If you plan to rent one of our properties, we will ask you to pay a holding deposit. If the tenancy goes ahead, that money will be put towards the initial payment. If you subsequently withdraw, fail to move in on the agreed date or if your credit references fail, your holding deposit will be forfeited. If the landlord pulls out for any other reason than those stated above, we will return your holding deposit to you.

The purpose of the holding deposit is to:

- show you are willing to move into the property on an agreed date; and
- enable us to proceed with references; and
- enable us to take the property off our availability list.

6 MAKING PAYMENTS - MADE EASY

Payments for items can easily be made on-line at <http://www.benhams.com/oneoffpayments/>

Here you can select from a drop down menu payment for the following options: Holding Deposit, Rent, Commission, Fees, Management Funds or Other.

7 RENT

Rent is usually payable monthly or quarterly, in advance. After the first payment, you MUST make all future payments by Standing Order. You will need to set-up a Standing Order with your Bank before moving in. Generally, the money will leave your Bank account three days before the rental due date so that it reaches the landlord's account on the due date.

8 CHARGES

These cover the cost of preparing a Tenancy Agreement, obtaining references and a fee for the Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

- Tenancy Agreement: £225 inc. VAT
- Referencing per tenant: £84 inc. VAT
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme fee: £30 inc. VAT
- Where there is a Guarantor we charge £120 inc. VAT per Guarantor for credit referencing and preparing a Deed of Guarantee.

9 DEPOSIT

Before you can move into the property, you must provide a deposit usually equivalent to at least six weeks' rental subject to the terms of your tenancy agreement. This is held until the end of the tenancy against dilapidations. It cannot be offset against the last month's rent. The deposit is held in a designated client's deposit account and will be returned to you at the end of the tenancy once the inventory check-out report has been completed.

For your complete peace of mind, and in line with current legislation, we register all deposits with a deposit protection scheme within 14 days.

When the check-out has been completed, the property completely cleaned and we have received instructions from the landlord, we will arrange for the money to be credited to your bank account, minus any agreed deductions. This usually takes around 10 working days.

10 MOVE-IN AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

A full inventory must be prepared just before you move into your new home, recording the condition of the property together with the contents. A copy is supplied to both you and the landlord to check and then sign.

When you receive the inventory, it is important to check the document fully. This prevents disputes at the end of the tenancy. The landlord pays for both the inventory and the check-in procedure.

On the first day of the tenancy, an independent inventory clerk will check you into the property and hand over the keys

At the end of the tenancy, a check-out report is prepared and the tenant must pay for this. The cost of the check-out depends on the size of the property and the number of bedrooms.

11 KEYS

You will be handed two sets of keys at the start of the tenancy. If we are managing the property, we will hold one set in our secure key system in case of emergencies.

12 UTILITIES

The tenant is responsible for paying all utility charges and telephone bills. You must transfer all gas, electricity, water and telephone accounts into your name at the start of the tenancy and provide meter readings to the relevant companies.

At the end of the tenancy, you must inform the relevant companies that you are leaving and provide meter readings.

13 COUNCIL TAX

Council tax is not included in your rent - please contact the Local Authority at the start of the tenancy to inform them that you will be living in the property. We can supply you with a list of council tax charges for various London boroughs. If you are the sole occupier, you are entitled to a discount.

14 TELEPHONE

If you would like to discuss arranging a telephone connection with BT, dial 150 to speak to British Telecom Customer Services (from the UK). If you are calling from overseas, dial your own international operator who will connect you to the UK's international operator on 153. Ask for British Telecom Customer Services.

15 TV LICENCE

You are responsible for paying the TV licence regardless of who owns the TV set.

16 INSURANCE

The Landlord is responsible for insuring the property (i.e. the building) and any of the Landlord's belongings but it is essential that you insure your own personal contents against risks such as fire, theft, flooding, storm damage and escape of water.

17 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

If you rent a property that is also managed by us, you can rest assured that we have reliable contractors on hand 24/7. If there is an emergency out of office hours, you will be provided with our 24/7 out of hours number. If however you cannot find it, you can always call our main Management Department number where emergency contact information is provided on a recorded message.

Our Management department is open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

18 TENANT'S CHECKLIST

When you start a new tenancy, don't forget the following:

- Initial rental payment (NB - one calendar month is calculated as the rent per week x 52, divided by 12 months)
- Deposit (usually 6 weeks' rent)
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme fee of £30 inc. VAT
- Tenancy Agreement and credit check fees
- Monies must be paid in cleared funds i.e. preferably by direct bank transfer
- Set-up a signed standing order with your Bank for further rent
- Passport/driving licence
- Proof of address (required under UK money laundering legislation).

If you follow our guide, you can rest assured that all you need to do now is sit back and enjoy your new home, confident that Benham and Reeves is on hand to provide advice and support throughout your tenancy.

And don't forget, for complete peace of mind, we are members of ARLA Propertymark (the Association of Residential Letting Agents), the Property Ombudsman and The Tenancy Deposit Scheme. So you can be certain of our complete professionalism at all times.

19 LETTINGS JARGON BUSTER

ARLA Propertymark

The Association of Residential Letting Agents, a Government recognised membership scheme ensuring high standards of code and conduct from Letting Agents.

AST (Assured Shorthold Tenancy)

This guarantees in writing that the landlord may take back the property at the end of the tenancy agreement. The majority of tenancies are ASTs as they apply if the applicant is an individual and where the rent is below £100,000 per annum

Break Clause

This gives the tenant - and sometimes the landlord as well - the right to terminate the tenancy during the fixed period of the tenancy.

Contents Insurance

Can be purchased separately when renting and covers damage to the contents of your home from fire and flood and also theft or other events causing loss or damage.

Extensions

After the fixed term of the rental contract has expired, the parties may want to renew their agreement, in order for the tenant to stay on and this is known as an extension.

High Rent Tenancy

Rents over £100,000 per annum fit into this category.

Notice Period

The length of time that the Landlord and tenant must give one another before ending their rental contract.

TDS - the Tenancy Deposit Scheme

This is the Government scheme which protects tenants deposits in ASTs.

Tenancy Agreement

This is the agreement between a Landlord and a Tenant under which he is entitled to occupy the Property

The Property Ombudsman (TPO)

The TPO ensures that sellers, buyers, landlords and tenants get the highest level of customer care. It is a free, fair and independent mediation service.

Utilities

Electricity, gas and water are all referred to as utility services and are, under most circumstances, to be paid for by the tenant.

Benham & Reeves

London

Canary Wharf
City
Colindale
Ealing
Fulham

Greenwich

Hammersmith
Hampstead
Highgate
Hyde Park
Kensington

Kew

Knightsbridge
Nine Elms
Surrey Quays
Wapping
West End

International

China
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