

Bluestone



TENANTS GUIDE

Tenants Guide

Whether you're looking for your first independent home or simply looking for a short term let whilst finding something suitable to buy, you can be confident of receiving friendly and professional advice from Bluestone. In an ever changing and fast paced market, you can relax, knowing that we will work effectively with you to ensure that you find the property that suits your needs.

We understand that you may have numerous questions regarding the entire process. This guide has been designed to answer all of those questions.

Finding the right property

When you're looking for the right property you might want to consider the following factors:

- Location - Is the property located within close proximity of the transport links and local amenities that you need?
- Furnished or Unfurnished - If you already have furnishings, it would be wise to look for an unfurnished property - some landlords are unable to store the furniture that is advertised with a property. A part furnished property normally constitutes white goods and kitchen appliances only.
- Rent - is the rental price affordable? As a tenant you will normally be responsible for all bills such as gas, water, electric and council tax, so you'll need to take this into account when budgeting.
- Specific Requirements - some landlords may not consider tenants with for example, pets. Always be sure to check your suitability for a property prior to viewing to avoid disappointment.

Why not come into the office to register your details with us and see what we currently have available? Or go online and search our website, Rightmove or OnTheMarket.



Viewing a property

Once you have found a property that you're interested in, it's prudent to view as soon as you can and act quickly. In this busy market, certain types of properties and locations are in high demand and so can be let within a day or two of being advertised. Prepare for the viewing and compile a list of potential questions to ask in advance so that you can proceed if you like the property.

Here are some tips:

- If it's of importance to you, check that you can get TV reception, or if the property has cable or a satellite dish. If you can't receive terrestrial television through an aerial, then cable or satellite TV may be your only option.
- Take someone with you, or all of the people who plan to move in, if possible.
- Check that the speed and availability of broadband in the area is adequate for you.
- Are there enough electrical sockets for your needs?

Referencing

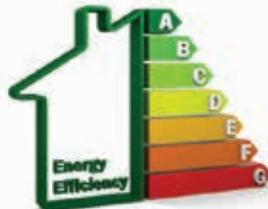
Once you've decided to apply for a property with us, we'll put your offer to the landlord. Should it be accepted, you will need to complete our referencing process prior to moving in. At this point, you will need to pay our application fee and provide us with the following:

- Photographic identification for each applicant (e.g. Driving Licence, Passport)
- 3 months' payslips
- Your employment details - we will acquire an employment reference
- If self-employed, have accounts/accountant details ready
- Your landlord details - we will obtain a landlord reference
- Your UK bank account details - we will do a credit check on all adult applicants

It's in your interest to tell referees that we'll be in touch; ask them to reply as quickly as possible so that there's no delay in granting your tenancy. Until these have been returned, we won't be able to proceed with the tenancy. It's very important to declare any personal or financial information, such as bankruptcy, prior to submitting reference forms as this may affect your suitability. If you fail to do so, you may be unable to move into the property and your application fee won't be returned.

Preparing to move

We will always provide you with a valid Gas Safety Certificate (if there is gas at the property) and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) prior to you moving in. Before you move, you'll need to pay one month's rent in advance, which will act as the deposit. In some circumstances you'll be asked to pay a higher deposit, for example if you have pets.



Tenancy agreement

Once referencing is complete, the Tenancy Agreement will be drawn up; this will usually be an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. The agreement will need to be signed by all parties prior to commencing of the Tenancy.



When you receive a copy of the Tenancy Agreement, we strongly advise that you read it carefully and check any terms or points that you do not understand with a solicitor. The Tenancy Agreement is a binding contract between you and the landlord. It contains the rights and responsibilities of each party during the Tenancy. There are obligations that you and your landlord have, which may not be set down in the agreement, but that are still required by law and implied in all Tenancy Agreements. These terms form part of the contract, even though they have not been specifically agreed between your landlord and you.

Some of the most common implied terms are:

- Your landlord must carry out basic repairs, for example maintaining the installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation, space heating and water heating, in good working order
- You have the right to live peacefully in the accommodation without excessive intrusion from your landlord
- You have an obligation to use your home in a 'tenant-like' way, for example by not causing damage and by using any fixtures and fittings properly
- You have an obligation to provide access for any repair work that needs to be done.

Joint Tenancies

If you enter into a Tenancy Agreement jointly with another person, you will both be bound by the terms of the agreement. Your responsibility for meeting all the expectations of the Tenancy Agreement will continue until the Agreement is brought to an end by either the Landlord giving notice or by you serving notice.



Guarantor

Dependent on your circumstances, you may be asked to supply a guarantor. If a guarantor is required, they will need to supply us with references, and will only be accepted if deemed suitable. The guarantor will be jointly or severally liable with the Tenant(s), which means that the guarantor may have to pay the full costs of any breach of the Tenancy Agreement including all rent arrears. A draft copy of the standard tenancy agreement will be provided to the guarantor.



Insurance

Whilst your landlord is responsible for insuring the building that you are renting, you are liable for insuring your belongings against theft or damage, as your belongings will not be covered by the landlord's insurance policy. We can offer you a personalised tenant's insurance quote; please speak to any member of staff to make sure you're covered. It's important that your landlord's furnishings are protected by the policy, in case of any mishaps during your tenancy.



Rent Payments

You're rent will be due on a set day of each month, so please set up a standing order to ensure that it reaches us on time. It's your responsibility to check that payments have been set up correctly, as the bank will not discuss your account with a third party. If you're rent reaches us late repeatedly, charges could be applied to your account.



Deposit

All Landlords and agents are required by law to register and protect your deposit within a government-approved scheme, as stated in your Tenancy Agreement. Your Tenancy Agreement sets out exactly how the money will be dealt with at the end of the Tenancy and what you can expect to happen. The fact that a deposit has been paid does not mean that a tenant can afford to ignore any other promise contained in the Tenancy Agreement.

The money paid as the deposit does not represent the extent of your liability to the Landlord for any breach of the agreement. At the end of the Tenancy we'll pay the deposit back to the lead tenant in a joint Tenancy. You must arrange for that sum to be divided accordingly between joint tenants. If there's a dispute at the end of a Tenancy regarding any deductions, the dispute will be resolved by the scheme protecting the deposit; this scheme will be used to adjudicate and decide how the deposit should be returned.

Keys

One set of keys will be provided when you move in to a property. Always gain consent with us or the Landlord before having additional keys cut. You'll need to hand over every set of keys when you move out. If you don't return the keys you may be charged for replacing the locks.



Inventory

An Inventory or Schedule of Condition will be prepared prior to the start of the Tenancy. This will describe the condition of the inside and outside of the property, its contents, and the contents of the garden and any other outbuildings if applicable. You'll receive a copy when you move in and will be asked to check and sign this.

Utilities

If your property is managed by us, we will inform utility providers that you have moved in and provide them with meter readings. You're responsible for the payment of all utilities and council tax for the duration of the Tenancy.

Maintenance and repairs

It's your responsibility to promptly report any repairs or maintenance to us if we manage the property. If it's not managed, we will provide you with your Landlords details so that you can contact them directly.

Apart from in a gas emergency, never instruct a contractor to carry out works to the property. If you do so without prior approval from the Landlord or us, you may be liable to pay the contractor's invoice.



If there are maintenance contracts or guarantees for any of the appliances or installations at the property, we'll leave copies for you.

Inspections

We carry out periodic inspections of managed properties on a regular basis in order to assess the condition of the property and ascertain whether any maintenance or repairs are necessary. We will also look to ensure that you are conducting the tenancy in a tenant like manner. We will always aim to give you seven days written notice of the date and time of the visit. Whilst it is preferred, you don't need to attend as our management team can access the property using management keys if you're happy for us to do so.

When a Landlord manages the property themselves, they will make arrangements directly with you. A Landlord should never access your property without prior consent.

Your main responsibilities include:

- Paying the rent in full and on time
- Maintaining and looking after the property
- Ensuring tenants and visitors behave responsibly

Don't leave the property empty or unoccupied for longer than 2 weeks without notifying us or your landlord first.

Renewing your tenancy

When the end of your Tenancy is approaching, we will ask you and your Landlord if you want to continue with the Tenancy for a further fixed term. You'll be informed in writing of the new terms (if any) and any fees that are due. If your landlord doesn't want to continue with the tenancy, we'll serve you with a two month written notice (Section 21) to terminate the Tenancy.

If you don't comply with the notice, possession proceedings will be taken against you and you'll be liable for all legal costs incurred. You can't give notice to end your Tenancy during the fixed term unless there is a break clause included in the Tenancy Agreement. Your obligations remain until the Tenancy ends or the property is re-let, even if you choose to leave early. If the Tenancy becomes periodic, you'll need to give us one month's notice in writing, according to the date of the Tenancy.

End of the Tenancy

It's essential that the property and its contents are handed back in the same condition that they were in at the beginning of the Tenancy, while allowing for normal wear and tear. Furniture needs to be in the same rooms that they were initially provided in. By the last day of your Tenancy, ensure that you've removed all your belongings and that the property is clean. Don't forget about cleaning kitchen appliances and remember to tend to the garden (if applicable), with the borders weeded and grass cut.

You won't be able go back to the property after the end of the Tenancy so it's a good idea to plan well in advance. If the property is not left clean, or if the garden is untidy, you may be charged for carrying out work to return the property to its original condition; this money will be deducted from your deposit.

Tips for ensuring that you receive your deposit in its entirety:

- All kitchen utensils, equipment and appliances should be cleaned, including the oven; the fridge and freezer should be defrosted, and food removed from all the cupboards; all hard surfaces should be washed down and cleaned, including the kitchen floor.
- All bathroom/WC furniture and fittings should be thoroughly cleaned with an appropriate bathroom cleaner/disinfectant, paying particular attention to any stains or marks.
- All the woodwork, skirting boards etc. should be washed down.
- All items of furniture should be dusted, cleaned and left in the appropriate rooms.
- All electrical goods and appliances, including light bulbs and any garden equipment should be in original working order.
- Gardens and patio should be free of weeds with the lawns cut. The garden must be in the same condition that it was handed to you at the start of the tenancy.
- No rubbish should be left on the premises and bins should be left as they were originally found.
- Internal keys for cupboards, windows and so on, should be left in their locks and all sets of keys given to us. Check your inventory to see what keys were handed to you at the start of the tenancy.



Final Bills

You should contact the appropriate offices for telephone, water rates, and council tax and arrange for final bills. For gas and electricity, it's generally easier to inform them of the final meter reading after the checkout process. If the property is managed by us we'll record these readings during the checkout and send letters on your behalf. We'll also supply them with your forwarding address.

Mail Forwarding

You should make arrangements with Royal Mail for mail to be forwarded (please supply us with proof that this has been completed before your security deposit is released).

Testimonials

"Thanks for everything, you are very professional, and I can't believe that renting the property through yourselves has gone so smoothly and I have such lovely tenants!" - **SUSAN PEAT, LANDLORD**

"Thank you for the fantastic service you gave us right from the beginning to completion in selling our home on Oaklands Road. We've sold a number of properties in the past and I can say that you've managed to combine a professional service with a personal touch. The pictures, video tour and the attention to detail you paid to us was outstanding. I was especially impressed that you sold our home within a week of our instruction and also very impressed by your online case tracking which kept us up to date through to completion. Keep up the good work! I shall definitely be recommending you to my friends and family." - **CAROL CHAPMAN, VENDOR**

"Having worked with numerous local lettings agents and been continually disappointed, working with Bluestone has been a breath of fresh air. Bluestone manage to combine a professional service with a personal touch, using initiative and a prompt and pro-active approach in all aspects of the service they provide. Bluestone allow me the peace of mind that my investments are being protected and my properties run both efficiently and professionally." - **MARK MCCROSSANT, LANDLORD**

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Thank you for taking the time to read our Tenant Guide.
Please call us on **01633 841805** to discuss any
queries that you might have.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Newport Council and Council Tax: 01633 656656

TV Licence: 0844 800 6790 www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Police Non Emergency General Enquiry: 101

TRANSCO (Gas Emergencies): 0800 111 999

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