

# the tenant guide

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This document gives you important information about your tenancy, and helps answer any questions you may have. If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## About your tenancy

**Properties are typically let for six months at a time using an Assured Shorthold tenancy (longer and shorter terms and different types of tenancies may be available). As long as you are not in breach of the terms of your tenancy, you cannot be evicted until the end of your fixed term.**

For longer tenancies, we may want to use a break clause. This allows either party to bring the tenancy to an end earlier than the last date of the fixed term. You should take great care reading your tenancy agreement and any other documents you are given at the start of or throughout your tenancy as these form part of a legally binding contract. This means that you must behave in the way they describe. We normally ask that everyone over the age of 18 who will be using the property as their main home must be named on the tenancy agreement, although there may be exceptions.

If you are asked to provide a guarantor, that person will be asked to sign a separate agreement before your tenancy starts.

Both you and your guarantor, if applicable, need to make sure that you keep your agreement and any other documents in a safe place as you may need to refer to these during your tenancy or need them as evidence if applying for parking permits etc.

Most of the time, the landlord will be happy for your tenancy to be renewed after the initial term. You may need to pay a renewal fee, which will be stated on the fee guide provided to you at the beginning of the tenancy.

If you are in breach of your tenancy or when the tenancy comes to an end, we can take possession of the property. We are required by law to serve you notice of our intention to do this and to follow the eviction procedure as detailed in the Housing Act 1988.

Sometimes you or the landlord may want a bit more flexibility than a fixed term tenancy offers; in these cases, if agreed between the parties, the tenancy can roll on as a periodic tenancy. This means that you can serve the landlord one months' notice any time after the end of the fixed term. Please refer to your tenancy agreement for details. The landlord can also serve you notice anytime, however, this would have to be two months' notice.

# your security deposit

**When you move in, we will ask you to pay a deposit. In England and Wales, Deposit Protection was introduced in April 2007 (as part of the Housing Act 2004). This means that when you pay the deposit in full, we have to protect it within 30 days.**



There are a number of providers available and we can use any one of these, however, we must give you the details of the provider we are using and information about what will happen to the deposit at the end of your tenancy. This is referred to as 'Prescribed Information'.

## End of tenancy

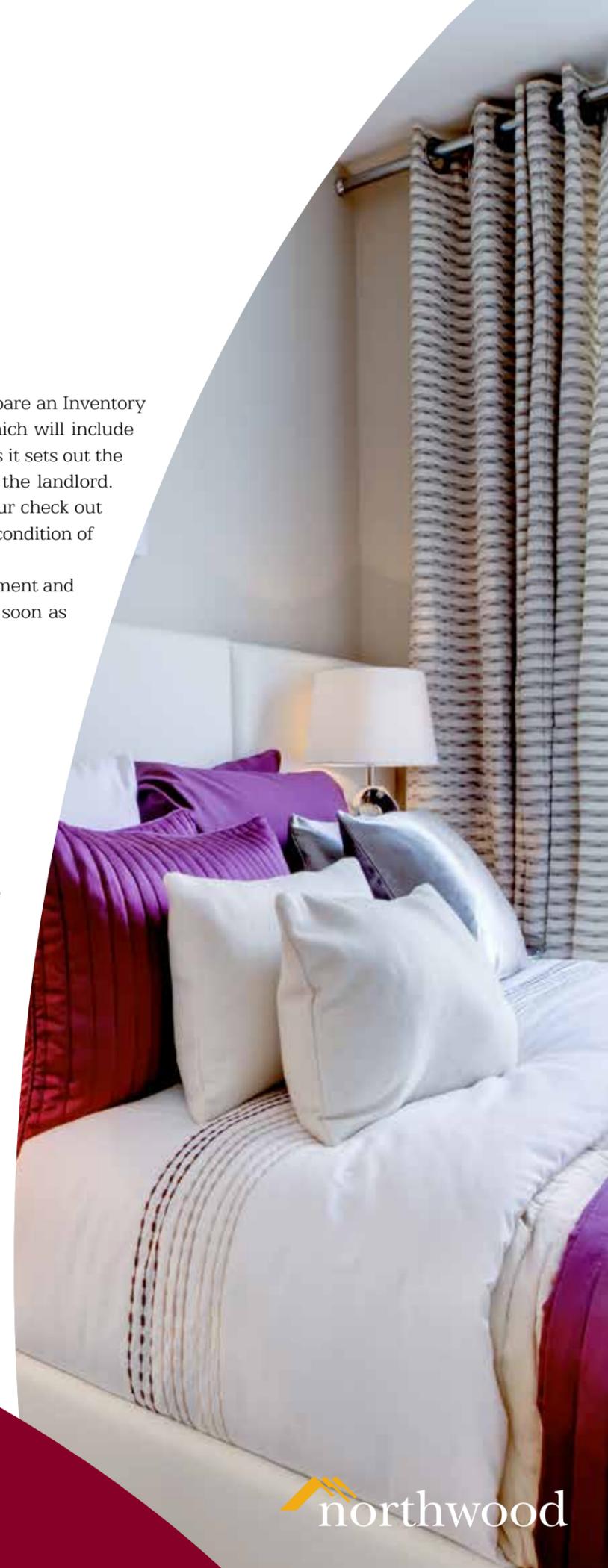
If you and the landlord cannot agree on any deductions from the deposit, the case can be referred to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Service (ADR). This is an independent service that acts as a free alternative to going to court. An adjudicator will consider the evidence and make a decision on who the deposit should be returned to.

# the inventory

Before you move in to the property, we will prepare an Inventory and Schedule of Condition. This document, which will include photographs of the property, is very important as it sets out the condition of the property and anything left by the landlord. We will use this document when completing your check out appointment to ensure a fair assessment of the condition of the property is done. You need to make sure that you review the document and make us aware of any amendments needed as soon as possible after you have moved in.

# insurance

Your landlord is responsible for insuring the building and his possessions; however, none of your possessions will be covered by this policy. We recommend that you take out contents insurance. You can also insure against accidental damage to the landlord's possessions. We can pass your details on so that you can be contacted for a quotation; just let us know if you want us to do so. Alternatively, you can get an instant quote on our website  
[northwooduk.com/pages/tenant-insurance](http://northwooduk.com/pages/tenant-insurance)



# during the tenancy

## Paying your rent

As a tenant you have a number of responsibilities to your landlord; one of these is to pay your rent in full and on time. Please be aware that late payment of rent can lead to additional charges (refer to the fee guide) and eventually to you being evicted from the property.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your Standing Order leaves your account; we are not able to speak to your bank on your behalf.

## Utilities and Council Tax

At the beginning of your tenancy, we will contact the different companies that supply your property and give them your details. It is your responsibility to ensure that all bills are paid when due.

If you decide to change any of your utility suppliers we ask that you inform us of this so that we can update our records.

## Media Services

All media services are your responsibility, although in some properties you may find that provisions are already there. Please make sure you ask permission from your landlord before installing a satellite dish or any wiring.

## Cleaning

The property should be clean when you move in; most properties are professionally cleaned between tenancies. If you have any concerns about the cleanliness of the property at the beginning of the tenancy, you should let us know as soon as possible, but remember that it is your responsibility to keep the property, any carpets, curtains, appliances and furniture clean throughout the tenancy. If you choose to have the property or carpets professionally cleaned whilst living there, you will have to pay for it.

## Ventilation

It is important that you keep the property well ventilated during the tenancy to avoid the build-up of condensation and mould. Make sure that extraction fans and ventilation systems are used and windows opened regularly.

## Hanging pictures

Please make sure that you ask permission from the landlord before hanging pictures or fixing anything to the wall.

## Re-decorating

You must not redecorate or make changes to any part of the property without the landlord's consent. If you need to touch up any of the paint work, please make sure you use the right colour and type of paint.

## Heating the property

During the winter and any cold spells, it is essential that you continue to run the heating to prevent burst pipes, even when you are not at home. The temperature of the property should not drop below 6°C.

## Smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide alarms

If your landlord has not provided these, we recommend that you have at least one installed per floor.

All alarms must be tested regularly and batteries changed as required. You must also make sure that they are kept free from dust and other obstructions.

## Instruction manuals

All the instruction manuals you need should be left within the property and you should refer to these to make sure that you are using appliances and equipment correctly. If instruction manuals are missing, they can usually be found online. If you experience any problems, please let us know.

## Legionnaires' disease

Legionella is a bacterium that can live in water systems and cause potential health problems. The easiest way to prevent the spreading of legionella is to flush through the water system by running all taps and showers for a few minutes when the property has been vacant for any periods of time during the tenancy.



# maintenance

**You are required to act in a 'tenant-like manner'. This means that you are responsible for looking after the property and any contents left by the landlord and to deal with minor maintenance issues and odd jobs such as changing lightbulbs and batteries in smoke detectors etc., bleeding radiators, keeping seals etc. clean and free from mould, tightening loose screws on door handles and so on.**

If you break something or use it in such a way that it breaks or breaks down, it will be your responsibility to repair or replace it. When you instruct a contractor to undertake the work, make sure they are suitably qualified and keep any receipts or certificates as we may ask to see these.

Any maintenance issues that are not your responsibility to deal with, such as routine maintenance to appliances, should be reported to Northwood or your landlord immediately. If you notice an issue and decide not to report it, you may be held liable for the cost of any damage caused.

The table below & opposite explains who is responsible for some of the more common maintenance issues, landlord or tenant.

### Pest Control

It can often be difficult to know who is responsible for paying for the eradication of pests, however, a good rule of thumb is that if an infestation is caused as a result of a defect to the property or was present before you moved in, the landlord will be responsible for the cost. You will always be responsible if the pest infestation is as a result of your lifestyle.

Maintenance Issue	Landlord	Tenant	Comments
Replacing taps	✓		
Replacing tap washers	✓		
Replacing light bulbs		✓	Including those in appliances and outside lighting
Replacing consumables		✓	Filters, batteries etc.
Tightening screws		✓	Curtain poles, door handles, kitchen cupboards etc.
Mowing lawn, weeding, clearing leaves and general gardening		✓	
Light pruning		✓	Do not cut down or undertake severe pruning of mature plants, shrubs etc. without the landlord's permission
Cleaning of patio/paving		✓	To avoid slip hazards
Removal of moss & leaves from gutters	✓		It is your responsibility to notify the landlord if the gutters need cleaning, clearing or repairing
Bleeding radiators		✓	

Maintenance Issue	Landlord	Tenant	Comments
Radiator leaks	✓		If caused by erosion or wear, however it is your responsibility if you have caused the damage*
Re-igniting pilot light/boiler (initial troubleshooting)		✓	As long as you have been provided with a manual/instructions, you should undertake initial troubleshooting before reporting it to the landlord
Boiler maintenance and servicing	✓		
Replacing fuses		✓	
Appliance repairs	✓		Unless the damage is caused by you*
Appliance upkeep		✓	Includes filter and general cleaning, checking pipes, adding chemicals as required etc.
House alarm servicing	✓		If the system is used by you, any security company charge should be paid by you
Electrical repairs/checks	✓		Unless the damage is caused by you*
Unblocking drains	✓	✓	Please refer to your tenancy agreement for full details
Replacing shower heads, clasps, hoses	✓		Unless the damage is caused by you*
Tightening clasp fittings, towel rails etc.		✓	
Cleaning and de-scaling of showers and showerheads		✓	
Shower plumbing/electrical repairs	✓		Unless the damage is caused by you*
Repairs to bath and shower seals	✓		
Preserving bath and shower seals		✓	
Damp – external	✓		Unless this is caused by you (e.g. poor installation of satellite cabling)*
Damp – internal	✓	✓	If the damp is a result of your lifestyle, it is your responsibility
Locks	✓	✓	Depending on the cause of the problem*
Chimneys	✓	✓	The landlord is responsible for having the chimneys swept prior to your tenancy; it is your responsibility to arrange this during and at the end of the tenancy*

\*Work to be undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor

**Please note** that if we or the landlord arrange for maintenance work to be undertaken and the fault is found to be caused by you, you will be responsible for the cost. Normally you do not need to be at home when maintenance work is being undertaken; we can liaise with the contractor for access.

# in an emergency

**Any emergencies should be reported immediately, either to us (during our office hours) or the relevant emergency department depending on the circumstances.**

This table explains the best action to take in some emergency situations.

Situation	Is this an emergency?	Who do I call?	Comments
No heating	Depends on time of year and circumstances	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	If the office is closed for an extended period (Christmas), contact an emergency provider
No hot water	No	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	If the office is closed for an extended period (Christmas), contact an emergency provider
No power supply	Yes, if total loss of power in the property which doesn't extend to neighbours	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The fuse board</li> <li>* Neighbouring properties</li> <li>* Your supplier to establish if there is a known fault</li> </ul>
Gas leak	Yes	National Grid	Emergency number: 0800 111 999
Carbon Monoxide alert	Yes	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	Turn off all appliances, open windows (ideally) and leave the premises
Fire	Yes	Fire department	Emergency number: 999
No water supply	Yes, if there is no running water at all	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	Check: Your supplier to establish if there is a known issue
Plumbing leaks	Yes, if it cannot be contained and is causing damage	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	Do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Turn the water off</li> <li>* Take extra care if leak is through or near any electrical fittings</li> <li>* Alert neighbours if water is leaking from their properties</li> </ul>

Situation	Is this an emergency?	Who do I call?	Comments
Roof leaks	Yes, if the leak is causing major damage or is affecting an electrical fitting	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	
Roof damage	Yes, if hazardous to people or property	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	
Gutters/downpipes	No, unless water is entering the building causing major damage or if hazardous to people or property	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	
Blocked sink, basin, bath etc.	No		Normally tenant responsibility unless it can be proven that blockage was not caused by you
Blocked toilet	Yes, if there is only one toilet in the property		Normally tenant responsibility unless it can be proven that blockage was not caused by you
Drains	Yes, if damage is being caused	Landlord Northwood Emergency contractor	
Locks/doors	Yes, if you are unable to secure the property or have lost your keys	Police if a crime has been committed	Normally tenant responsibility unless it can be proven that damage/issue was not caused by you
Broken windows	Yes, if you are unable to secure the property	Police if a crime has been committed	Normally tenant responsibility unless it can be proven that damage/issue was not caused by you

You must ensure that any contractor you instruct is suitably qualified to undertake the work needed.

**Please note** that if an emergency call out is arranged and the contractor finds the issue not to be an emergency and could have been dealt with during our normal office hours, you will be responsible for the cost.



# changes during the tenancy

There may be times during the tenancy when your circumstances change; please contact us as soon as possible to inform us of these changes. Please note that you must not let someone else move into the property or get a pet without the landlord's permission.

## Keys

If you need more keys cut for the property, you must contact us first so that our records can be updated.

## Landlord Responsibilities

It is the landlord's responsibility to make sure that the property is safe and in a good condition. You should refer to your tenancy agreement for details of your landlord's responsibilities.

## Inspections

During your tenancy, inspections will be carried out periodically. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure the property is in good order and well looked after. A report detailing the outcome of the inspection will be kept on file and shared with the landlord.

We will always give you notice of the inspection so that you know when we are coming. You do not have to be present for the inspection, although you can be if you want to.

## Giving notice

We will write to you approximately two and a half months before the end of the tenancy to ask if you want to renew or inform you that the landlord wants his property back. If you receive a renewal letter from us and you don't want to renew, you should tell us as soon as possible. Please refer to your tenancy agreement and the section titled 'About your tenancy' in this guide for clarification on notice periods.

# moving out

When you are moving out of the property, we will arrange for a check-out appointment; this will allow us to do a final inspection of the property and make an assessment of any damage beyond fair wear and tear.

You need to make sure that all your belongings have been removed before the check-out appointment and that the property is in the same condition as it was when you moved in (allowing for fair wear and tear). It is also useful for you to make a note of the meter readings.

Remember; once this appointment has been completed and you hand over the keys to the property, you will not be allowed access to it again. It is therefore essential that you undertake any cleaning, gardening etc. before the appointment to avoid deductions from your deposit. It is your responsibility to leave the property in a clean condition; failure to do so will result in deductions from your deposit to pay for cleaning.

You do not need to be present for the check-out appointment, but it is often useful if you are.

Once you have moved out and returned the keys, make sure that you arrange for your mail to be redirected and cancel or transfer all media services.

## Cancelling rent payments

We are not able to stop your Standing Order from leaving your account, this is your responsibility. If we have to return a rent overpayment to you we may charge you, please refer to the Fee Guide for details.

## Returning your deposit

When you have moved out we will return your deposit less any agreed deductions. For details of what happens to your deposit and what to do if you do not agree with the proposed deductions, please refer to the section of this guide titled 'Your Security Deposit' and the Prescribed Information we gave you at the beginning of the tenancy.

**If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.**