

Guidance for prospective tenants

Introduction

Welcome to Syntax Services rental division, letting and managing residential properties in Newcastle. Properties we currently have available to rent are listed on our website www.syntaxservices.co.uk. Once you have selected a suitable property contact us on 0845 004 3343 to arrange a viewing appointment.

Getting Started

Having found a suitable property each person 18 or over will need to complete a Tenancy Application Form. This asks for full personal details including name, age, marital status, details of resident children, pets, details of adverse credit history, previous tenancies, employment history in the last 5 years, a character referee, bank details, and authorisation to carry out a detailed credit history search. A 'Holding deposit' of around £100 plus VAT will be required whilst references are checked. This will normally be deducted from the initial monies due at the start of any tenancy. Please note, however, that the holding deposit is non-refundable because it is used to pay for credit and other referencing.



References

Referencing simply seeks to establish in all respects whether a person is a suitable prospective tenant. References will be required from an employer, present or previous landlord/agent (if applicable), a character referee, and bank details for each adult applicant. A landlord/agent may require an applicant to provide a Guarantor who will also be referenced.

Rental Costs

Assuming all references are satisfactory and the landlord accepts the application a date will be set for signing the tenancy agreement, and a breakdown of the 'initial monies' payable in advance. These will include:

- One month's rent paid in advance
- Damage Deposit (Equal to one months rent.)
- Administration Fee (£200 plus VAT)
- Less 'Holding Fee' (£150 plus VAT will be deducted from the Administration Fee when the tenancy starts)

All the above costs must be paid before you sign the tenancy agreements. These sums are referred to as 'initial monies', and must be cleared funds e.g. Bank Draft, Credit/Debit Card, or cash. Personal cheques will not be accepted as payment in respect of initial monies.

Tenancy

An Assured Short-hold Tenancy is used for all tenancies with a term of usually 6 or 12 months. It is important to note that a tenancy is legally binding once it has been executed. As such it is important that tenants read through the agreement prior to signature so that everyone understands their obligations. Ask any questions to clarify anything that you are unclear on. Once signed it is important that all documents relating to the tenancy are retained in a safe place.

Once the 'initial monies' have been received in cleared funds and the tenancy agreement signed keys to the property will be released to you.

As indicated most tenancy agreements are for a term of 6 or 12 months. However they can be extended after that date until either the landlord gives 2 months notice, or the tenant 1 months notice from a rent day. The initial Assured Shorthold Tenancy will automatically continue as a Statutory Periodic Tenancy with the same terms and conditions as the original tenancy unless notice to quit has been served by either the Landlord or tenant. This Periodic Tenancy will then continue until either the Landlord serves the tenant with 2 months notice to quit or the tenant serves the landlord with one months notice to quit. This form of tenancy can continue for as long as it suits both parties. Alternatively a new Assured Shorthold Tenancy for a specific period with terms agreed by both parties can be entered into.

Damage Deposit

Your deposit is held against any repairs, replacements or cleaning needed to restore the property to its original condition at the end of the tenancy. It cannot be used as rent at any time. The deposit is held by an independent third party: no interest is paid to either the tenant or landlord.

Summary of rental costs

- Holding deposit — £150 plus VAT. This deposit is non-refundable if the tenancy does not go ahead; it will, however, be deducted from the Administration Fee when the tenancy starts.
- First month's rent
- Damage deposit — one month's rent
- Administration fee — £200 plus VAT

Future Rent Payments

Rent is always paid a calendar month in advance. You will normally be required to set up a standing order from your bank to Syntax Services for future rent payments. Please note that all standing order payments must be made 3 days prior to your rent due date to allow for clearance.

Where a number of tenants share occupation of a property each tenant is 'jointly and severally' responsible for the whole rent so that they are all equally liable for any non- payment of rent by one or more of their co-tenants.

Inventory

An Inventory and Schedule of Condition of the property, its contents, furniture, fixtures and fittings will be prepared prior to the tenancy commencement date. It is important that you take care in agreeing the Inventory and Schedule of Condition at the start of the tenancy as it will form the basis of any claim for damages, by the landlord, at the end of the tenancy. Any costs will be deducted from your deposit & an itemised statement and cheque will be usually sent within 2 weeks, unless estimates are required which may delay proceedings.

Safety Regulations

All properties on our list comply with the current furniture, and gas safety regulations. You will be given a copy of the Gas Safety Certificates when the tenancy agreement is signed.

Tenant's Obligations

You should be aware that responsibility for the property rests with the tenant during the tenancy. It is extremely important that any gas or electrical problems are reported immediately and that the property fully secured when you leave it unattended at any time. During the winter it is essential that steps are taken to prevent freezing of the water and heating systems.

If you have a maintenance or repair issue do not instruct a contractor directly. Please contact Syntax Services as soon as possible.

Quarterly Property Visits

All properties will be subject to regular visits by a Property Inspector. The purpose of these visits is to check the condition of the property, garden maintenance, and the manner in which the tenancy is being conducted generally. It will also give the tenant an opportunity to raise any issues they wish to bring to the attention of the agent. A mutually agreeable appointment will always be made in advance with the tenant.

Utilities

It is important that once you have signed a Tenancy Agreement you contact the gas, electricity, and water companies to set up an account, and establish a connection to the service. Tenants are reminded that they are responsible for payment of the provision of all the services to the property and we cannot guarantee that services are 'ON'.

Gas and electric meter readings will be taken at the inventory and 'check-out' stages, and we will notify the companies of the commencement and termination dates of the tenancy, your name, address, and meter readings. This ensures that you are not responsible for any previous tenants' bills and equally prevents your bills becoming a new tenant's responsibility.

Council Tax

It is the tenant's responsibility to pay the Council tax direct to the local authority.

Television Licence

The tenant is responsible for the television licence regardless of whether or not a television is provided by the landlord.

Insurance

The tenant is responsible for insuring their own personal effects and furniture as this is not the landlord's responsibility.

Any questions?

If you have any questions regarding the letting of a property please do not hesitate to contact us.