

## MOVING IN

After you have viewed a property and have decided to take it then there are a few issues that need to be addressed upon moving in.

**We advise checking the link below:**

[How to rent - GOV.UK](#)

### Deposits

It is usual for a landlord to ask the tenant for a returnable deposit at the start of the agreement. This may be equivalent to a month's rent, or often more.

If you provide a deposit, your landlord must protect it in a government-approved scheme within 30 days and give you prescribed information about it. Make sure you get the official information from your landlord, and that you understand how to get your money back at the end of the tenancy. Keep this information safe as you will need it later.

Your deposit should be refunded in full unless the landlord has incurred expense because of:

- Unpaid rent.
- Unpaid bills or other charges for which the tenant was responsible for paying.
- Breakages or damage to the landlord's property beyond fair wear and tear.

Always get a receipt for any deposit paid. Your landlord must notify you within 30 days of taking your deposit, which scheme your deposit is being held in.

Please see the link below:

[Deposit protection schemes and landlords: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

Many disputes occur between the landlord and tenant concerning the refunding of deposits. There are, however, several ways in which you can help to safeguard your deposit:

- Make sure you are clear about which bills you are responsible for paying, for example, who is responsible for paying the Water Rates?
- Always read the electricity and gas meters when you move into a property to ensure that you do not inherit the previous tenant's debt.
- Report on any repairs promptly. Failure to do so may lead to further work becoming necessary, for which you could be liable.
- Ensure that you have an inventory of fixtures and fittings in the property and their condition (**see below**).

These measures are intended to ensure that your stay is as hassle free as is possible.

### Inventories

Many landlords will provide an inventory of fixtures and fittings contained within the property. Check your inventory for inaccuracies such as missing, broken or damaged items. Tell your landlord, in writing, if there are any inaccuracies.

If you are not given an inventory, draw one up yourself. As well as the fixtures and fittings themselves you should note down their condition and the condition of the property generally. For example, if there are stains on the carpet or burns in the furniture make a note.

If the property is in a poor state of cleanliness when you move in you should tell your landlord, in writing. You could also take photographs of the condition of the property. This will enable you to support your case in the event of a dispute later.

Ask your landlord to sign a copy of the inventory and keep a copy for yourself. Although there is no reason to believe that you will have a problem with obtaining a refund, if you do not take these precautions now it will be too late to do anything if such a situation arises.

## **Rent Payments**

You should only pay rent to the landlord of the property, or the managing agent authorised by the landlord to manage the property on his behalf. Never pay your rent to somebody merely claiming to represent the landlord or to somebody of whose identity you are unsure. If possible, pay your rent by standing order, not cash or direct debit (a direct debit can be varied without your consent).

If you pay rent on a weekly basis, you are legally entitled to a rent book. If you pay rent at other intervals and do not have a rent book, it is advisable to obtain a receipt for each payment. This should state the amount paid and the period of rent it covers. This is especially important if you must pay in cash.

## **Utilities**

When you take on a property always find out from the start which bills you are expected to pay. This should be outlined in any agreement that you enter.

It is a fair likelihood that when you move into a property it will have been supplied with utilities (i.e. **gas, electricity and water**) previously. The supply may need to be reconnected, and you will certainly need to arrange for the account(s) to be placed in your name(s).

Your landlord should be able to tell you who supplies your gas and electricity. Electricity and gas can now be supplied by a whole host of companies (e.g. **you can pay for your gas through your electricity company**). It may be worth shopping around to find the cheapest supplier if you have not been connected previously, or if you wish to try to save some money by changing suppliers. Remember to consider the cost of actually connecting to a new supplier. Also, do not make changes concerning the supply of such utilities without consulting your landlord. Ultimately it would be their decision.

You should ask if all the names of those using the utilities can be registered on bills so that you are all liable.

## **Electricity**

Opening An Account: The account will be registered in someone's name. You will be asked for your previous address. The electricity company will check for any past record of irregular or non-payment. Your landlord should be able to tell you your electricity supplier or you can contact UK Power Networks who will also be able to tell you.

[Help and Contact | UK Power Networks](#)

If the electricity supply is still connected you may simply be able to give the electricity company the meter reading on the day that you move in. In some cases, the electricity company may wish to take a reading. If the electricity supply is disconnected, you will need to give the electricity company notice of the required connection date. This is usually at least two working days.

Methods of Payment: There are a few different ways to pay for your electricity supply dependent on your supplier:

- Direct debit: You will pay a fixed amount each month or quarter based on previous usage at the property. Any balance on the account will be adjusted once a year. There may be a small discount given for payment via direct debit.
- Key Meter: A meter will be fitted in your property, which is operated by a key. This key can be charged up by credits bought from a machine at the electricity showroom or in the high street or over the counter from some shops.
- Monthly Standing Order: This is like paying by direct debit, but no discount is offered.

For further details of payment schemes contact the electricity company.

## **Gas**

Opening An Account: If the property you are moving into has a gas supply you will need to arrange to open an account with the gas supplier. Your landlord will be able to tell you your gas supplier or you can contact the Southern Gas Networks [Help and Contact | UK Power Networks](#)

You should telephone the gas supplier and tell them exactly when you want the supply to start. You should give them reasonable notice of this (i.e., **three or four working days**). You are advised to confirm the arrangements in writing and to keep a copy. If you are a new customer, you may also have to complete a customer information form. Where a group of you are sharing a flat or house it is a good idea to ask for all your names to be on the account. The gas supplier may ask for your previous address and will check for any past record of irregular or non-payment.

Providing the existing pipes are sound and no repairs are necessary, all that your gas supplier will need to do is take a meter reading either when the previous occupant moves out or when you move in. Your gas supplier will then be able to calculate how much gas you use from then on. If the gas supply in the property is turned off it may take up to three weeks to turn it back on.

## **Methods of Payment:**

- Quarterly bill.
- Monthly direct debit or quarterly equal payments. (**Is useful to spread payments out & avoid a costly winter bill**)
- Prepayment meter. This will usually mean that your gas costs more, but you will be paying for it as you use it.

Your supplier will give you information about making online payments.

If you have difficulty paying your gas bill, or any other bill, you should contact the organisation concerned as soon as possible to try and resolve the problem. The longer the debt is left the more difficult it will be to deal with it.

## **Water Rates**

**Liability:** Whether or not you are responsible for paying water rates will be dependent on your agreement with your landlord. If there is nothing stated in your tenancy about water rates you will not be liable to pay them. Similarly, if you have a verbal agreement with your landlord and nothing about water rates was stated at the beginning of the agreement you should not be liable to pay the water rates.

However, many tenancy agreements now state that the tenant is liable for paying the water rates. If this is the case, you should ensure that you only pay for the period of your tenancy/ occupation.

**Opening an Account:** If you are responsible for paying the water rates you will need to advise the water company of the date on which you took up residence. For most addresses in London your supplier will be Thames Water. [Thames Water - The UK's largest water and wastewater company](#)

**Supply:** In most cases the water supply will already be turned on when you move into a property. However, occasionally it may not be if, for example, the property has been empty for some time. If this is the case, you will need to open the main stop valve. In most cases the stop valve is inside the building, under the kitchen sink or in the airing cupboard. In some cases, the stop valve may be in a box in the front garden or drive and in a few places, in the public footpath. You will need a special long-handed key to operate it. If you need further assistance or advice, you should phone your supplier.

**Methods of Payment:** Unless your water is metered the amount charged will be a standard amount related to the property. You can choose to pay:

- For the whole year in advance on 1 April.
- For six months in advance, on 1 April and 1 October.

Please check with your supplier about payment methods

**What To Do If A Leak Occurs:** In the event of a leak or a burst pipe you should shut down the water system and stop the water from entering the property. It is advisable to find out where the stop valve is before an emergency occurs. You should inform your landlord of what has happened in order that any necessary repairs can be carried out. For further advice in an emergency, you should contact your supplier.

## **Council Tax**

You may or may not be liable to pay Council Tax. For further details see our information sheet entitled 'Council Tax'. This will tell you if you are liable or not.

Please see the link below:

[How Council Tax works: Discounts for full-time students - GOV.UK](#)

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