

When you move in



There are a number of things you should do as soon as you move into your property.

Why an inventory matters

It is important to have an accurate record of the condition of the walls, floor coverings, appliances and furniture when you move in. Anything that is damaged or in need of repair or cleaning should be noted.

An inventory can help if there are any disagreements about damage at the end of the tenancy and any deductions from your deposit. A detailed inventory with photos will provide strong evidence if there is a disagreement.



Utility companies

It is important to find out which utility company supplies your new property as you need to notify them that you have taken over the accounts. You may also be able to get a cheaper tariff if you swap to a different supplier. It is always advisable to shop around for the cheapest deals using comparison sites such as [Gocompare](#), [Compare The Market](#), [MoneySupermarket](#) etc. If you are directly responsible for paying the gas and/or electricity bills you have the right to choose who energy supplier is. Your landlord can only choose who the supplier is if they are directly responsible for pay the bills.

If you are unsure who the providers are:

- Call the regional electricity distribution number 0800 6783 105 to find out who supplies your electricity.
- The Meter Number Helpline is 0870 608 1524 will be able to help you find your 'Meter Point Reference Number (MPRN) as a way of identifying who supplies gas to your property.
- South West Water are responsible for the supply of your water

As soon as you move in it is important to know how to turn off the water, gas and electricity in case of an emergency

Meter Readings

It is important to take readings from the gas, electric and water meters (where applicable) and contact the utility companies to give your details and the date that you moved into the property. It may be worth taking photos of the meter readings for your records.



Contents insurance

Your landlord is generally responsible for building's insurance but you will have to insure the belongings in the property. The buildings insurance will cover the fixtures and fittings within the home but will not cover your property. The landlord will not replace items belonging to you that have been stolen or damaged through crime or an accident in the property.

It is always advisable to shop around for the cheapest contents insurance deals. Some insurers won't cover tenants in shared accommodation so it is important to get the right policy. There are comparison sites such as [Gocompare](#), [Compare The Market](#) and [MoneySupermarket](#) and other insurers not included on comparison sites such as [Aviva](#) and [Direct Line](#).

Council tax

Council Tax is a daily charge that helps pay for local services such as rubbish collection and those provided by Devon County Council, parish and town councils, Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon & Somerset Fire Authority. You should notify the Council Tax department as soon as you move in and a Council Tax bill will be calculated for your new home. You can do this using your [online account](#) or complete and return the [Moving In](#) form on the council's website.

Your landlord will need to prove that you were given you a copy of the latest version of the How to rent guide at the beginning of the tenancy in order to serve a valid section 21 notice to end the tenancy. The landlord doesn't have to give you updated versions of the guide unless you are issued with a new tenancy agreement.

How to Rent Guide

From 1 October 2015 your landlord must give you, or email, a copy of the DCLG's (Department for Communities and Local Government) How to Rent: the checklist for renting in England when issuing you with a new tenancy. The guide offers a checklist for each stage of renting a private property and more detailed information on:

- what to look for before renting
- living in a rented home
- what happens at the end of a tenancy
- what to do if things go wrong

The guide outlines the rights and responsibilities of a tenant with links to more detailed guidance.

Tenancy Deposit Protection

Within 30 days of receiving your tenancy deposit your landlord/agent is legally required to:

- protect your deposit with one of the three government-backed schemes
- provide you with information about the scheme used (known as prescribed information)

This only applies if you have an assured shorthold tenancy. There is no requirement to protect a deposit taken from a lodger.

The deposit protection schemes are designed to keep your deposit safe and make sure you get back what you are entitled to at the end of the tenancy.

Your landlord can choose one of the following schemes to protect your deposit:



Your landlord could face penalties if they don't:

- protect your deposit when they should have
- give you the required information when they should have

It also means it could be more difficult for the landlord to end your tenancy.

