

Landlord Guide

Renting your property?

When it comes to letting and managing property, our knowledge is second to none.

With 200 years of experience and as one of the longest established firms of property consultants in Yorkshire we are here to look after your interests, either as a first time investor or a more established landlord. Our procedures comply with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) bylaws and rules, thus providing you with the comfort that both your money and assets are safe. Our dedicated residential and property management lettings staff have an in-depth knowledge of the local markets and are able to assist you through all aspects of the letting and management of your property.





Our service levels

For landlords, we offer three levels of service:



PLATINUM/
GOLD FULL
MANAGEMENT



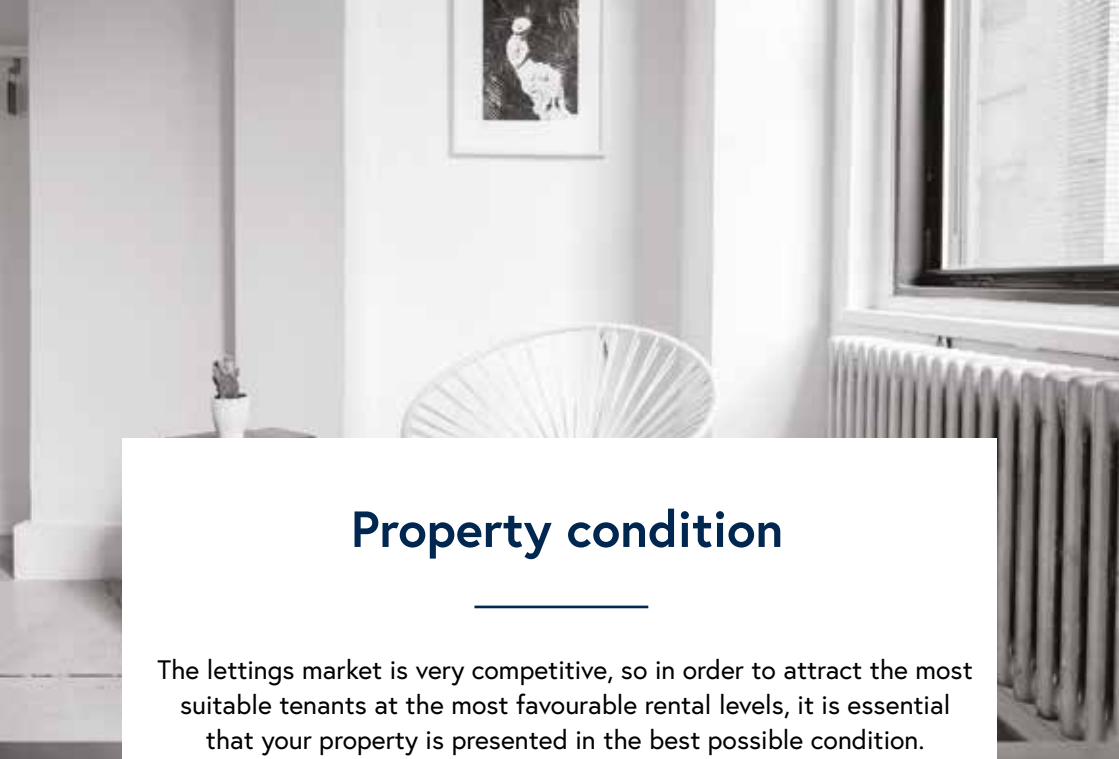
SILVER
MANAGED



TENANT
FIND ONLY

Most landlords choose one of our management services, which includes accounts management, periodic property inspections and tenant liaison - offering you the peace of mind that your property is in capable hands. Our terms of business provide further details of the services available.

Our let only service is geared towards experienced landlords and those that are knowledgeable in all aspects of lettings and property management.



Property condition

The lettings market is very competitive, so in order to attract the most suitable tenants at the most favourable rental levels, it is essential that your property is presented in the best possible condition.



Garden

A garden should be left in the condition you would wish to find it. Once the property has been let a tenant is usually responsible for the general upkeep of the garden to include cutting the lawn and weeding. Any large hedges or trees may require special attention for which the tenant is not usually liable. Increasingly, landlords are arranging garden maintenance themselves and including the cost within the rent in order to retain control and quality. Should you decide not to arrange a garden maintenance contract we would recommend you provide the tenant with the appropriate tools in order to maintain the garden. If the you are supplying garden equipment such as a lawnmower/trimmer, you will also need to provide a power breaker and have the equipment PAT tested to ensure safety.





Decoration

Most properties are let on an unfurnished basis since the provision of furnishings is unlikely to significantly increase the rental income and also results in more wear and tear. Unfurnished properties should include floor-coverings, curtains and light fittings. Most tenants will also expect to find a cooker.

Furnished properties should include suitable furniture for each room (a bed in each bedroom, a dining table and chairs in the dining room, sofa in the sitting room etc.). Kitchen white goods would be expected and should be PAT tested. Should you decide to let the property with furniture and equipment this must be safe to use and comply with current legislation.



Vacant Property

If there is an extended period after you have vacated or you have bought the property before the tenant is due to move in, you should ensure that the appearance of your property does not quickly deteriorate due to accumulation of junk mail or unkept garden. During colder weather heating should be left on a low setting or the water and central heating system should be drained down to prevent frost damage.

Please be aware we are unable to accept responsibility for the safety and security of your property between tenancies when it is unoccupied. Ensure that you check the conditions of your property insurance cover for periods when it is unoccupied.

Permissions and key contact

The first thing that you must do when deciding to rent your property is obtain the necessary consents from other parties. These could include:

Mortgage Company - You should reference the terms of any mortgage on the property and advise your lender if required. Please note if you require mortgage advice we can refer you to Mortgage Advice Bureau. Please see the referral fee statement on our website.

Insurance Company - You must ensure you advise your insurance company.

If your property is a leasehold property you may need to obtain permission to let from the freeholders or management company.

For joint ownership each owner must sign our terms of business and provide ID documentation.

Inland Revenue

If you are a UK resident you will need to declare the income on a self-assessment tax return. If you are planning to live overseas or be out of the country for more than six months in any tax year you will need to apply to the Inland Revenue for exemption from tax deduction at source. You can download the relevant information at www.hmrc.gov.uk

Utilities and general information

Tenant guide - It is useful to compile a folder or tenant guide with information such as the location of meters, instructions for appliances etc.

Redirection of your mail – Please arrange this via the Post Office.

Council Tax - Whilst your property is let the tenants will be liable for the Council Tax. Should your property be unoccupied between lets you will become liable to pay the Council Tax.

Utilities - We recommend that you take your own meter readings when you vacate (and at the start and finish of any tenancy) and instruct the utility companies to forward your final accounts to your new address. You must contact the relevant companies to arrange disconnection of the telephone service or cable/satellite TV service. The tenant will be responsible for the utilities during their tenancy.

Keys - Three full sets of keys should be provided.

Inventory and schedule of condition - An inventory of household contents together with a description of the property condition is essential to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding at the termination of the tenancy. This document can only be prepared once you have moved out and we usually require the property to be vacant and fully prepared for the tenant at least seven working days before the tenancy is due to start in order that the inventory can be prepared in time. When one tenant moves out and a new letting has been arranged it is necessary for an interval of at least seven working days to ensure that the inventory can be updated and any minor repairs carried out.

Tenancy agreement - The tenancy agreement clarifies the responsibilities of both landlord and tenant and will need to be used should a dispute arise between both parties. It is essential that a tenancy agreement is properly prepared to comply with current legislation. We will sign an Assured Periodic Tenancy (APT) on your behalf.

Accounts and arrears for managed properties

Security deposit – We will collect a security deposit from the tenant (equivalent to five weeks' rent) at the start of the tenancy and register the deposit with The Tenancy Deposit Scheme. The deposit will be held by The Tenancy Deposit Service in their custodial scheme for the duration of the tenancy against any breach of the tenant's obligations (e.g. non-payment of rent or damage to property or furnishings). If agreement cannot be made the case will need to be submitted to an Independent Case Examiner for adjudication within 10 days.

Rent – Once a tenancy has commenced the rent is normally payable on the same date each month and we will usually arrange a standing order for this purpose. We will receive the rent from the tenant and forward it to you after deducting any authorised expenses. You will receive a periodic statement from us detailing all payments received and any deductions made.

Arrears - The greatest care is taken to select reliable and responsible tenants including the undertaking of formal credit and reference checks. Occasionally, tenants may find themselves in genuine difficulties and unable to pay their rent. Should you be dependent on rental income to pay a mortgage we would recommend that you maintain a reserve fund. Should a tenant be in rent arrears and/or in breach of their tenancy agreement Dacre, Son & Hartley can serve the necessary notice to terminate the tenancy if appropriate. However, this does not guarantee that the tenant will actually leave. If the tenant refuses to go you will need to take further action. Unless you have arranged legal insurance you will need to instruct a solicitor to commence possession proceedings through the courts and to recover outstanding sums.

Property management managed properties only

Re-letting – If a tenant decides to vacate we will start the process of re-letting. This will involve an inspection of the property to review the rent and check the condition of the property, reporting any recommendations to you and starting to remarket the property.

Repairs – The landlord is responsible, by law, for repairs and maintenance of the property. As part of our fully managed services we maintain a list of reputable contractors who will deal with repairs on your behalf. If you have your own choice of tradesmen we may be able to instruct them provided they are easily contactable, reliable, and you are able to provide us with their relevant insurance documents. You would also need to pay their invoices directly. If any equipment is covered by a service contract or guarantee you should provide us with details prior to a tenancy commencing. As landlord you are also responsible for maintenance of 'white goods' unless there is a specific disclaimer and all other fixtures, fittings and equipment provided for tenants use.

Tenants will be responsible for keeping the interior of the property clean and be expected to change light bulbs, replace batteries, as well as pay for any material repair of any item which has been damaged through their actions. Should any maintenance/repair need to be carried out we shall, in the interests of good property management, arrange for repairs, provided the anticipated cost does not exceed the amount stated in the Terms of Business. Should the cost exceed this and wherever practical or feasible we will obtain an estimate and seek permission prior to arranging repairs. In cases of emergency, should we need to instruct contractors without consent, we require the confidence of our clients to use our discretion in this respect.

Safety checks and certificates

When letting a property you are legally obliged as a landlord to ensure that your property is safe for any prospective tenant prior to their occupation. You will need to ensure that you have the following documents and/or carry out the relevant checks. We can help to arrange these if it helps:

Solid fuel

If a solid fuel source is available, such as a wood burner or open fire, chimneys and flues must be swept every 12 months and certified.

Soft furnishings

Any soft furnishings such as settees and mattresses left at a property must comply with the safety regulations and be marked with a label to show compliance.

Gas Safety Certificate

We will need a Gas Safety Certificate and this must be renewed annually.

Electric Safety Certificate

We will need an Electric Safety Certificate and this must be renewed every five years.

Portable Appliance Test (PAT)

Any electrical appliances will need to have an annual Portable Appliance Test (PAT).

EPC Certificate

The property must have a current EPC rating of E or above.

Smoke detectors

All rented properties must have at least one smoke alarm fitted on each storey where there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation. Smoke alarms must comply with current legislation and be tested to ensure they are in proper working order prior to the commencement of each tenancy.

A carbon monoxide alarm must be fitted in any room used wholly or partly as living accommodation containing a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers). Alarms must be tested and maintained in accordance with current legislation.

Carbon monoxide

A carbon monoxide alarm must be fitted in any room used wholly or partly as living accommodation containing a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers). Alarms must be installed, tested and maintained in accordance with current legislation.

Legionella

Legionella bacteria can develop in hot and cold-water systems and may be spread through water droplets from outlets such as showers and taps. In most residential properties, the risk is considered low due to the regular use and turnover of water systems.

Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any potential risk of Legionella is appropriately considered and managed where necessary.

Further guidance is available on the HSE website:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg274.htm>

Referral Fees & Privacy Notice

Please see dacles.co.uk for information on Referral Fees and our Privacy Notice.

