

Guide for Tenants

COOKE
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& CO

We try to make applying for a rented property with us as easy and fair as possible.

Here's how it works:

1. Find a property.

Choose something you like the look of, book with us to go and see it.

2. Tell us you want it.

We'll ask you a few questions to make sure that it's likely you'll be able to go forward with the letting. There will be some necessary personal questions in there, like how much you earn. If on the basis of your responses we think you're likely to be OK you can move on to step (3).

We don't deliberately exclude anyone from letting a property, but certain landlords may have preferences for those that, for example, do not smoke or do not have any pets.

We promise that no decision on accepting or rejecting a tenant will be made on the grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, class, physical attribute or anything else that is not directly related to the referencing agency's view of a tenant's ability to pay the rent or ability to keep the property.

3. Formally apply.

You'll be asked to complete an online form that we will use to formally reference you, this includes details of your employer, previous landlord and that sort of thing. It also involves a credit check and a check we are required to carry out that confirms you have the right to live in the UK. At this point you pay one week's rent to hold the property. The property will be reserved for you on receipt of the payment. If your referencing is successful your holding fee will be credited against your first rent payment. If you fail referencing based on something you put on the application that turns out to be incorrect the holding fee isn't refundable, so now is the time to tell us if you think there might be something that could stop your passing the check.

4. Get the result of your application.

We'll come back to you as quickly as we can with this. The speed depends on how quickly we can get hold of people, but it's usually a day or two. If you are accepted then you can jump to step (5). Sometimes you may not be accepted immediately, we will always know the reason why and will work with you to overcome it, for example by using a guarantor.

5. Formalise a moving-in date.

We will agree a date with you, prepare the Tenancy Agreement and send it to you to check you are happy with it before signing.

6. Pay the advance costs.

Before the moving date you will need to pay us: A. The first month's rent and B. The deposit, which is the equivalent of 5 weeks' rent.

As an example, if you rent a property with a monthly rent of £1250:

By law we cannot charge you unnecessary fees, but there are some occasions where additional costs may be payable.

We are unable to accept payments by credit or debit card. Payments should be made by bank transfer.

Holding fee	£288
Deposit	£1442
First month's rent (minus holding fee)	£962
TOTAL	£2692
Changes to tenancy, instigated by you	£75
Company let fee	£500
Lost set of keys	£50
Re-let fee if tenant is exiting fixed term early	Property dependent
Rent arrears	Interest charged at 3% above Bank of England base rate

Next step:

7. Book a move in appointment.

You will need to come to our office with a copy of your passport and visa if applicable (if you don't have a passport please ask about alternatives) so we can finalise the Right to Rent Check. You can then sign for and collect your keys.

8. The paperwork.

Your inventory will be emailed to you directly from the independent inventory clerk for you to check through. We will upload all your tenancy documents to your portal for you to access including your tenancy agreement, prescribed information and your deposit certificate.

9. Move-in.

Go to the property and let yourself in to your new home! Read all the meters and have a look around. Your inventory should be with you within a week of move in so it is a good idea to make a note of any maintenance or wear and tear when you arrive and take some pictures so you are able to check everything off against your inventory when you receive it.

Don't forget to make sure you report any maintenance to us or the landlord depending on who is managing the property, and that you have a standing order set up for your monthly rent payments.

During the tenancy:

Our portal makes everything transparent. You are given the ability to check your rent account and any prescribed information at any time. If your landlord has asked us to manage the let you will also be able to track any ongoing maintenance at the property via your portal. It is also how you should report any maintenance issues. It is important your report issues as soon as you are aware of them so they can be fixed promptly before the situation worsens.

If we are managing the property you will also be notified of inspections and be able to view the reports. We will make appointments to visit you during the tenancy to inspect the property to ensure it is being well maintained. The frequency will depend on what we see at the first inspection. The better you keep it the less we will bother you.

Your deposit is held in the custodial Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS) which is government approved. We will send you details of this and your protection certificate via the portal.

After the tenancy:

At the end of the tenancy the company who prepared the inventory will check that the property is handed back in the same condition that it was given at the start of the tenancy. Deductions will be made in accordance with the terms of the deposit scheme and your tenancy agreement for any damages and cleaning that are not considered fair wear and tear.

You will be emailed a copy of the checkout report for you to raise any queries and you can then request your deposit return from TDS.

We strive to operate fairly and transparently. Letting agents often get bad press for how they treat tenants. We are not one of those agents.

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