



Tenant Handbook

Welcome to your new home.

We are delighted to have you as a tenant with SEAL Properties and hope you will be very happy in your new property.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with clear and practical guidance from the day you move in through to the end of your tenancy. It contains important information about your rights, responsibilities, and how your tenancy will be managed.

Please take the time to read through this document carefully, as it will answer many of the common questions that arise during a tenancy.

If you cannot find the information you are looking for, our team will be happy to assist.

The SEAL Properties Office

Monday to Friday
9.30am to 5.30pm

167 Saltwell Road, Gateshead, NE8 4TJ
2-4 Front Street, Annfield Plain, DH9 8HY

0191 5805900

info@sealproperties.co.uk

The Team

We are a small but dedicated team, and we are here to help.

Director – Emma – emma@sealproperties.co.uk

Property Manager – Chloe – chloe@sealproperties.co.uk

Property Compliance – Sam – sam@sealproperties.co.uk

Repairs – repairs@sealproperties.co.uk

1. Moving In

Checking in to your property:

First things first — put the kettle on and take a moment to settle in. Once you're ready, please take some time to carefully review the information below to ensure everything is recorded correctly at the start of your tenancy.

1.1. Meter Readings

You should take gas and electricity meter readings as soon as you enter the property.

These readings will be required when setting up your utility accounts with your chosen suppliers. Responsibility for opening and maintaining utility accounts rests with the Tenant from the commencement of the tenancy.

If you are unsure of the current supplier, you can find the last known supplier using the following service: <https://www.findmysupplier.energy/>

1.2. Check your inventory

An inventory report will have been provided to you at the start of your tenancy.

You must review this carefully within 7 days of the tenancy commencement date. If there are any discrepancies, omissions, or concerns, you must notify us in writing and provide supporting photographs where possible.

Failure to raise amendments within this time frame may result in the inventory being deemed accurate.

This process is important as it helps protect your deposit at the end of the tenancy.

1.3. Make a note of Snagging

If you identify any issues at the start of your tenancy, including minor defects, cosmetic matters, or items requiring repair, these must be reported to us within 7 days of the tenancy commencement date.

This includes:

- Items not recorded in the inventory
- Damage or defects present on arrival
- Any maintenance issues requiring attention

Please report all issues in writing and provide clear photographs where possible.

Please note:

- Items reported within the initial 7-day period will be reviewed and, where appropriate, recorded against the inventory or scheduled for repair
- Not all reported items will require immediate action and may be addressed as part of routine maintenance
- Failure to report issues within this time frame may result in them being considered the Tenant's responsibility at the end of the tenancy

After the initial 7-day period, any new maintenance issues must be reported promptly as they arise in accordance with your tenancy obligations.

1.4. Getting Familiar with the Property

Please take a moment to familiarise yourself with the key safety features and controls within the property, including:

- The water stopcock (to isolate the water supply)
- The fuse box / consumer unit

- The gas meter and shut-off valve (where applicable)
- The electricity meter

Knowing the location of these items is important and may help prevent damage or ensure safety in the event of an emergency.

1.5. Update your contact details

Don't forget to contact your bank and update your address for any important post.

Remember to update your address on key legal documents, such as your driving licence.

1.6. Say hello to your neighbours

We encourage you to take a moment to introduce yourself to your neighbours where appropriate.

Maintaining positive relationships with neighbouring residents helps create a more enjoyable living environment and can help prevent avoidable disputes.

Tenants are expected to act reasonably and considerately towards neighbours at all times in accordance with their tenancy obligations.

2. Your Rights as a Tenant

As a Tenant, you have important legal rights. SEAL Properties is committed to managing your tenancy fairly and in accordance with all applicable legislation.

Quiet Enjoyment

You have the right to live in the property without unnecessary interference.

Safe & Maintained Property

You have the right to live in a property that is safe and properly maintained.

Deposit Protection

Your deposit will be protected in a government-approved scheme, and you will receive the prescribed information.

Protection from Unfair Practices

You are protected from unlawful eviction, harassment, and prohibited fees.

Raising Concerns

You should contact us in the first instance if any issues arise.

3. Your responsibilities as a Tenant

You are expected to:

- Pay rent in full and on time
- Keep the property clean and in a tenant-like manner
- Report repairs promptly
- Allow access for inspections and repairs with appropriate notice
- Ensure all occupants and visitors behave responsibly

You must not:

- Cause damage to the property
- Engage in anti-social behaviour
- Interfere with safety equipment
- Allow unauthorised occupiers to reside at the property

Failure to comply with these obligations may result in formal action being taken.

4. Repairs and Maintenance

4.1. Reporting Repairs

All maintenance issues must be reported promptly.

Repairs can be reported by phone or email; however, our preferred method is by email to ensure a clear record of the issue

When reporting a repair, please:

- Use the subject line: **REPAIR – [Property Address]**
- Provide a clear description of the issue
- Include photographs where possible
- Send to repairs@sealproperties.co.uk

This helps us assess and prioritise the issue more efficiently.

We aim to respond to all repair enquiries within **24 hours** (working days), although resolution times will vary depending on the nature of the issue.

4.2. Reporting Repairs *Out Of Hours*

In the event of a genuine emergency outside of office hours, please call:

 **0191 580 5900 (Option 3)**

Please leave a clear and detailed message describing:

1. The nature of the issue
2. The level of urgency
3. Any immediate risks

Examples of emergencies include:

- Major water leaks or burst pipes
- Electrical hazards
- Loss of heating during cold weather
- Gas leaks (see below)

Where a contractor is instructed outside of normal working hours and the issue is found not to be an emergency or has been caused by misuse or neglect, the Tenant may be responsible for the reasonable costs incurred.

What is not an emergency

- Loss of heating or hot water where alternative options are available and there is no immediate risk
- Minor leaks that can be contained (e.g. small drips under sinks)
- Blocked sinks or drains caused by normal use
- Loss of power due to a local power cut
- Appliance faults (e.g. cooker, washing machine, fridge)
- Cosmetic issues or general wear and tear
- Routine repairs (e.g. loose handles, dripping taps)
- Being locked out of the property or lost keys

4.3. Access for Repairs

You must allow reasonable access for contractors to carry out inspections and repairs. We will provide appropriate notice where access is required, except in emergency situations. Failure to provide access may delay works and could result in further action where necessary.

4.4. Tenants are not must not carry out repairs, alterations, or instruct contractors without prior consent.

5. Dealing with Emergencies

We recommend taking some time to familiarise yourself with this page as soon as possible so you will be able to react quickly in an emergency.

Emergency Services Help

(police, fire, ambulance, coastguard)

999 for Emergencies

101 for Non-Emergencies

If you believe there is an immediate risk to safety or serious damage to the property, you should act promptly and follow the guidance below.

5.1. Gas Escape

If you suspect a gas leak:

1. Turn off the gas supply if safe to do so using the Emergency Control Valve (ECV) usually found on the pipework near the gas meter.
2. Open windows and ventilate the property
3. Do not use electrical switches
4. Call **0800 111 999** immediately

You must then notify us as soon as possible.

5.2. Water Leaking from an Upstairs Flat

If water is entering your property from above:

- Attempt to contact the upstairs neighbour
- Place containers to catch water and minimise damage
- Move belongings away from the affected area
- Monitor the ceiling for sagging, cracking, or bowing
- Report the issue to us immediately

In Tyneside flats, the ground floor property may control the stopcock for both flats. If safe to do so, you may try turning off the water supply.

If the leak is severe or presents an electrical risk, treat this as an emergency and contact us immediately.

5.3. Water leaking from the roof

If you notice water entering from the roof:

- Place containers to catch water where possible
- Move belongings away from affected areas
- Avoid using electrics near the leak
- Monitor the ceiling for sagging, cracking, or bowing
- Report the issue immediately

Repairs will be prioritised based on severity and risk. Please note that in adverse weather conditions, it may not be possible to carry out external repairs immediately. In such cases, temporary internal measures may be taken until safe access is possible.

5.4. Water leaking from your own property

If a leak is coming from within your property:

- Turn off the water supply at the stopcock immediately
- Avoid using electrics near the leak
- Contain the leak where possible

- Report the issue as soon as possible

Failure to act promptly may result in increased damage, which may be recoverable where caused by negligence.

5.5. Locking your self out or losing your keys

If you are locked out or have lost your keys:

- This is not considered an emergency repair
- You should arrange access via a locksmith at your own cost

Where keys are lost, the Tenant may be responsible for the reasonable cost of replacement keys and/or lock changes.

Where we hold spare keys, we may be able to assist during office hours, subject to availability.

5.6. Smoke Alarms and Carbon Alarms Sounding

If a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide alarm is activated, you must treat this seriously and act immediately.

It is important to understand the difference between a genuine emergency, a nuisance alarm, and a battery warning, and to respond appropriately.

- A continuous alarm sound may indicate fire or carbon monoxide and must be treated as an emergency
- An intermittent beep (e.g. every 30–60 seconds) usually indicates a low battery
- A nuisance alarm may be triggered by cooking fumes, steam and aerosols in the case of a smoke alarm (there is no such equivalent for carbon alarms)

What You Should Do

If the alarm is sounding continuously:

- Evacuate the property immediately if there is any risk
- Where safe to do so turn off fuel burning appliances, and open the windows for carbon
- Call 999 if you believe there is a fire or Gas Emergency Service (0800 111 999) in the case of carbon
- Do not ignore the alarm

If there is no apparent danger (nuisance smoke alarm):

- Ventilate the area by opening windows
- Turn off the source (e.g. cooking, shower, spray)
- Do not tamper with or remove the alarm

If the alarm is beeping intermittently:

- Replace the batteries promptly
- Test the alarm after replacing the batteries
- Where the alarm is a sealed unit, you must report this to us so that it can be replaced.

6. Common Maintenance Problems

Before reporting a repair, please check the guidance below. Many common issues can be resolved quickly without the need for a contractor.

6.1. Lights not working

If a light is not working:

- Check if the bulb needs replacing. Changing standard lightbulbs is a tenant responsibility.

- Check whether other lights are affected
- Check the fuse box / consumer unit for any tripped switches

If the issue persists after these checks, report it to us.

6.2. Loss of power/ blown fuses

If you have no power or partial power:

- Check the fuse box / consumer unit for tripped switches
- Unplug all appliances
- Reset any tripped breakers
- Check whether neighbouring properties are also affected

If the issue continues after resetting the fuse box, report it to us.

6.3. Power cut

If there is a power cut:

- Check whether neighbouring properties are affected
- Visit: <https://www.powercut105.com> or call **105** for updates

Power cuts are managed by your electricity network provider and are not the responsibility of the Landlord or Agent.

6.4. Blocked sink or drain

If a sink or drain is blocked:

- Try using a plunger and/or suitable household drain cleaner
- Avoid using sinks if water is not draining properly

Blockages caused by grease, food waste, or misuse may be the Tenant's responsibility and the cost of remedial works will be the tenants responsibility. If the issue persists, report it to us.

6.5. Central heating/hot water not working

If your heating or hot water is not working:

- Check the boiler pressure (if applicable). If it is below 1 bar, the system likely needs topping up. Follow a basic how to guide on YouTube on how to use the filling loop to top up the pressure.
- Check that you have gas credit on the meter
- Ensure the thermostat is set correctly
- Check the programmer/timer settings
- Reset the boiler if safe to do so (following manufacturer instructions)

If the issue persists, report it to us. Loss of heating during colder conditions may be treated as an emergency.

6.6. Bleeding radiators

If radiators are not heating properly:

If your radiators are cold at the top and warm at the bottom, they have trapped air and need bleeding with a radiator key.

Radiator bleeding is generally a Tenant responsibility unless otherwise advised.

If you are unsure how to do this safely, contact us for guidance.

7. Taking Care of your Property

You are expected to keep the property in a clean and tenant-like manner throughout your tenancy.

You must:

- Keep the property clean and well maintained
- Report issues promptly
- Take reasonable steps to prevent damage

Failure to take proper care of the property may result in costs being recovered in accordance with your tenancy agreement and relevant legislation.

The guidance below will help you maintain the property and avoid unnecessary damage or charges.

- 7.1. Vermin - Keep all food securely stored and ensure bins are emptied regularly. If you spot pests, let us know so we can advise on the best course of action. Infestations caused by poor hygiene or waste build-up may be the Tenant's responsibility.
- 7.2. Windows - Keep windows reasonably clean and ensure trickle vents remain open to help with ventilation. Do not override window restrictors except in cases of emergency. Do not force window mechanisms and report any faults promptly.
- 7.3. Baths, Showers and toilets - Keep plugholes clear of hair to prevent blockages. Never flush wet wipes, sanitary products, or cotton wool down the toilet. Use shower curtains or screens to prevent water escaping. Wipe down surfaces to prevent mould and limescale build up.
- 7.4. Extractor Fans – Fans are generally found in kitchens and bathrooms. Always use extractor fans when showering or cooking to reduce moisture in the air. Proper use helps prevent condensation and mould.
- 7.5. Condensation - Condensation is the leading cause of mould. To reduce condensation heating and ventilation should be balanced. Open windows regularly, maintain heating at a constant level. Use extractor fans where fitted.
- 7.6. Blocked washing machines/dishwashers - Do not overload appliances and remember to clean filters regularly and check the condition of hoses.
- 7.7. Smoke alarms - Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms regularly. You are responsible for replacing the batteries when they run low. Do not tamper or remove alarms, to do so will be considered a serious breach of tenancy.
- 7.8. Bins - Please ensure you put your rubbish out on the correct collection day and bring the bins back in promptly. If your bin is lost or stolen, you are responsible for replacing it. Bulky waste must be disposed of through a licenced waste carrier.
- 7.9. Going on Holiday – If you are going on holiday for an extended period of time please ensure that the property is secure, that the heating is left on low in colder months and turn the water off where appropriate. Please tell us if you intend on being away from the property for more than 14 days, as we may need to notify the insurance company in order to maintain cover.

8. During Your Tenancy

8.1. Rent Payments

Rent must be paid in full and on time in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

Failure to pay rent may result in:

- Arrears being pursued
- Additional action being taken
- Possession proceedings where necessary

If you experience any difficulty making payment, you must contact us as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

8.2. Inspections

Periodic inspections will be carried out during your tenancy. Typically, this is 3 months from commencement of tenancy and then every 6 months, but it can vary depending on need.

You will be given reasonable notice prior to any visit. The purpose of inspections is to ensure the property is being maintained appropriately and to identify any repair issues

You must allow access for inspections and maintenance in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

Failure to provide access may result in further action being taken where necessary.

8.3. Anti-Social Behaviour

You must not engage in behaviour that causes nuisance, annoyance, or disturbance to neighbours or other occupants.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Excessive noise
- Harassment or intimidation
- Criminal or anti-social activity

You are responsible for the behaviour of anyone visiting the property.

Reports of anti-social behaviour will be taken seriously and may result in formal action, including possession proceedings where appropriate. Please refer to our Anti-social behaviour policy for more information on how we manage ASB.

8.4. Change of tenancy

You must not (without prior written consent):

- Sublet the property
- Allow additional occupiers to reside at the property
- Transfer or assign the tenancy

Any request to add or remove a tenant or change a named occupier must be submitted in writing and will be subject to approval.

Please note:

- Additional checks may be required (including Right to Rent checks under the Immigration Act 2014)
- Changes may be subject to reasonable administrative costs where permitted by law

Unauthorised changes to occupation may result in a breach of tenancy and could affect licensing compliance.

9. Leaving your Property

9.1. Serving Notice

If you wish to end your tenancy, you must provide a minimum of two months notice in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

- Notice must be given in writing
- Include the intended vacation date
- Notice will usually need to expire at the end of a rental period unless otherwise agreed

Please note:

- A tenancy will not end automatically — notice must be served
- We recommend that Tenants contact us before serving notice to ensure the correct notice period and expiry date are applied. Incorrect notice may result in the tenancy continuing and rent remaining due.

- If the tenancy is held jointly, notice served by one tenant will end the tenancy for all occupants
- You remain responsible for rent and all obligations until the tenancy legally ends

If you are unsure, please contact us and we will guide you through the process.

9.2. Preparing to Leave

Before vacating the property, you must ensure that:

- The property is cleaned to a good domestic standard
- All personal belongings are removed
- Rubbish and waste are disposed of correctly
- All fixtures and fittings remain in place
- The property is returned in the same condition as at the start of the tenancy, allowing for fair wear and tear

Further guidance will be provided once notice is served on the move out process. Failure to meet these requirements may result in deductions from your deposit.

On the final day of the tenancy, the property must be fully vacated and all keys returned to the office so that we may complete our check-out process.

9.3. Deposit return

Your deposit will be returned in accordance with the rules of the tenancy deposit scheme in which it is protected.

- Deductions may be made for:
 - Damage beyond fair wear and tear
 - Cleaning where required
 - Missing items
 - Rent arrears or other outstanding charges

You will be notified of any proposed deductions, and the deposit scheme provides a dispute resolution process if required.

10. Summary

10.1. We hope this handbook has provided you with a clear understanding of your tenancy and what to expect during your time in the property.

To summarise:

- Pay your rent on time and in full
- Keep the property clean and well maintained
- Report repairs promptly and follow the correct reporting process
- Act reasonably and considerately towards neighbours
- Comply with all terms of your tenancy agreement

By following these simple principles, most tenancies run smoothly and without issue.

If you are ever unsure about anything during your tenancy, please contact us. We would always prefer to deal with any issues early, rather than allowing them to develop into larger problems.

Our aim is to provide a professional and responsive service, and we ask that you work with us to maintain the property and ensure a positive living environment.

Thank you for choosing SEAL Properties. We hope you enjoy your home and wish you a happy and comfortable tenancy.