

# Tenant's Guide

## **Renting a property**

When you decide to rent a property, choose to rent through Paul Carr Residential Lettings. We are committed to making the application process and your tenancy as stress free as possible.

We have a range of quality properties available to rent in the North Birmingham area encompassing Sutton Coldfield, Great Barr, Aldridge, Walsall, Burntwood, Lichfield and surrounding areas from under £400 up to around £3,000 per month. Whatever your requirements, we aim to match them and deliver a level of service which is second to none.

Our dedicated team of sales advisers are ready to help you. Whilst properties are normally marketed for let around 4 to 6 weeks before the available date, we can register your requirements on our priority matching list ensuring you are contacted straightaway about new properties coming onto the market.

## **Basis of Let - Furnished vs. Unfurnished**

Nearly all of our properties are available on an 'unfurnished' basis. An unfurnished property will normally have a cooker and sometimes white goods such as a washing machine and a fridge/freezer. Floor coverings will normally be provided and sometimes blinds/curtains. Very occasionally a property may be offered on a fully or partly furnished basis.

## **Basis of Let - Managed vs. Non-Managed**

The majority of our properties are marketed on a 'Managed Let' basis. This means that once you have moved into the property you will pay your rent to us and contact us regarding any matter arising during your tenancy. We will inspect the property at regular intervals during your tenancy, giving you at least 24 hours' notice. Some properties are offered on a 'Let Only' basis. In this case, after you move into the property, you will deal directly with the landlord on all matters arising.

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## **Certification of properties**

Every let property is subject to essential safety inspections - energy performance (EPC), gas and electric, as appropriate. Where required by law, we will provide you with a copy of the relevant certificates.

## **Viewing our properties**

It is essential to view a property before making an application to rent it. Viewing appointments are generally conditional upon a prospective tenant being in employment (see also 'Processing your Application'). Our landlords do not accept DSS applications. Our specialist viewing team offer appointments Monday & Friday 1.30pm to 4.30pm, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 1.30pm to 6.00pm and 9.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays. Viewings on some properties are via landlord/existing tenant and appointment times are subject to availability. Our Lettings Enquiries team are ready to advise.

## **Application to rent a property** (allow approx. 25 minutes at our Lettings Office)

Once you have found a property you would like to proceed with, you will be required to complete an Application. All adults who will be living in the property are required to complete an application. Applications must be completed accurately. If you have any adverse credit this must be disclosed and you will need someone to act as your guarantor (they will need to complete a Guarantor Application). We require sight of various documents to allow us to progress your Application. These are detailed on the Individual Application Process and Checklist. We are also required to perform a 'Right to Rent' check in terms of the Immigration Act 2014. A payment of £80 (incl VAT) per applicant is required. If a Guarantor is needed, a payment of £80 (incl VAT) is also required. **Payment is required in cash.**

Application forms are available from any of our viewings team, from our lettings offices, or any of our sales offices. We prefer that you bring your completed application to the local lettings office but, exceptionally, you may return this to any of our sales offices. **If there is anything about the property or your application which you wish to be taken into account before we approach the landlord you MUST note this when you submit your application** (even if you have already mentioned this at the viewing appointment).

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## Guarantor

We will pursue your Guarantor if you fail to pay your rent on time. **Your Guarantor will be required to act as your Guarantor for the full duration of your legal tenancy/occupancy of the property.** In agreeing to be your Guarantor, they assume legal responsibility for all aspects of the tenancy.

## Processing your Application (Contact Applications on 0121 726 9420)

We will discuss your application with the landlord as soon as possible. It is the landlord's decision whether they wish us to proceed with your application. In the event of multiple applications, the landlord is not obliged to proceed on any application and 'first come first served' does not apply. We aim to advise you of the landlord's decision within 2 working days of receipt of your fully completed application. Once we have the landlord's agreement to proceed we will call you to confirm and thereafter we will take up references. At this stage your status moves from applicant to prospective tenant. Should the landlord decide not to proceed with your application, your £80 fee paid will be available for applications on suitable alternative properties, or will be available for collection.

## Obtaining References

Up to three references are taken for every prospective tenant - a credit reference; an employer reference and, if appropriate, a current landlord reference. References are usually obtained within a week although some references can take longer. To help speed up this process we advise you to make your employer and, if appropriate, your current landlord aware that they will be contacted to provide a reference for you. As soon as your references are completed we will liaise with the landlord and confirm their decision to you. We will also agree a move-in date with you and set up an appointment for you to visit our lettings office to discuss and sign your Tenancy Agreement etc. By this stage at the latest we strongly recommend that you consider taking out both contents cover for your personal possessions and also cover for accidental damage to the landlord's contents (such as carpets). We can help you to get the appropriate cover in place through HomeLet, who can provide you with a free **no-obligation** quote. Paul Anthony Carr are an Introducer Appointed Representative of HomeLet which is a trading name of Barbon Insurance Group Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Additionally, we can arrange protection and financial advice through our business partner Centrad Ltd.

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## Obtaining References (continued)

In the event that your reference results in a **'decline'** by the referencing agency we will advise you accordingly and discuss this with you as far as possible. In these circumstances the £80 paid per applicant **is not due for reimbursement**.

## Payment required prior to moving into the property

Before taking occupation of the property you will be required to make a payment of:

- One month's rent, plus
- A deposit of one month's rent + £100 # (subject to a minimum of £500), plus
- Agreement Fee of £150 (incl. VAT) \*\*

So, for example, if the monthly rent is £600, before taking occupation you will be required to pay £1,450 - (£600 + £700 + £150) (# - exceptionally a higher deposit) We prefer to receive the above payment by bank transfer but we are able to take a debit card payment at the sign-up appointment. Cash is also accepted but this will incur a 1.5% transaction charge. All forms of payment are required to be cleared funds at least one working day before the move-in date. We do not accept payments by cheque or credit card. In the event that you need to have a guarantor, a separate Guarantor Agreement is required. The charge for this agreement is £30 (incl VAT). All payments are required in full on or before the sign-up appointment (see below). \*\*In the event that you decide not to proceed with the tenancy after we have confirmed your sign-up & move-in appointments, this Agreement Fee still remains payable.

## Period of the Let

Our properties are generally available to let for a fixed period of 12 months, although in some cases only a 6 month let may be offered initially. We understand the importance of having the security of a roof over your head so, at around 10 weeks before the end of the Tenancy, we will contact you to ascertain your intentions. If you wish to obtain the security of a further fixed period tenancy (subject to landlord agreement) a payment of £100 (incl VAT) will be required where the tenancy is for a period of over 6 months. £75 (incl VAT) will be payable for a tenancy of 6 months. It is important that you confirm your intentions as soon as possible, especially if you wish to renew. Renewal gives you the protection of a fixed rent for a fixed term. Guarantor agreements on renewal incur a charge of £30 (Incl VAT)

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## **The Tenancy Deposit**

We are required by law to hold the deposit you have paid in an approved scheme. Paul Carr Residential Lettings use The Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS) operated by The Dispute Service under a Government awarded contract. Under the TDS your deposit is secure. In accordance with TDS guidance we aim to return your deposit to you within 10 working days of the move-out inspection provided the property is left in the same condition as at the move-in date (subject to fair wear & tear). You will be provided with a certificate to confirm your deposit is held within the Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

## **Your Tenancy Agreement and the Sign-Up Appointment** (allow approximately 20-30 minutes at our Lettings Office)

Before taking occupation we require you to attend an appointment at our lettings office to sign your Tenancy Agreement. A draft copy of this and other relevant documentation will have already been made available to you. We expect you to have read the documents and asked for any necessary clarification before attending the appointment. All prospective tenants must sign the Agreement. If you have a guarantor, they must have already signed the Guarantor Agreement. The Agreement must be signed at least one working day before the move-in date. You will be provided with a copy of the Agreement at the move in appointment. We require you to bring a copy of your Passport/Residence Permit/Identity Card to the sign-up appointment.

## **The Move-In Appointment** (allow approximately 40 minutes at the property)

At the move-in we will review the property with you and ask you to sign our Inventory (including photographic inventory) & Statement of Condition document. This is important as this document will form the basis of any dilapidations claim by the landlord. A copy of the document will be given to you in due course.

Please note that it is not possible to move any of your personal belongings into the property until the move-in appointment has been concluded. Whether you have friends and family with you to help you move, or you have engaged the services of a removal company, they must be made aware of this.

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## Your Obligations as a Tenant

### Payment of Rent

All rent **MUST** be paid in advance by monthly standing order. You are required to set this up with your bank. We do not operate a direct debit system. Your rent is due on the same date each month in line with the tenancy start date. The standing order must be set up so that the rent arrives with us on or before the due date. Whichever bank you are with, you should expect to allow three working days for your rent to reach us. So, for example, if the rent is due on the 25th of each month the standing order needs to be set up for the 22nd of the month. In this example the money would leave your bank account on that date. **Please ensure that you agree to a tenancy start date which accommodates the date your salary is paid to you.** If you experience any financial problems during the course of your tenancy which may affect payment of your rent it is essential that you contact us immediately.

### Looking after the Property

We expect you to look after the property as if it were your own. Where applicable, this also includes the garden area. Responsibility for the property rests with the tenants during the tenancy. **Any problems that may occur or repairs that are necessary MUST be reported via our website through our on-line repair reporting system – 'Report a Repair'**

We aim to resolve any repairs issues for you ASAP. To assist us we will pass your contact details to our contractor to allow them to make access arrangements with you. In the event of an emergency occurring, you should take all reasonable steps to prevent the problem escalating. If you are absent from the property at any time it must be fully secured. In the event that the property is burgled you must contact the Police and advise us immediately. Please ensure you obtain a crime reference number. You will be accountable for any damage through wilful neglect or misuse during the period of the tenancy.

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### **Keeping us informed about any changes in your contact details**

To help us ensure that you have proper enjoyment of the property we will have to be in touch with you from time to time. Please inform us immediately if you change your phone number or your email address. Our main method of contact is by email and/or phone/text for more urgent matters.

### **Periodic Inspections** (allow approximately 10 minutes at the property)

All properties under our management are subject to inspection. At the periodic inspection we are simply checking to ensure that the property and any gardens are being looked after. We are not judging your lifestyle nor are we undertaking a detailed check to the inventory. We would normally only expect to be in the property for 10 minutes. As a minimum, we will inspect the property about a month after moving in, then around 3 months later and every 6 months thereafter.

**It is a condition of your tenancy that you accommodate access for an inspection and safety checks etc with reasonable notice.** We will contact you in advance of each inspection. We find that this is easiest by email as many tenants have reported that they are not permitted to receive personal calls at work. We are required to give you a minimum of 24 hours' notice. Generally **we will give you at least 2 weeks' notice.** Whilst we prefer that you (or a friend or family member) are present during the inspection, **where we have agent keys to the property we will access the property and carry out the inspection in your absence.** This will save you taking time off work. We will leave you a note to confirm that we have attended and we will ensure that your property is secure when we leave. If there are any matters which we need to bring to your attention we will record this on our note but sometimes we may need to contact you following the inspection. Where you would prefer to be in attendance at the inspection please note that you must be available within the two-hour inspection slot allocated in our diary. Unfortunately we are unable to offer a specific time slot but we will take your personal commitments into consideration where possible.

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### **Other responsibilities**

You are responsible for the insurance of your own contents and personal effects. This is something which we can help you with (see *Obtaining References*). You are also responsible for providing a TV Licence whether or not a TV is provided by the landlord. You are also required to make your own arrangements for the provision of a phone connection/line/broadband subject to the landlord's agreement. Landlord approval must also be obtained to have Sky etc. set up at the property. You are responsible for regularly checking all smoke alarms and replacing batteries.

### **Contacting Utility Companies, Local Council etc. about your Tenancy**

We (or the landlord for certain landlord-managed properties) will contact the utility companies with relevant meter readings and the council, both after the move-in and move-out appointments. This action will close the landlord's account. However, you must also contact these bodies independently to set up your account. Please bear in mind that your responsibility for these services is for the duration of the tenancy which may not necessarily be exactly the same as the dates of occupation.

### **Final Inspection** (allow approximately 45 minutes at the property)

We always carry out a final inspection on the date your tenancy ends. Generally this will coincide with the date you vacate the property. Once we have confirmation that you will be vacating the property we will give you a final inspection appointment.

- The property must be left in a clean and tidy condition, all your personal possessions and all rubbish must have been removed.
- You will be required to hand over all keys.
- We will refer to the original inventory and statement of condition at this inspection.
- We will take final meter readings and ask you to confirm your current utility supplier(s).
- We must be advised of any issues with the property which you have not already reported.

Returning the property in a clean and tidy condition, with all your personal possessions and all rubbish removed, will allow us to ensure that your deposit is dealt with in a timely fashion.

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As you will be required to hand over the keys for the property, **no further access will be available to you**. The following list (not exhaustive) will assist you in preparing for the final inspection:

- Carpets hoovered and floors brushed & mopped over
- All cupboards emptied and wiped out
- All surfaces cleared and wiped over
- All woodwork wiped over, especially skirtings
- Windows and frames cleaned inside and out
- Kitchens - hobs, ovens, grills and cooker hoods & extractor fans cleaned and, where included, fridges & freezers clean and defrosted
- Bathrooms - toilet, sink, bath, shower/shower area and extractor fans cleaned
- Where permission granted to fix anything to the walls, the surface to be made good and repainted, as necessary
- Where permission given to repaint, all areas to be returned to original colour scheme or as specified by landlord when permission granted
- Where permission has been granted to store Landlord's contents, e.g. curtains, blinds, furniture etc. these must be re-hung/restored to original position, as appropriate
- Light bulbs and batteries for smoke alarms are a tenant responsibility. These items must have been replaced, as necessary, before we carry out our check. It is not acceptable to leave light fittings without bulbs, irrespective of whether you have purchased bulbs to leave at the property. The same applies to batteries for smoke alarms. If you have not replaced as required a deduction will be made from your deposit for a contractor's cost to re-fit, as required.
- Garden and outside areas - grass cut and weeds removed
- Garages and sheds cleared of your personal possessions and any rubbish

Most tenants receive their deposit back in full where the above preparations are made. We strongly advise you to ensure that you allow sufficient time to move out of the property.