



Living in the Property – Information & Advice

General Maintenance

Whilst I make every effort to ensure that everything is working perfectly when I rent a property, maintenance issues will of course arise. It is very important that you make me aware immediately of any problem, or potential problem, however insignificant it may seem, in order that I can evaluate it and act as required.

Some issues will always be a priority, so for instance I will always do my best to ensure you are not left for any long period without electricity, heating or hot water. However, I can only act if you make me aware.

Other issues may not seem important at the time, but a small problem can easily turn into a large problem if not dealt with straight away. I would rather be 'bothered' than not informed.

If a problem arises that is completely out of your control, I will of course pay for it to be rectified. If, however, something happens because of your own actions, or worsens due to you not informing me early enough, the financial responsibility will be with you.

Heating

The heating is controlled by a 'Hive' system. This is simple to use and offers maximum flexibility, either via the wall-mounted thermostat, or via an app on your phone (which then also allows you to control the heating or change the settings remotely). Specific information on Hive can be found in the Information File, and full instructions for your Hive thermostat can be found in the blue box file.

If any radiators are not heating up properly, the most likely reason is that they need bleeding. This is quite simple to rectify. Please contact me for instructions, or for me to attend property.



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During periods of non-occupation (e.g. when you are away at Easter/Xmas), to avoid the heating of an empty house, please ensure that the 'Hive' control system is set to 'Holiday' mode for the dates the house is empty. This maintains a minimum temperature to guard against frozen and burst pipes. Please also ensure that receiver remains connected to the internet and that power is not turned off.

Hot Water

With the one exception of 48 Adams Avenue, all houses benefit from instant hot water (via a 'combi' boiler and electric showers).

The water at 48 Adams Avenue is stored and heated in a large tank, which then supplies all the taps and power showers.

Fair Usage

Your tenancy is based on an 'all-inclusive' package, and the cost of utilities is included in your rent. However, I would ask you respectfully not to abuse this benefit. The allowance in your rent is based on reasonable consumption. Under the terms of the tenancy agreement if, at the end of the tenancy, the consumption of gas, electricity or water is deemed to have exceeded 'fair-usage' then the additional usage will be deducted from your deposit.

Boiler Issues

Should you have any issue with your boiler, in the first instance please contact me, advising me of any error code showing on the front of the boiler. If it has turned itself off, most likely it will simply need re-setting or re-pressurising. This is a simple procedure which I can talk you through over the phone, and using the specific instructions contained in the Information File.

Electrical Issues

Should some or all of the electrics go off then, assuming there has not been a general power-cut (see if neighbours' lights are on), then it is likely the power (partly or fully) in the house has been shut down

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(electrics 'tripped'), due to a fault somewhere, most likely caused by an appliance rather than in the internal wiring.

This is nothing to be concerned about. All houses are equipped with modern consumer units (fuse boards) which are designed to detect minor faults and shut down circuits as a safety precaution. It is simply a question of identifying the issue (possibly an appliance used just before), and re-setting consumer unit – ensuring all switches are in the 'up' position. If in any doubt, do not hesitate to contact me.

Tumble Driers

Each property is equipped with a tumble drier – either 'vented', where hot air is vented outside through a large plastic pipe, or 'condensing', where appliance is not by an outside wall, so hot air is condensed to water instead.

If your property is equipped with a 'vented' tumble drier the most important thing to remember is to clear any fluff from the filter in the drum before each use. Also, if you suspect that warm air is escaping inside the room (e.g. due to broken or loose pipe), please let me know ASAP, to avoid damage to property caused by excess condensation.

If your property is equipped with a 'condensing' tumble drier, as well as clearing any fluff from the filter in the drum before each use, depending on the specific model, you may also need to check each time whether any excess water needs to be emptied from the front pull-out drawer. Instruction will be pinned to the wall nearby to clarify whether this is required.

Dishwashers (where supplied)

If you are lucky enough to be living in a house with a dishwasher, it is important that it is maintained correctly, not least to ensure that it washes effectively. In addition to dishwasher tablets, you will also need to add 'rinse aid' and 'dishwasher salt' from time to time. The dishwasher itself will indicate when this is required, usually via red lights on the front.



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If you need help in understanding how to add rinse aid and/or dishwasher salt, please contact me for advice. Failure to maintain your dishwasher properly could result in a deduction from your deposit if it results in damage to the appliance.

Cleaning

This will probably be the last the last thing on your mind when you move in, but you'll find it much easier to get yourself organised straight away.

Quite simply, if you do not keep the place cleaned (vacuumed, dusted, washed, wiped, etc.) you will give yourselves a number of problems – (1) I will be hassling you, (2) you will attract mice (if food is left out), (3) it will become an unpleasant place in which to live, (4) you will give yourselves a huge amount of work at the end of the tenancy period, and (5) allowing a build-up of dirt (anywhere) can invariably result in the need to re-decorate or renew items if they are beyond effective cleaning, the result being a significant dent in your deposit money.

On the other hand, if, as a group, you are able to get organised, then the opposite of the above will be true. I would very strongly advise you to use a rota system and make sure you stick to it. Just bear in mind how you found the property when you moved in. That will be the standard I will expect when you move out, for the benefit of subsequent tenants.

Front & Back Gardens

Please keep the front and back of the house clear of rubbish. Wheelie bins / recycling boxes / green sacks are provided, depending on the property. Please use them (in the correct way) and remember to put them out the day before they are due to be collected. If you are unsure of which days boxes/bins are collected, contact the Council (01604 837837) and request a timetable for the year to be sent out to you. Also contact the Council if a bin or box is stolen, in order that a replacement can be provided. This is free of charge.

Please do not allow a build-up of rubbish outside. Apart from it looking unsightly, if any food is lying around, rodents will be attracted. Also, if a house can easily be identified as a 'student house' (often by an untidy

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front garden littered with bottles and pizza boxes!) it may become a target for burglary by thieves attracted to the thought of a house full of laptops.

Please also ensure that drains do not get blocked. This can happen when food and other items are discarded down sinks and basins.

Bedrooms

Your bedroom is your own space. My main interest is that it is left in the same condition when you leave as when you found it. Although the tenancy agreement includes a clause about sellotape and blu-tak on walls, I recognize that you may want to personalise your room, so I will be reasonable about the odd poster. I just expect you to use some common sense and ask me if you are not sure about what you can do. Whilst I want you to feel like it is your home, if I have to re-decorate the room after you've left, I will have no option but to deduct the cost from of your deposit money.

In the winter months, condensation can be an issue, causing damp walls and even black mould. To avoid this, please do not cover radiators (e.g. with damp towels/clothes), ensure nothing is in direct contact with external walls, keep heating at a reasonable level, and ensure adequate ventilation. For instance, when you are in the property, open bedroom doors to allow good air circulation. If windows are fitted with trickle vents, ensure they are open. Otherwise, opening windows (even slightly ajar) can help. If you find moisture on windowpanes and sills, always wipe up straight away with a cloth.

Neighbours

Your neighbours could be owner-occupiers, renters, or even students. The likelihood is that there will be a mixture. Therefore, some people will work during the day, some may work shifts, and some may be at home, perhaps looking after children. As such, please be aware that others may not necessarily live in the way you do.

Please be considerate, particularly when it comes to noise. For instance, do not play loud music late at night, particularly on weekdays. If you are

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planning to have people round, please inform your neighbours as a courtesy. Ultimately, simply be reasonable, respectful, and use common sense.

Guests Sleeping Over

You will note that the tenancy agreement states that this is not allowed without the prior permission of the landlord. However, in the interests of reasonableness and practicality, I will not enforce this so long as tenants do not abuse the system.

If you want your boyfriend/girlfriend to stay over on a very occasional basis, I do not have a problem in principle, so long as there is no objection from other tenants. I do not specifically require to you to inform me in advance. However, again, I do expect you to be sensible, consider the other tenants, and respect the fact that your tenancy is based on single occupancy in each bedroom.

If the system is abused, I will have no hesitation in applying a future zero tolerance approach to this and other clauses within the tenancy agreement.

Fire Safety

Within the information file I have provided a 'Risk Assessment' for each house. Please read this. It is straightforward to understand, and largely relies on common sense in the event of an emergency and with regard to basic fire prevention.

Smoke detectors are fitted throughout the house. They are mains-operated with a battery back-up. If one detector goes off for any reason, they should all go off. It is your responsibility to check them, by pressing the 'test' button, once a week. If you find (or even suspect) a fault with any part of the fire alarm system, please let me know as soon as possible.

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Crime Prevention

The risk of crime against the property and your possessions will be minimized if you follow some very basic rules. Firstly, do not draw attention to the property, particularly the fact that it is a 'student house'. This will largely be achieved by keeping the front of the house tidy. Secondly, always keep the front door locked. Thirdly, make sure that any other means of access are denied when you are out, e.g. windows, back door, side/back gates, shed door, etc.

In the unlikely event that you are subject to burglary, please ensure that you have the appropriate contents insurance in place to cover your own specific requirements.

Loss of Keys

If you do not have a key, and you need access to house, please contact me on 07949 078172 or 01327 263917. You will be given a code enabling you to access spare key in key safe outside.

Should you lose your front door key, you will need to contact locksmith (Craig Fensome) on 07939 007867 or 01604 661872. For a charge of £20.00 (paid directly to him) he will be able to attend the property and cut you another key, so long as he has another one to copy. Please note, your key is part of a 'Master Key' system, so you will not be able to get it cut in a shop.

Other Information

More information can be found by visiting www.rlsa-northampton.co.uk.

In addition, each house has an 'Information File' a ring-binder containing key contact details, legal certificates, operating instructions and other house information (including a copy of this document).

Each house also contains a blue box file containing appliance manuals. If specific manual cannot be found, with the correct make and model, most information in any case is available on-line.

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