



Subletting your property

Information for council leaseholders

Many of our leaseholders do not live in the leasehold property they own.

You can rent out your flat, but there are some guidelines you need to follow to do this. Renting out a leasehold property is known as 'subletting.'

This leaflet tells you:

- Whether you can sublet your property
- Advice on subletting your property
- Your legal responsibilities as a landlord
- How to be a good landlord

Can I sublet my flat?

We do not mind if you let out your flat and become a landlord, as long as you:

- Let us know that you are renting out your property;
- Give us your new address and phone numbers;
- Provide contact details for your tenants, any key holders and your managing agent if you are using one, as we need to be able to contact them if there are any problems with the flat such as a burst water pipe; and
- Make sure that your tenants keep to the terms of the lease, as you are responsible for their actions.

Please contact Leasehold Services:

Email: servicecharges@dacorum.gov.uk

Tel: **01442 228 799**

Advice on subletting your property

We suggest you get help from a solicitor or citizen's advice bureau to prepare a suitable tenancy agreement between you (as a private landlord) and your tenant.

If you have a mortgage you should also tell your lender as you may need their permission to let out your home and they may want to change your mortgage to a 'buy to-let' arrangement rather than a standard residential loan.

If your flat is empty for more than 30 days in a row, you are no longer insured against malicious damage, damage caused by theft or attempted theft or by water leaks from fixed pipes or appliances. You can read the full details in your policy.

We will still send you the bills for the ground rent, insurance, service charges and maintenance as you are still the leaseholder and so are responsible for these charges.

When your tenants change, you will be responsible for telling the Council Tax Department as they will need to set up a council tax account for your new tenants and amend their records to show that the old tenants are no longer responsible. Please let us have the old tenants' new address if you know it.

Visit www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/council-tax/register-for-your-council-tax

You should also tell the water, gas and electricity suppliers of any changes to who is responsible for paying their bills.

Join a tenant reference scheme. It is sensible to run checks on anyone you are thinking of letting your property to and you should ask for proof of identity and a reference from a previous landlord. This service is sometimes included if you employ a local lettings agent to help you find a tenant.

What are my legal responsibilities as a landlord?

The assured shorthold tenancy agreement between you and your tenant must keep to the latest laws and be correctly signed in two parts (the agreement and the counterpart).

You should take out appropriate landlord insurance.

If your property has any gas appliances, by law you must get a landlord's gas safety certificate each year to show that you have had a safety inspection carried out and all of the gas appliances in the property are safe. You should show the certificate to anyone who is considering renting the property, and you should give a copy to your new tenant once you have agreed the terms of the tenancy and you have both signed the tenancy agreement.

By law, you must make sure that your tenants' deposits are protected and you should have a procedure for dealing with any disputes that come up. You should join a deposit protection scheme.

All properties that are rented out must have a current energy performance certificate (EPC). You should show the certificate to anyone considering renting your property, and you should give a copy to your tenant once you have agreed the terms of the tenancy and you have both signed the tenancy agreement.

Before you rent out your property, make sure that the electrics are safe. Although this is not a legal requirement, as a landlord you have a duty to make sure that your property is safe for your tenants.

Also, your insurance may not be valid if it can be proved that the property was not safe when the tenant moved in. You should ask a qualified electrician to check the electrics before your first tenant moves in and issue a certificate to confirm they are safe.

How can I be a good landlord?

1) Join a landlords' organisation such as the National Landlords Association or the Eastern Landlords Association. The benefits of belonging to a landlords' association are:

- They will offer on-going support to help you deal with landlord-related matters.
- They will represent their members' views and interests at local, national and European level.
- They will provide access to an exclusive range of discounted products and services to their members.
- They will help private landlords to become 'accredited landlords'. This is a way to improve the average level of tenancies and properties.

2) Make sure your tenants know who to contact if they need a repair.

- British Gas offers breakdown cover for gas appliances and electrical, plumbing and drainage emergency cover. They can also provide your yearly landlord's gas safety certificate. There are many other companies which offer breakdown cover.
- You may prefer to use local tradesmen. Decide if you want your tenant to contact you if they need a repair or if you would prefer to give your tenant a list of contact numbers so they can contact the tradesmen direct.

3) Decorate your property to a high standard.

- It will be much easier to rent out your property if it looks inviting and is tastefully decorated.
- Avoid bright coloured surfaces as these can date very quickly.
- The two main areas that a tenant looks at are the kitchen and the bathroom. If you make sure that these are recently refurbished, it shouldn't take too long to rent out your property.

Find out more about Landlords, private tenants and homeowners:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/housing/private-housing

For more information please contact the Leasehold Services team by email:

servicecharges@dacorum.gov.uk or telephone **01442 228000** and ask for **Leasehold Services**. Direct line: 01442 228 799.