

Jargon Buster

Applicant

The person or party looking to rent a property.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)

This is the most common type of Tenancy Agreement and provides the tenant with certain protections under The Housing Act 1988. This agreement should be used where the rent is below £100,000 per annum, the tenancy is for a period of six months or more and the tenant is an individual, or group of individuals, rather than a company.

Break clause

A break clause gives the tenant or landlord the right to terminate a Tenancy Agreement, in writing under specific circumstances, before the date the agreement is officially due to end.

Common areas

Areas of land or buildings, such as gardens, hallways, recreational facilities and parking areas, where more than one resident shares access.

Company Tenancy

This form of Tenancy Agreement is used where a company is the tenant. There is no additional statutory protection; both landlord and tenant are bound only by the terms of the written agreement.

Contents insurance

Insurance that covers the contents of a property, including electrical goods, carpets, furniture and curtains.

Contract

A legal agreement between the landlord and tenant of a property.

Contract race

When two parties have made an offer on the same property, the landlord will let to the first party to exchange contracts.

Contractual Tenancy

This form of Tenancy Agreement is used where the rent exceeds £25,000 per annum and the tenant is an individual or group of individuals. The tenant is not given any additional statutory protection and both parties are bound only by the terms of the written agreement.

Converted flat

A flat or apartment that has been created by the subdivision of a larger property.

Credit check

The procedure by which a check is made on the credit history of an applicant, usually conducted by one of the large dedicated credit check agencies. The check will reveal history of credit card repayments, outstanding debts, arrears and County Court Judgments.

Credit history

A history of an individual's or company's past borrowing, including information about late payments and bankruptcy.

Deflation

A situation in which prices are falling (the opposite to inflation).

Deposit

A sum of money (usually four to six weeks' rent) paid by the tenant prior to moving in.

Detached

A term used to describe a property that stands alone, separate from all others.

Development

A newly built residence or an older property that has been refurbished and modernised.

Dilapidations

Any disrepair or damage to a rented property. The costs of the dilapidations are usually recovered from the deposit.

Draft contract

Preliminary version of the contract.

Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994

Regulations that require all electrical installation and appliances within the property are maintained in good order and regularly checked for safety by an appropriate registered engineer.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

An EPC measures the energy efficiency of a property using a scale of A-G. It is a legal requirement and the landlord's responsibility to have a valid EPC for their property when it is marketed.

Excess

The initial sum paid on an insurance claim.

Extension tenancy

A legal agreement that extends the term of a rental agreement.

Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 and (Amendment) 1993

Regulations that require all domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery in a property to be certified as compliant.

Gas Safety Regulations 1998

Regulations that require that any gas appliances in a property to be inspected by a gas engineer, who is certified by the Gas Safe Register, before tenants move into a property and annually thereafter.

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

A building of three floors or more which is to be occupied by three or more people and where these people live as more than one household and share facilities such as bathrooms, toilets or cooking facilities.

Inventory

An inventory is a list describing the condition and contents of a property and is produced prior to commencement of the tenancy and referred to at the end of the tenancy, against which dilapidations/weaknesses etc which occur during the tenancy can be measured to ensure that the property is left in the same condition.

Landlord

The owner of property that is rented.

Landlord's reference

A reference given by a previous landlord, which confirms an applicant's history of payment of rent and previous conduct as a tenant.

Lease agreement

The formal legal document entered into between a landlord and a tenant that reflects the terms of the negotiations between them. It constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and sets out their basic legal rights.

Long let

A long let is a tenancy that typically lasts for a period of six months or more.

Maintenance charge

The cost of repairing and maintaining external or internal communal parts of a building charged to the landlord. Also known as service charge.

Maisonette

A self-contained apartment (usually on two floors) in a larger house with its own entrance from the outside.

National Approved Letting Scheme (NALS)

NALS is an accreditation scheme for lettings and management agents, offering landlords and tenants peace of mind that they are dealing with a firm that agrees to meet defined standards of customer service.

Offer

A sum of money that the tenant offers to pay to rent a property.

Pied à terre

A property kept for temporary, secondary or occasional occupation.

Portable Appliance Test (PAT)

A test carried out by a registered engineer to ensure that all electrical installations and appliances within a property are safe in conjunction with the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994.

Premium

The monthly amount payable for an insurance policy.

Premium lease

Where rent for the property is paid in full up front.

Property Management

The management of a property on behalf of the owner.

Protography

Fresh Move Protographers are trained specifically to collate property information including floorplans, video tours and multiple photographs, all in just one visit.

Renewal of contracts

Opportunity to renew a contract that has expired or will shortly expire.

SMS

Short Message Service. Commonly known as text messages.

Section 21 notice

The notice a landlord can give to a tenant to regain possession of a property

Semi-detached

A property that is joined to one other house.

Service charge

See maintenance charge.

Sitting tenant

A person occupying a property who is legally protected against being removed.

Statutory periodic tenancy

When the fixed term of an Assured or Assured Shorthold Tenancy comes to an end but the Tenant stays, a periodic tenancy automatically follows if no additional contracts are signed, the tenancy will be on the same basis as the original agreement.

Studio flat

A flat consisting of one main room or open-plan living area, incorporating cooking and sleeping facilities usually with a separate bathroom/shower room.

Subject to contract

Words that confirm an agreement is not yet legally binding.

Tenancy

The temporary occupation of a property by a tenant.

Tenancy Agreement

A legal agreement designed to protect the rights of the landlord and the tenant setting out all Terms and Conditions of the rental arrangements.

Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme (TDPS)

All deposits being paid by a tenant for an Assured Shorthold Tenancy must be registered with a recognised deposit protection scheme within 14 days.

Tenant

An individual, group of individuals (up to four) or company who holds or possesses property for a time, in return for the payment of rent.

Terraced house

A property that forms part of a connected row of houses.

The Property Ombudsman (TPO)

The Property Ombudsman (TPO) is a free, fair and independent arbitration service which provides sellers, buyers, landlords and tenants with an assurance that they will receive the highest level of customer service

Under offer

The status of a property to let when a landlord has accepted an offer from a prospective tenant, prior to exchange of contracts.

Valuation

A basic survey of a property to estimate its value for letting purposes.

Void period

Period of time when a property is empty/unoccupied by a tenant.