What to expect renting your property

From the first enquiry to the end of the tenancy.

Letting a home is less a single event than a run of small decisions: who to rent to, what to ask for at the start, how to handle repairs and what happens when the tenancy ends. Here is what the journey usually looks like, and where the rules in Scotland shape it.

1. Marketing and viewings

When RentLocally markets a property to let, we advertise it on Rightmove. We do not list on other property portals, and this guide does not promise any particular number of enquiries, viewings or a time to let.

Your advert must show your landlord registration number (or 'landlord registration pending') and the property's EPC rating. Good photographs, an accurate description and a realistic asking rent do most of the work. Our rental guidance describes nearby advertised rents; it is a starting point for that conversation, not a valuation.

Expect to arrange viewings at times that suit working applicants, including early evenings. If a tenant is still living in the property, viewings need to fit around them and the rules for accessing the property.

2. Choosing a tenant fairly

When considering potential tenants you can ask for proof of identity, payslips or bank statements to show they can afford the rent, and contact details for previous landlords for a reference.

- You can only check a tenant's credit rating with their written permission, and you should not charge them a fee for it.
- You cannot discriminate against a potential tenant because they have children or receive benefits.
- 'Right to rent' immigration checks apply in England, not in Scotland.
- You can ask for a guarantor; if you do, they must sign the guarantor section of the tenancy agreement.

3. Money at the start of the tenancy

You can ask for a deposit of up to two months' rent. In most cases it must be protected in one of the three government-approved schemes in Scotland within 30 working days of the tenancy starting, and within 30 days you must give the tenant written details including the scheme's name and contact details.

Charging any other fee to start or renew a tenancy is against the law, including key money, credit check fees, administration fees and non-refundable holding deposits. Tenants can claim these back.

You can ask for rent in advance, for example where a tenant has no guarantor, but you must tell them what period it covers and it cannot be more than six months' rent. If rent is paid in cash, give a receipt.

4. The tenancy paperwork

Use the correct documentation when setting up the tenancy agreement. The Repairing Standard guidance also explains that, at the start of the tenancy or earlier, the tenant must be given written information about the Repairing Standard, including how it can be enforced.

We recommend a detailed, photographed inventory and check-in report signed at the start. It is the clearest evidence of the property's condition if questions come up about the deposit later.

5. During the tenancy

The property must meet the Repairing Standard at all times during the tenancy, not just on the first day. If it does not and repairs are not carried out, the tenant can apply to the housing tribunal.

Damp and mould have specific timescales. If there is damp or mould you must inspect within 10 working days and send the tenant a written summary within 3 working days of finishing the inspection. If the inspection finds substantial damp or mould, repairs must start within 5 working days. If something outside your control causes a delay, you must tell the tenant why and when you expect to act.

Rent increases, rent arrears, access for repairs and antisocial behaviour each have their own rules on mygov.scot. Councils can also ask landlords for information about the rents they charge.

6. When the tenancy ends

Ending a tenancy, and returning the deposit, both follow set rules. The deposit cannot be used for normal wear and tear; if there are no costs to deduct, it must be returned in full.

A check-out report against the original inventory, prompt meter readings and a quick turnaround on any work make the gap before the next tenancy as short as possible.

At a glance: checklist

- ☐ Advert shows the registration number (or 'pending') and the EPC rating
- ☐ Referencing agreed; written permission held for any credit check
- ☐ No prohibited fees requested
- ☐ Deposit no more than two months' rent, protected in an approved scheme and written details given
- ☐ Correct tenancy documentation and Repairing Standard information provided
- ☐ Inventory and check-in report completed
- ☐ A plan for repairs, including damp and mould timescales

Official sources

Setting up a tenancy as a private landlord (mygov.scot)
https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-new-tenancy

Taking a deposit as a private landlord (mygov.scot)
https://www.mygov.scot/tenancy-deposits-landlords

When you must protect a tenancy deposit (mygov.scot)
https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-deposit/protection

Registering as a private landlord (mygov.scot)

https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-registration

Your responsibilities as a private landlord (mygov.scot)
https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-responsibilities

Repairs and maintenance as a private landlord (mygov.scot)
https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-repairs

Repairing Standard: statutory guidance for private landlords (section 2, overview) (gov.scot)
https://www.gov.scot/publications/repairing-standard-statutory-guidance-private-landlords/pages/3/

Please note

This guide is general information for private landlords in Scotland, written by RentLocally and checked against the official pages listed in the sources on 27 October 2026. It is not legal advice. The checklists help you prepare; completing them is not a certification that a property meets the Repairing Standard, the Tolerable Standard or any other legal requirement. Rules change, so always check the official sources and take professional advice for your own circumstances.