



Making London your home...

RHP SERVICES: INFORMATION FOR LANDLORDS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Types of Property

We are looking for licensed houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), studio, one, two, three four and five bedroom homes. RHP Services can offer you a guaranteed rent scheme with a comprehensive property management service.

Rental Income

You can use the **Quick Rental Valuation** facility on our website to get an idea of how much rent you could receive, or you can book a free no obligation **property inspection and rental valuation** for a more detailed offer.

The rent we can offer you is determined by what the councils we work with pay us, and this in turn is determined by the size and location of the property. Unfortunately we cannot offer any premium for properties in exceptional decorative order or with facilities that could attract a premium if rented privately, for example en suite bathrooms.

Do bear in mind that the rent we are offering you is **guaranteed** and you will be paid whether the property is empty or occupied from the day we take it on. You will therefore receive the rental amount we agree with you every month during the contract with us, even if there is no one living in the property.

Property Management Service

We will provide all tenancy management services, and your property will be looked after by RHP Services, so you will not have to deal with the day-to-day property management issues. Please see the Services for Landlords document also available on our website for more details of the service we provide.

We will enter into a contract with you for a fixed period of up to three years for the property as soon as it is ready to let. You can extend or renew the contract with us at the end of this first contract period with us.

Quality Standard

All the property we manage has to be to the **Decent Homes Standard**. This is the same minimum standard you should be providing if you let the property privately.

All property must have current gas, electricity and energy performance **certificates**.

All property must be furnished with good quality safety rated bedroom, living and dining room furniture and kitchen appliances. We can supply all the required **furniture** and kitchen appliances.

We will carry out a no fee no obligation **property inspection and rental valuation** of your property and let you know what works are needed to bring it up to the required standard.

Property Documents

We require current (with 6 months or more before renewal) gas and electrical safety certificates and an energy performance certificate for each property.

We also need proof of ownership and permission to rent, confirmation of building insurance, and copies of service plans, warranties and operating instructions for equipment and appliances

You can go to the **Certificates and Documents** section of this document for more details on required paperwork.

Extra Services

If your property needs some work to bring it up to the required quality standard, we can carry out all the redecoration, repair and renovation works.

We can also commission the gas, electricity and energy performance **certificates** required for all rental properties.

RHP Services can also supply all the **furniture** and kitchen appliances (also often called 'white goods') required for furnished lettings, whether we manage the property or not.

We encourage all our landlords to take out gas **boiler cover** with RHP Services. This is because we have engineers who can attend to the property within 2 hours of a problem being reported, whereas other companies can take up to 48 hours to respond. If you already have a boiler service plan you can move to our cover as soon as your current cover ends.

We know that when renting out a property the initial cost can mount up. This is why we provide a service where we deduct these costs – for example for works to bring the property up to standard, furniture packs and certificates – in equal amounts from the rent we pay you over a number of months. This will save you the hassle of paying for it when the contract starts and put less strain on your finances.

Please contact us for a rental valuation, a quote for works or certificates, furniture pricing, and advice about renting your property through us.

STANDARDS AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RENTED PROPERTY

Law and Regulation

Managing rented property is quite a complex business, governed by laws and regulations to ensure the quality and safety of all rented dwellings, and to protect tenants. Unfortunately landlords do not have a similar level of legal protection from bad tenants!

As well as being members of the National Landlords Association (NLA) and the Residential Landlords Association (RLA), RHP Services is London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS accredited), which means we are recognised by London local authorities (councils) as having the necessary skill and expertise to manage residential rented properties to the highest standards. We are also accredited landlords on many individual local authorities' accreditation schemes.

This section has a summary of what you will have to deal with as a landlord.

At RHP Services not only will we will help you to ensure your property meets the required standards and that all the necessary paperwork is in order, we will free you from having to deal with these tenancy and property management issues when we take on the management of your property under our exceptionally good value **Guaranteed Rent Scheme**.

If you choose to manage the property yourself you will still have to meet these requirements as they are legal requirements that will be enforced by local authorities (councils), Trading Standards Service, and the Health and Safety Executive.

Town Planning and Building Regulations

You require **planning permission** or **planning consent** if you are making any significant alterations to a building, including for example loft conversions, extensions, or changing the use of any building (for example from garage to granny annex). You have to apply to the local planning authority for permission and consent, and this process can take many months.

All major works has to be inspected and passed by a local authority building inspector to ensure it meets **Building Regulations** which set the minimum required quality standard for all building works.

PROPERTY STANDARD

By law all rented properties in England and Wales have to meet minimum health and safety standards, and this in turn dictates a minimum quality standard.

Local authorities (councils) in England have two guides for assessing the quality of residential dwellings and all the property we manage has to meet this quality standard.

Property Standard 1: Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor. The HHSRS lists 29 hazards - risk of harm to health and safety - in and around the home, and sets out preventative measures that can be taken to limit these hazards.

It is a legal requirement that residential premises be free from category 1 hazards. Local authorities can (and do) take action against property owners if their property does not meet this standard.

Property Standard 2: Decent Homes Standard

With the exception of the requirement to be free of HHSRS category 1 hazards (see above), this is not a statutory requirement for private residential dwellings. However it is the quality standard required by councils we work with.

In a nutshell the decent homes standards states that dwellings must and be weatherproof, warm, and have reasonably modern facilities. This means the property must:

- have good heating and ventilation to help prevent condensation, and must be free of damp and mould;
- be free of pollutants – no asbestos or other hazardous materials or chemicals, have properly installed gas with hard wired smoke alarms and carbon monoxide monitors;
- have adequate space (minimum room sizes), security (locks), light (windows and light fittings), and noise insulation;
- have adequate water supply, hygiene and sanitation (sinks, baths, water closets (toilets)); food storage, preparation and cooking facilities; refuse storage (bins) and collection facilities;
- have adequate protection against accidents – electrical safety, window and door security, level floors with appropriate floor coverings, fire retardant fixtures, fittings and furniture.

Additional Property Standard Requirements

Most local authorities we work with now also require additional safety measures. Currently these include:

- (1) window opening restrictors on all windows above the ground floor;
- (2) Kitchen fire safety packs – fire door to kitchen, heat detectors, fire extinguisher and a fire blanket;
- (3) Water and slip resistant flooring in bathrooms.

All property must have adequate means of receiving a TV signal, either a digital TV aerial or connections for cable or satellite TV.

We have to provide tenants with a basic information pack with instructions on how to use equipment at the property including space and water heating and all appliances, and a list of local facilities such as schools, health facilities and council offices. We will make up this information pack for your property if we are provided with the instruction manuals for all supplied equipment

Our free no obligation property inspection and rental valuation will tell you what, if any, work needs to be done to bring your property up to the required standard, and we can provide quotes for and project manage all the work required.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is defined as a property where two or more individuals that are not the same household (i.e. are not related or partners) are sharing facilities (bathroom, kitchen). Guidance is a bit fuzzy on house and flat shares, but basically if each individual in the property has their own tenancy or licence then it is a HMO.

HMO Licensing

The Housing Act 2004 introduced a requirement for HMOs to be licensed by local authorities. Mandatory licensing is required for HMOs with 5 or more people and/or in a building with 3 or more storeys (even if one or more of these is not part of the residential dwelling).

Some local authorities have additional licensing powers to require all HMOs meeting criteria set by the council to be licensed. For example local authorities can use this power to require all shared accommodation let to students in their borough to be licensed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Important Disclaimer: While we do our best to ensure the information on our web site is up-to-date we cannot accept any responsibility or liability for any loss or harm occasioned by members of the public using this information.

Landlords and managing agents have a duty of care to ensure rented properties are safe for tenants, visitors, and even trespassers! Basically this means property owners, landlords and agents are required by law to ensure the property and all fittings and furniture supplied with the property are safe. As this is a legal duty landlords can face fines, jail and civil damages if their property does not meet the required standard and if tenants and visitors have an accident and suffer an injury in the property as a result.

These are some of the main Acts of Parliament that place legal duties on landlords (any person or organisation the rents out residential property):

Housing Act 2004

As well as regulations on tenancy management, this Act introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to replace the Fitness Standard. There is more information on the HHSRS in the property standards section of this website.

Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

This places a legal duty on landlords to ensure any gas appliance, installation pipe work or flue installed at any property under his control is maintained in a safe condition so as to prevent risk of injury to any person. In addition landlords are required to 'ensure that each appliance and flue to which that duty extends is checked for safety within 12 months of being installed and at intervals of not more than 12 months since it was last checked for safety ...'

As a result of a number of deaths due to faulty gas installations these gas safety regulations are rigorously enforced.

Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994

A landlord must ensure that the fixed electrical installation is safe. Safe means that there is no unacceptable risk of injury or death, or damage to property from the electrical installation. The fixed installation includes the consumer unit (fuse box), fixed wires, wall sockets, light fittings and switches, and anything else that is permanently wired in.

A landlord must also ensure that any portable electrical appliance supplied is safe. Portable appliances are those that would normally have a plug fitted for connection to a socket, and include all mains voltage equipment such as kettles, toasters, washing machines, fridges and freezers, and electric hobs and ovens.

Inspections of the fixed installation by a competent person (generally a qualified electrician) is required under management regulations for HMOs (whether licensable

or not), at intervals of no more than five years.

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 requires the landlord to ensure the electrical installation is safe when the tenancy begins and that it is maintained in a safe condition throughout that tenancy, so it is regarded as good practice for landlords to have safety checks on non HMO lettings.

Councils will not accept a property without a valid electrical installation certificate.

We would also recommend that you upgrade your property to meet the most recent regulatory standard BS7671:2008.

Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations (Amended 1989 & 1993) – This sets out standards for fire resistance for furniture and furnishings containing upholstery. Landlords are required to ensure all furniture supplied in the property meet these requirements.

Consumer Protection Act 1987 – This was amended in 1993 to include regulations on the provision of furniture in rented accommodation to back up landlords' liability to ensure the safety of furniture and furnishings as set out in the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations.

While these are the main Acts and Regulations that landlords have to adhere to, there are many more that can be used to prosecute landlords in the interest of protecting tenants including:

- General Product Safety Regulations 1994
- Occupiers Liability Act (1957, 1984)
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Housing Acts (up to the 2004 Act)
- Landlord & Tenant Acts (1927, 1954, 1985)
- Protection from Eviction Act 1977 (as amended)
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Case Law – Decisions made by judges are used as precedents.

RHP Services will make sure your property meets and is maintained at the required standard when in our management. However if you have any concerns about your legal liability in terms of renting out your property, we would suggest that you obtain expert legal advice from a solicitor with appropriate experience of residential property law and regulation.

Tax

You need to seek professional advice about your tax liability for rental income from the properties we manage for you, we are not qualified to give this advice.

Further Information and Advice

If you have any questions about the services we offer landlords please contact us by email or call for an informal chat.

CERTIFICATES AND DOCUMENTS

Before we can take your property into management we need the following certificates and documents.

Essential Documents

These are documents that we must have before we can take your property into management. We are happy to go through this list in detail with you.

- **Gas Safety Certificate**

If gas is supplied to the property you must have a current gas safety certificate. We cannot take on a property that does not have a current certificate, and as a property owner you should not rent out a property that has not passed a gas safety inspection. You can receive substantial fines and even go to prison if a tenant is injured by a defective gas installation.

Gas certificates have to be renewed every year. We can arrange for gas certificates to be renewed every year by Gas Safe certified engineer for the period your property is in management with us.

- **Electrical Safety Certificate**

You must have a current Electrical Safety Certificate for the property. The full title of this is Domestic Electrical Installation Periodic Inspection Report, and it is a report on how safe the electrical installation of a property is.

A National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) registered electrician will carry out an inspection of all the wiring at the property, and if it meets the standards as required by Building Regulations, will issue a certificate. Electrical Safety Certificates are usually valid for five years.

This certificate does not include testing of electrical appliances, which are described as any equipment that is plugged into an electric socket. Electrical appliances include the three 'white goods' required to be supplied as a furnished rental – washing machine, fridge freezer and hob and oven (if electric or connected to the electricity supply). For this you need a portable appliance test (PAT). Most electricians who carry out Periodic Inspection Reports will also carry out PATs.

It is not a legal requirement to have PATs for single family rented dwellings, though it is advisable to have all supplied electrical appliances tested before the property is rented out.

As a property owner you should not rent out a property that has not passed an electrical safety inspection.

- **Energy Performance Certificate**

This certificate sets out how energy efficient a property is with ratings from and is required for all residential properties. Although most tenants will never ask to see the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), it is a European Union (EU) regulation that all rented property and property put up for sale have an EPC. It is therefore one of the required items of paperwork for all rented residential properties.

Fortunately you only need an EPC once every ten years. It is recommended that you have a new EPC done after works to the property, particularly work that improves the energy efficiency such as loft and wall insulation, replacing windows, installing new energy efficient boilers, etc.

Please note that we can commission the gas, electricity and energy performance certificates if you do not already have these, and keep them updated as necessary - the gas safety certificate which has to be renewed every 12 months.

- **Building Insurance**

We will need a copy of the buildings insurance certificate or written confirmation that you have buildings insurance. This insurance must be kept up to date throughout the time we manage the property (most insurance has to be renewed every year).

If you have a lease the freeholder will provide you with written confirmation of buildings insurance details which will suffice, though you can request a copy of the insurance certificate from them.

You do not need contents insurance, though you may wish to take out extended warranties and service plans on the white goods supplied as part of a furnished rental.

- **Proof of Ownership**

We require documentary proof that you are the legal owner of the property. This can be in the form of the purchase completion statement your solicitor would have given to you when you bought the property. If you cannot find a copy of this (quite often the original is kept with the title deeds), a Land Registry statement of ownership, which you can get from the Land Registry at www.uklrs.co.uk or www.land-search-uk.co.uk

Desirable Documents

These are documents that it will be useful for us to have – the more you can provide us the less likely we are to have to contact you!

- **Permission to Let**

If you have a mortgage we will need a letter from the lender to confirm that they are happy for you to rent out the property.

If you have a lease (common with flats/apartments), then we will also need a letter from the freeholder or management company confirming that you have permission or that your lease allows you to rent out the property.

- **Gas Boiler Cover and Equipment Warranties**

We require a copy of any existing gas boiler cover and also recommend that you transfer to the cover we provide at the end of existing cover.

We also need details of any warranties you may have for works (double glazing, damp proofing, etc) and equipment (space and water heating, cookers, ovens, fridge, freezer, washing machine, etc.) in the property.

- **Instruction and Owners Manuals**

It is also useful for us to have the operating instructions / user manuals that come with boilers and equipment. Most modern equipment is supplied with 'quick guides' that are only a few pages long and these will be enough.

If you have had an alarm system installed we will need both the user instruction and the alarm code. If you have a monitored system you will have to cancel the contract before we take the property into management.

- **Utility Suppliers Details**

We require details of current gas and electricity suppliers as we will need to contact them to change bill payer details. We require details of suppliers for key and card meters as we may need to contact them during the time the property is in management with us should an issue arise with the supply or equipment. Supplier details will be on bills and sometimes on the meters.

You will no longer be responsible for water and sewerage bills from the next due date after we take the property on (this is because water and sewerage charges are usually paid six months or a year in advance and we do not make refunds or deductions for charges already paid).

- **Council Tax**

We need to know which local authority council tax for the property is paid to. You will no longer be responsible for paying council tax for the property from the day we take it on.

- **Television licence**

You will no longer be responsible for a television licence for the property from the day we take the property on. You must also cancel any subscription service (Sky).

We can scan and make copies of all documents and return the originals to you.