

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
Residential Lettings



Tenant Handbook

# WELCOME

This handbook covers a range of topics that you will find useful during your tenancy with us. These include how to contact our team, the letting process, property maintenance, utilities, your local community and ending your tenancy.

You can find more information about us on our website:  
[www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk](http://www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Residential Lettings Team

 01865 280942

 [residential-lettings@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:residential-lettings@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### Oxford University Security Services - outside office hours

 01865 289999

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# YOUR TENANCY

## A timeline journey



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Signing your tenancy  
with the University or an  
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checklist



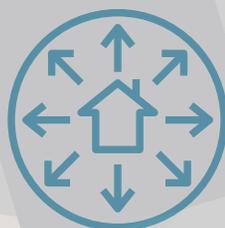
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tenancy renewal



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Check-out  
appointment



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Returning  
your deposit





# MOVING IN



## MOVING IN CHECKLIST

ITEM	TICK
Confirm inventory, submit electronically or sign and return.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up standing order (or salary deduction if University staff).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for a parking permit (if needed).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange gas/oil, electricity and water payments, if applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up a Council Tax account.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for TV licence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange telephone and internet access.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Register with a dentist and doctor.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change address details at bank, DVLA and workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance (contents only).	<input type="checkbox"/>

## CHECK-IN APPOINTMENT

We like to meet all our new tenants early in the tenancy and welcome them to their new property. The check-in appointment offers you the opportunity to meet the team and ask any questions. You can go through the inventory in your own time, but we are also happy to assist you at the check-in appointment.

## INVENTORY

The inventory forms part of the tenancy agreement. Please take the time to check each item and its condition.

The purpose of the inventory is to detail the condition and contents of the property at the time you move in. If there are any queries or errors with any description, this must be agreed within the first 14 days of the tenancy.

You will receive the inventory either in electronic form or as a paper copy. If you receive the electronic version, please follow the on-screen instructions to send it back to us. If you have a paper inventory, please write any amendments you wish to make on it and send a signed copy back to the Residential Lettings office.

At the end of the tenancy, the property must be clear of your personal belongings and left in the same condition as when you arrived, aside from 'fair wear and tear'.

## FAIR WEAR AND TEAR

The law defines fair wear and tear as "reasonable use of the premises by the tenant and the ordinary operation of natural forces." This refers to the forces of time, but also to the effects of a person's normal daily habits on a property and its contents.

## YOUR TENANCY DEPOSIT AND PROTECTION

The University uses 'MyDeposits', a government-approved deposit protection scheme. This is a legal requirement for landlords and letting agents, to protect their tenants' deposits.

'MyDeposits' means that as long as you comply with the terms of your tenancy agreement, we are obliged to return your deposit in full, minus any agreed deductions, within 10 days of when we agree how much will be returned.

'MyDeposits' also provides a free impartial dispute-resolution service in the event of a disagreement.

## ABOUT YOUR RENT

Rent is charged by calendar month. If your tenancy begins in the middle of a month you will initially be charged a partial month's rent.

The rental amount is reviewed each year, beginning from the next complete month following the anniversary of the start of the tenancy. Any rent reviews generally follow inflation, calculated as the percentage change in the Retail Price Index (RPI) over the past twelve months. Exact details will always be included in your tenancy contract.

## HOW RENT PAYMENTS ARE MADE

Rent payments are made either by a standing order set up with your bank or, if you are an employee of University of Oxford, as a direct deduction from your salary.

## PETS

The University's standard tenancy agreement and policy state that no pets may be kept without prior written permission. If you wish to keep a pet in your rented property, you need to seek written consent from the Residential Lettings team. In deciding whether to grant this, we will consider whether the property is suitable for this type of pet.

If you own a dog, or would like to own a dog, it is particularly important to discuss this with the Residential Lettings team and make sure that we are aware. If a visit to your property is scheduled by a member of staff or a contractor, we ask that a tenant is either present, or that you confirm that any dogs are safely secured in a different room.

To review the Pet Policy, please visit [www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk](http://www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk) or contact us on 01865 280942 or [residential-lettings@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:residential-lettings@admin.ox.ac.uk)



# LIVING IN YOUR HOME

SERVICE	WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US	WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU
 <b>RENT</b>	All our properties are fully managed and they are maintained and decorated to a high standard.	Pay your rent in advance, on the agreed date and by the agreed method.
 <b>SMOKING</b>	All our properties are non-smoking. This includes electronic and herbal cigarettes.	Do not smoke in our properties.  Smoke damage to the property during your tenancy will result in a charge for re-decoration and cleaning of soft furnishings, such as curtains and carpets.
 <b>GARDENING</b>	We will prepare the garden at the beginning of your tenancy so that it is in good order for when you move in. During the course of your stay, we will also carry out any required maintenance on trees and hedges.	Where applicable, please cut your lawn regularly and keep the garden tidy and free from rubbish.  Please do not plant or remove any trees from your garden or carry out any maintenance on trees. If you believe that any work may be required, please inform us as soon as possible.
 <b>REPAIRS &amp; DAMAGE</b>	We strive to ensure repairs are completed in a timely manner, but please be aware that in some cases there will be delays – for example, if specialist engineers or replacement parts are needed. When there is a serious danger to property or people, such as major leaks, flooding or electrical failure, we aim to respond within 3 hours. For urgent repairs, such as loss of heating, minor leaks or blockages to drains, we aim to complete the job within 24 hours.	Report any damage to your property to us as soon as possible.  Any damage caused to the property, or to furniture which belongs to the University, may mean you are charged the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged item.
 <b>INSURANCE</b>	The University provides building insurance for properties and any contents it owns.	We advise you to take out contents insurance which covers (among other things) accidental damage to your possessions.
 <b>LOCKOUTS</b>	A member of Security Services will, by arrangement, be able to meet you at your property to unlock the door.	Please contact us to arrange access back into your property if you are locked out. Outside office hours, please contact Security Services directly. You will be asked for ID. They may also ask to see a copy of your tenancy agreement after letting you back into the property.  Please note that any out-of-hours call out to open a door may mean you are charged £25.
 <b>REPLACEMENT KEYS</b>	If you lose your keys, please get in touch with us and we'll issue a replacement.	You will be liable for the cost of changing locks and replacing keys. This typically costs:  £8.72—each replacement union key £50.40—each replacement union lock £21.05—replacement RFID fob (attached to your keys) £60.00—typical labour cost for lock change
 <b>MAINTENANCE</b>	The University will carry out any routine maintenance needed at the property during your tenancy – such as clearing guttering or adjusting windows or doors. We aim to complete any routine maintenance job within 21 days.	Please contact us as soon as possible to report any maintenance issues. Do not try to arrange a repair yourself.
 <b>ELECTRICAL CHECKS</b>	Our properties are UK mains supplied; this is 240 volts/50 Hz.	You will need to check that your electrical items work at this voltage. If they do not, please bring a transformer. Plugs may also be different, so you may need to buy an adapter plug.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

Some of the costs associated with your property are listed below. If anything is unclear or not listed, please contact us to check.

ITEM	TENANT	LANDLORD
Inventory check-in		X
Rent	X	
Water bills	See contract	
Electricity bills	See contract	
Gas bills	See contract	
Oil (Wytham)	See contract	
Council tax	X	
TV Licence	X	
Telephone	X	
Building insurance		X
Contents insurance	X	
Internet (broadband, cable or satellite) * Under no circumstance should a satellite dish be installed without first getting written consent.	X	
Routine repairs and maintenance		X
Gas or oil boiler servicing		X

## REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE – YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Keeping your home clean and tidy and preventing any blockage to the drains, gutters and pipes of the house.
- Cleaning with the correct products.
- Ensuring windows and doors are locked when you leave the property unattended.
- Opening windows regularly, particularly in the bathroom and kitchen, to avoid condensation and the risk of mould.
- Not to affix things to the walls by any means without the consent of the office. Picture hooks, drawing pins and blue tac, etc. can damage the walls, requiring repair or redecoration.
- Doing those minor jobs which a householder would be expected to do. These tasks might include:
  - Replacing light bulbs
  - Replacing smoke/heat detector and carbon monoxide detector batteries where needed
  - Ensuring waste and recycling is available for collection by 7am on collection day
  - Arranging collection of bulky waste items (such as sofas, chairs, washing machine) with the council
  - Defrosting fridge/freezer (where provided)
  - Gardening (where relevant)
  - Vacuuming
  - Regularly checking smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitor by pressing the 'test' button
  - Keeping hobs and ovens clean
  - Keeping the washing machine/tumble dryer clean, particularly the door seals
  - Pest control

## CONDENSATION

Condensation may build up in your accommodation, particularly on windows and exterior walls. This can lead to damp and mould, so it is important to take some preventative measures:

- Ventilate – ensure that you regularly ventilate your accommodation to allow drier air to flow in from the outside and replace damp air inside;
- If it is safe and secure to do so, leave the bedroom window ajar when sleeping;

- Open the window when cooking/washing up;
- Open windows for around half an hour per day;
- If your window has trickle vents, ensure they are open;
- Avoid drying clothing on radiators inside; and
- Keep lids on pans when cooking to reduce the release of moisture into the air.

If you need any further advice, please contact us. Visit our website, [www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk](http://www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk) for more detailed information on condensation management.

# SAFETY

## CARBON MONOXIDE MONITOR

All our rental properties that contain devices capable of producing carbon monoxide gas are fitted with carbon monoxide detectors. Although your detector is tested annually, we recommend that you check it regularly by pressing the “test” button.

**Carbon monoxide is odourless and could be lethal, so if your alarm should ever sound, please leave the property immediately and telephone the office (or Security Services if it is outside of working hours).**

Do not re-enter the property until it has been confirmed that it is safe to do so.

## SMOKE ALARMS

All smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide alarms, are tested before tenancies start, during management inspections, and in some cases at other times. However, it is good practice to test the audible function of these alarms each week.

You will notice that each smoke, or carbon monoxide alarm has a test button. Please do press these buttons each week to make them sound. If any fail to function, please contact the Residential Lettings team for advice.

If an alarm has a low battery it will often make intermittent singular beeps. If this occurs, please change the battery, where you are able, or please contact the team, if you are in any doubt.

- Do not cover or tamper with smoke alarms in your property.
- Please be careful when cooking as smoke alarms are very sensitive.

## FIRE PREVENTION

- Ensure the correct plugs are used for electrical equipment.
- Keep your oven and hob clean.
- Do not heat up large amounts of oil.
- Do not smoke within the buildings.

- Do not use candles or incense sticks.
- Do not store items in gas or electricity meter cupboards.
- Avoid overloading electrical sockets. If necessary, please use a multi-way bar extension rather than a block adaptor.
- Keep an eye out for blackness or scorch marks around sockets or plugs.
- Report any damaged or frayed cables.
- Report any blown fuses or circuit-breakers.
- **If the fire alarm sounds, leave the property immediately.**

## FIRE DOORS/COMMUNAL AREAS

- In some properties, particularly in communal areas, there are fire doors. These will usually be marked as fire doors, and often have automatic door closers. These doors are designed to prevent the spread of fire, so please never prop them open or prevent them from closing in any way.
- Fire doors all have a rubber/plastic trim/seal around them. It is also good practice to regularly check that there are no defects or tears in this trim. If you notice any problem, please report this to the Residential Lettings team.
- Communal / shared entrance halls, staircases and landings must be kept clear and free from obstructions at all times (please store shoes and personal belongings inside your apartment) – these areas are Fire Exits and must be kept clear for your safety and that of your neighbours.

## STATUTORY TESTING

In accordance with current legislation and good practice, we carry out the following checks in University properties:

- Gas safety – every 12 months
- Boiler services – every 6 or 12 months
- Fire alarm and emergency lighting (if applicable) – every 3 months
- Portable Appliance Test (PAT) – every 12 months
- Electrical fixed wire testing – every 5 years
- Chimney inspection, in properties that have wood burners or fireplaces approved for use – every 6 months

## PEST CONTROL

From time to time, it is possible that you may experience problems with pests, especially if you live in the countryside. These could be ants, wasps, or other insects, vermin, such as mice or rats, or any unwanted visitors. Should this occur in your property, please take steps to remove them as soon as possible.

It is the tenant's responsibility to control pests, where they

are within the tenanted areas of the property. You may wish to instruct a pest control company to attend.

Should the pests be in the loft, roof space, basement, or anywhere else where the tenant does not normally have access, please contact the Residential Lettings team for us to resolve the problem. If you would otherwise like any help or advice on the matter, please also contact us.



## ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

It is a legal requirement to provide you with a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when your tenancy begins. An EPC contains:

- information about a property's energy use and typical energy costs; and
- recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money.

An EPC gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). All rental properties in the UK must achieve a rating of E or higher; the certificate is valid for 10 years. You will be provided with a copy when your tenancy commences.

## ROUTINE PROPERTY CHECKS

We carry out routine property checks at least once a year and again during the final two months of your tenancy. Under the terms of your Tenancy Agreement, you will be given at least 24 hours' notice of these checks.

These visits allow us to make a quick check of the condition of the property inside and out, and to plan ahead for any major works such as external or internal redecoration. We might also take pictures to illustrate work that needs to be carried out at the property.

The checks provide an ideal opportunity to let us know about anything that concerns you. After the visit, you may be contacted by a contractor on behalf of the University, who will come to the house to carry out maintenance work identified at the property check.



## ASBESTOS

Asbestos is a mineral comprised of flexible fibres that possess resistance to heat, electricity and corrosion. These qualities made asbestos valuable for many applications, including in the construction of houses. Asbestos is no longer used in any building construction, due to its harmful properties, however it still exists in many older buildings.

**If you would like to do any redecoration to ceilings, floor surfaces or walls, including drilling any holes, please make sure to consult with the Residential Lettings team so that we can advise you whether the work is possible in your property and, most importantly, we can make sure that the correct processes are being adhered to regarding asbestos.**

Many domestic properties built before 2000 used asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in their construction. It is usually impossible to tell whether these are present without

expert advice, but it is important to note that ACMs are only harmful when they are disturbed and asbestos fibres become airborne. Because of this, we have carried out asbestos management surveys in all our properties and maintain a register with detailed information on all ACMs. We have not generally removed the asbestos these surveys found unless it was in danger of being disturbed by tenants during their day-to-day activities, and we have no plans to do this in future.

Whenever work is going to be carried out which may affect the building's fabric, we also carry out additional targeted surveys. This process ensures that there is no danger from asbestos to our tenants, staff or contractors.

Please be reassured that all ACMs within Residential Lettings properties are managed in full compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. They pose no risk as long as the correct procedures are followed and they are left undisturbed



# MOVING OUT



A month before the end of your tenancy, please contact the team to arrange a checking-out appointment.

To ensure your check-out process runs smoothly please ensure that you allocate at least an hour for the check-out appointment. You check out by midday. If you cannot meet the deadline, please contact us.

A member of our team will meet you to check the property against the initial inventory.

During the appointment you will be asked to complete a checking-out form, which will state chargeable items

highlighted during the checking-out appointment (the form may be sent to you by email in order for you to complete electronically). A copy will be made for your records and the form will be sent to the finance team for processing.

The form will include your forwarding postal address, email and bank account details. This will enable us to arrange the return of your deposit.

We may ask to show your property to prospective tenants during the last two months of your tenancy. If so, we will notify you at least 24 hours before any viewing, as set out in the agreement.

## MOVING OUT CHECKLIST

ITEM	TICK
Ensure that your accommodation is clear of any personal belongings.	
The property is clean and tidy.	
Any furniture needs to be in its original position.	
If the deposit was paid by a third party, please provide their account details so that we can process the deposit refund.	
If utility accounts have been in your own name, please let us know which companies they were with.	
Contact the utility companies to close your accounts and update the billing contact information back to the University.	
Please remember to cancel the standing order payment with your bank to avoid continuing to pay rent.	
Arrange for a final Council Tax invoice to be sent to your forwarding address.	
Arrange with Royal Mail to have your mail redirected to your new address.	
Arrange for a final account with your telephone/internet provider to be sent to your forwarding address.	
Ensure that all key sets and fobs have been returned when you vacate.	



# GREEN LIVING



## USE LESS ENERGY

Every little helps:

- Turn off your PC (both the computer and the monitor) when not in use.
- Turn off other appliances when not in use, especially if you go away.
- If you have control over your property's heating system, do not overheat it. Be aware that turning the thermostat up higher will not warm the room any faster.
- On warm days, open windows and close curtains when you are in.
- Boil water with the pan's lid on, and do not overfill the kettle. Both these changes will save you time as well as

saving energy and reducing moisture in the air (which can lead to mould).

- You wouldn't leave a room with the tap running, so always turn off the lights when you leave.

## USE LESS WATER

- Report dripping taps.
- Report any known or suspected leaks.
- Don't wash utensils, crockery or fruit and vegetables under running taps.
- Do not leave the tap running while you are cleaning your teeth.
- Consider having a shower rather than a bath.

## SMART UTILITY METERS

Smart meters can be installed on both gas and electricity supplies and aim to provide a cleaner and more flexible energy system.

If you have your gas and/or electricity accounts in your own name and you would like to replace an existing older meter with a modern smart meter, please contact the Residential Lettings team. We will allow you to have the new meter(s)

installed, provided that the work is being carried out by a qualified engineer working for the utility company that owns the meter(s).

It is important for you to discuss it with the team, however, as we would like to keep details of when any meter is replaced, what the new meter number is, and the final reading of the old meter.

**WASTE PREVENTION**

**REUSE**

**RECYCLE**

**DISPOSAL**

## REDUCE WASTE

The waste hierarchy is a good way to think about how we manage waste. The best option is to prevent waste from being produced in the first place. The least preferred option is disposal or landfill.

The higher up the waste hierarchy our actions are, the better for the environment.

- PREVENT: do you really need to create the waste in the first place? Could you borrow, rent or hire an item instead?
- REDUCE: do you need as much as you think? Can you buy materials with recyclable content? Can you use materials more efficiently? For example, if you print, then print double-sided.
- REUSE: can an item be repaired or upgraded? Can someone else use it?

## WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?

Recycling bins are emptied fortnightly; Oxford City Council and Vale of White Horse District Council have a rotating programme.

Garden bins are emptied one week and household rubbish the next. For details please visit either:

[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk) or [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

where you can enter your postcode and see the schedule of collections or report a missing bin.

Alternatively, you can call either Oxford City Council on 01865 249811 or Vale of White Horse on 01235 422422.

### OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Blue bins	Recyclable materials such as paper, card, glass bottles and jars, aerosols, foils, tins and cans, cartons and plastic bottles.
Green bins	Non-recyclable waste that will be sent straight to landfill.
Brown bins	Garden waste, flowers, leaves, plants and weeds and compostable items

All food waste must be disposed of in green food caddies.

### VALE OF WHITE HORSE

Green bins	Paper and cardboard, glass (please separate bottle tops), all plastic bottles, pots and trays (except film), metal including aerosols.
Grey bins	Non-recyclable waste that will be sent straight to landfill. Nappies, cling film, sanitary products, tissues.
Brown bins	Garden waste, flowers, leaves, plants and weeds and compostable items.

All food waste must be disposed of in green food caddies.







## WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

Your feedback helps us understand what you like about our service and where we may be able to make improvements. We constantly gather information and opinions to inform us about tenants' priorities and preferences.

If, at any time, you have any suggestions about a service or facility that could be improved, please do email us on [residential-lettings@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:residential-lettings@admin.ox.ac.uk).



QVOD FELICITER VORTAT  
ACADEMICI OXONIENS  
BIBLIOTHECAM HANC  
VOBIS REIPUBLICAEQVE  
LITERATORVM  
T. B. P.

We hope you enjoy your stay.

For more information please visit our website  
[www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk](http://www.residential-lettings.ox.ac.uk)

