Denny Knight Landlord Guide

The Complete Guide to Letting Your Property

Everything you need to know about being a landlord

Phone: 01604 632433

Email: Northampton@dennyknight.co.uk

Address: 22 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF

Welcome

Thank you for downloading our Landlord Guide.

Whether you're letting your first property or expanding an existing portfolio, understanding your responsibilities as a landlord has never been more important. This guide explains the key legal requirements, the letting process, and how to maximise your investment while protecting your property.

You'll also find details of the services we offer to help make letting your property straightforward and stress-free.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the team, we will be happy to help.

Contents

1) Why Invest in Property?

Property investment can be a reliable way to build long-term wealth while generating regular income. With the right property and strategy, landlords can benefit from both capital appreciation and consistent rental returns.

Long-Term Capital Growth

Property values have historically increased over time, making buy-to-let an attractive long-term investment. While prices can fluctuate in the short term, owning property over many years can provide significant capital growth.

Rental Income

A well-managed rental property can provide a steady monthly income, helping to cover mortgage repayments, maintenance costs, and other expenses while generating a profit. Rental income can also offer greater financial stability than investments that rely solely on capital gains.

Diversification of Investments

Investing in property allows you to diversify your investment portfolio, reducing reliance on stocks, shares, or savings alone. Property is a tangible asset that can help spread risk across different investment types.

Demand in Your Local Area

Understanding local demand is essential when investing. Areas with strong employment opportunities, good schools, transport links, and local amenities tend to attract more tenants, resulting in lower vacancy periods and stronger rental performance.

Current Rental Market Overview

Many regions are seeing sustained tenant demand and competitive rental values, making it important for landlords to stay informed about local market trends, legislation, and tenant expectations.

2) Preparing Your Property

A well-prepared property is more attractive to prospective tenants, lets more quickly, and helps reduce maintenance issues during the tenancy. Taking the time to present your property to a high standard can also encourage tenants to look after it.

Decorating

Keep décor clean, neutral, and well maintained. Repair any damaged walls, flooring, or woodwork before marketing the property.

Cleaning

The property should be cleaned to a professional standard before tenants move in. Pay particular attention to kitchens, bathrooms, windows, carpets, and appliances.

Safety

Ensure the property complies with all legal safety requirements before letting. This includes:

- Working smoke alarms on every floor.
- Carbon monoxide alarms where required.
- Valid gas and electrical safety certificates (where applicable).
- Secure locks on doors and windows.
- Safe stairways, handrails, and flooring free from trip hazards.

Furnishing (If Applicable)

If the property is furnished, provide clean, good-quality furniture that complies with current fire safety regulations. Only include items that are practical and in good condition.

Garden

If the property has outdoor space, ensure it is tidy and easy to maintain. Mow the lawn, trim hedges, remove weeds, and dispose of any garden waste before the tenancy begins. Clearly outline who is responsible for ongoing garden maintenance.

Appliances

Test all supplied appliances to ensure they are clean, safe, and in full working order. Leave instruction manuals where possible.

Keys

Provide a full set of clearly labelled keys for all tenants.

3) Landlord Legal Responsibilities

As a landlord, you have a legal duty to provide a safe, compliant, and well-maintained property. Meeting your responsibilities helps protect both you and your tenants while avoiding costly penalties.

Safety

You must ensure the property is safe throughout the tenancy, addressing hazards promptly and complying with all relevant health and safety legislation.

Gas Safety Certificate

If the property has gas appliances, an annual Gas Safety Inspection must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. A valid Gas Safety Certificate must be provided to tenants.

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)

An EICR is required at least every five years for most rented properties. Any remedial work identified must be completed within the required timescales.

Smoke Alarms

Working smoke alarms must be installed on every storey of the property used as living accommodation and tested at the start of each tenancy.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon monoxide alarms must be fitted in rooms containing a fixed combustion appliance, such as a boiler or log burner, and checked at the beginning of the tenancy.

Fire Safety

Landlords must minimise fire risks by providing safe escape routes, ensuring any supplied furniture complies with fire safety regulations, and maintaining fire detection equipment where required.

Certificates

Keep all required certificates up to date and readily available, including:

- Gas Safety Certificate (where applicable)
- Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)
- Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

A valid EPC must be available before marketing the property. Most rental properties must meet the current minimum EPC rating required by law.

Compliance

Landlords must remain up to date with changes in legislation and ensure their property continues to meet legal requirements throughout the tenancy. Please see our different management options available later in the brochure.

Right to Rent

In England, landlords must check that all adult tenants have the legal right to rent before the tenancy begins. This service is offered as part of our property management solutions.

Deposit Protection

All tenancy deposits for an assured shorthold tenancy in England or Wales, must be protected in a government-approved tenancy deposit scheme within the required legal timeframe, and the prescribed information must be provided to the tenant. Denny Knight can do this for you.

Repair Obligations

Landlords are responsible for maintaining the property's structure and exterior, heating, hot water, gas, electricity, sanitation, and other essential services. At Denny Knight, all property repairs and maintenance are managed through ‘FixFlo’ with full audit tracking once reported, where the relevant property management solution is selected.

Licensing (Where Applicable)

Some rental properties require a licence, such as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), Student Accommodation or properties located within selective or additional licensing areas. Check with your local authority to determine whether a licence is required.

4) Pricing Your Property

Setting the correct rental price is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a landlord. A well-priced property attracts more interest, lets more quickly, and helps maximise your return while reducing costly void periods.

Market Appraisal

We conduct a professional market appraisal and provide an accurate rental valuation based on your property's location, size, condition, features, and current market demand. At Denny Knight, we combine local market knowledge with real-time data to recommend a competitive rental price that reflects current conditions.

Comparable Properties

One of the best ways to determine rental value is by comparing similar properties that have recently been let or are currently available in the local area. Factors such as property type, number of bedrooms, condition, parking, outdoor space, and proximity to transport and amenities all influence achievable rent.

Achieving the Best Rent

This is often achieved through a combination of a well-presented property, high-quality photographs, accurate marketing and realistic pricing.

5) Marketing Your Property

Effective marketing is essential to attracting the right tenants quickly. A well-presented property with high-quality marketing materials will generate more enquiries, increase viewing numbers, and help achieve the best possible rental price.

We can offer the following marketing options.

Professional Photography
High-quality professional photographs showcase your property's best features, creating an attractive online listing that stands out from the competition.

Floorplans
A clear floorplan helps applicants understand the property's layout, room sizes, and overall flow before arranging a viewing.

Virtual Tours
Virtual tours allow prospective tenants to explore the property remotely at their convenience.

Property Descriptions
We’ll make sure your property description is clear, accurate, and informative.

Major Property Portals
We advertise on the UK's leading property portals to ensure your property reaches the widest possible audience, maximises exposure and increases the likelihood of finding suitable tenants quickly.

Social Media Promotion
We can promote your property through our social media platforms using targeted posts, which can generate additional enquiries.

6) Finding the Right Tenant

Selecting the right tenant is one of the most important steps in a successful tenancy.

Enquiries & Viewings

Once your property is advertised, prospective tenants will begin making enquiries. We will assess initial suitability and arrange viewings for possible tenants.

Applications

Interested applicants will be asked to complete a tenancy application, providing details such as employment, income, previous addresses and references. This information forms the basis of the initial tenant assessment process.

Holding Deposits

A holding deposit may be taken to reserve the property while referencing and pre-tenancy checks are completed. We will handle the deposit in accordance with current legislation.

Referencing

Comprehensive referencing through a third party referencing service helps confirm an applicant's suitability and checks the following:

- Identity verification
- Employment and income verification
- Credit history
- Previous landlord references
- Right to Rent checks (where applicable).

These checks help ensure the tenant can afford the rent and has a good history of meeting tenancy obligations.

Guarantors

If an applicant has a limited credit history, insufficient income, or other circumstances that increase risk, a guarantor may be required. A guarantor agrees to meet the tenant's financial obligations if the tenant fails to do so and will usually undergo the same referencing process.

Once you are happy with a tenant and accept their application, we can progress to the Tenancy Agreement.

7) Tenancy Agreements

A tenancy agreement is a legally binding contract between the landlord and tenant. It sets out the terms of the tenancy, protects both parties, and provides clarity on rights and responsibilities throughout the rental period.

Assured Periodic Tenancies

Most private rented tenancies now operate as periodic tenancies, meaning they continue on a rolling basis without a fixed end date. The tenancy continues until the tenant chooses to leave and provide notice, the parties agree to end it, or the landlord regains possession using a valid legal process. Full guidance on grounds and notice periods for both Landlords and Tenants can be found on Gov.uk or https://www.gov.uk/housing-local-and-community/changes-to-private-renting and through the Renters Rights Act Information Sheet 2026.

Responsibilities

A tenancy agreement clearly defines the responsibilities of both landlord and tenant.

Landlord responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the structure and essential services of the property.
- Carrying out repairs within a reasonable timeframe.
- Complying with all legal safety requirements.
- Protecting the tenant's deposit where required.

Tenant responsibilities include:

- Paying rent on time.
- Looking after the property and keeping it clean.
- Reporting maintenance issues promptly.
- Complying with the terms of the tenancy agreement.

8) Deposits

A tenancy deposit provides financial protection for landlords while giving tenants reassurance that their money will be handled fairly. Letting Agents and Landlords must follow strict rules when taking, protecting, and returning deposits to remain compliant.

Deposit Protection

In England, most tenancy deposits must be protected in a government-approved tenancy deposit protection scheme within the required timeframe. Denny Knight can manage this on your behalf, please see our Property Management Options later in this guide.

Prescribed Information

After protecting a deposit, we must provide tenants with the required Prescribed Information within the legal timeframe. This explains:

- Where the deposit is protected.
- How the deposit is handled.
- The circumstances where deductions may be made.
- The process for resolving disputes.

End-of-Tenancy Disputes

At the end of a tenancy, landlords and tenants should agree to any deductions before the deposit is returned. If an agreement cannot be reached, either party can use the deposit protection scheme's dispute resolution service.

Deposit Deductions

A deposit cannot be used for general wear and tear or to improve the property. Deductions should only be made for legitimate costs, such as:

- Unpaid rent.
- Damage beyond fair wear and tear.
- Missing items listed on the inventory.
- Cleaning costs where the property has not been left in an acceptable condition.
- Unpaid bills where the tenancy agreement makes the tenant responsible.

Evidence must be kept to support any deductions, including photographs, invoices, receipts, and the original inventory.

9) Inventory & Property Inspections

At the start of the tenancy

A detailed inventory provides a clear record of the property's condition at the start and end of the tenancy, helping protect both landlords and tenants by reducing the risk of disputes. An inventory records the condition, contents, and cleanliness of the property before a tenant moves in. It provides evidence if there are disagreements about damage, missing items, or cleaning requirements at the end of the tenancy.

Denny Knight will conduct a thorough inventory before the tenant takes possession of the property and a report will be prepared, covering:

- The condition of each room
- Fixtures, fittings, and furniture
- Existing marks, damage, or wear
- Appliances and outdoor areas

With photography that provides valuable supporting evidence.

The tenant receives a copy of the inventory and is given the opportunity to review and report any discrepancies. A signed check-in report provides confirmation that both parties agree with the recorded condition of the property.

Additionally as part of the move in process, we use a service to manage the transition of meter readings and utility bills to ensure accounts are transferred correctly and prevents disputes over responsibility for outstanding bills.

During the tenancy

We conduct regular property inspections throughout the tenancy, within the first 3 months, then 6 monthly thereafter. These inspections are designed to check the condition of the property and that the tenancy agreement is being adhered to.

At the end of the tenancy

The check-out inspection compares the property's condition against the original inventory. Any changes are documented, including photographs where necessary. This process helps determine whether deductions from the deposit are justified and ensures a fair outcome for both landlord and tenant. This process is managed through the government backed deposit protection scheme.

10) Property Management Solutions

At Denny Knight we offer a variety of lettings management services:

Denny Knight Lettings - Property Management Solutions

Feature / Service	Fully Managed	Compliance & Maintenance	Rent Collection	Tenant Find Only
Pricing	£200 + VAT Setup Fee 10% + VAT Monthly	£200 + VAT Setup Fee 8% + VAT Monthly	£250 + VAT Setup Fee 6% + VAT Monthly	75% + VAT of First Month's Rent
Best For	Landlords seeking complete property management and compliance support	Landlords who want compliance oversight and maintenance management without full management	Landlords who manage maintenance themselves but want professional rent administration	Landlords who want to self-manage but need help finding and setting up tenants
Professional Marketing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Major Property Portal Advertising	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accompanied Viewings	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tenant Referencing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Right to Rent Checks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tenancy Agreement Preparation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deposit Registration	✓	✓	✓	✓
Move-in Arrangements	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monthly Rent Collection	✓		✓	
Rent Statements	✓		✓	
Arrears Monitoring	✓		✓	
Deposit Administration	✓		✓	
Ongoing Tenancy Administration	✓		✓	
Dedicated Property Management	✓	✓		
Contractor Management	✓	✓		
Regular Property Inspections	✓		✓	
Compliance Monitoring	✓	✓		
Tenant Communication	✓			
Notice Serving (where required)	✓			
End of Tenancy Management	✓			
Deposit Negotiations	✓			
Property Advice & Support	✓			
Arthur Landlord Portal Access	✓		✓	
Fixflo Maintenance Reporting	✓	✓		

Arthur is our property management system that enables a joined up approach for Landlord and Tenants to view and respond to all tenancy related information.

Fixflo is our property maintenance system. It provides Landlords, Tenants, Contractors and our Property Managers with greater transparency, tracking, resolutions, communication and compliance to ensure that planned and reactive maintenance events are managed timely and appropriately.

Rent Reviews - Denny Knight will follow the correct legal process to propose a rent increase. In England, this is generally done by serving a formal rent increase notice (such as a Section 13 notice where applicable) and giving the tenant the required notice period. Any rent notification increases should be fair, reasonable and reflect the local market. Refer to the Renters Rights Act Information Sheet 2026 for more information.

Financial Considerations - Understanding the tax implications of property investment is an important part of being a landlord. Tax rules can be complex and change regularly, so landlords should seek independent advice from a qualified tax professional to ensure they meet their obligations.

Please note that, before any services are provided by Denny Knight Sales & Lettings Ltd, all landlords will be required to review and agree to our Business Terms and Conditions, which set out the terms of our relationship, the services we provide, and the respective responsibilities of both parties.

11) Ending a Tenancy

Notice Periods

The process for ending a tenancy depends on the tenancy type and who is ending the agreement. Letting Agents, Landlords and tenants must follow the correct legal procedures and provide the required notice periods.

Denny Knight will:

- Confirm the correct notice process applies.
- Ensure all required legal requirements have been met before serving notice.
- Keep accurate records of all correspondence.

Check-Out

Once the tenant has vacated the property and returned the keys, a thorough check-out inspection will be completed and compared against the original inventory and check-in report. At this point the deposit is either returned or disputed (see Chapter 9 on Inventory & Property Inspections).

Preparing the Property for Re-Letting

Once the tenancy has ended, we will discuss and agree next steps, including how to prepare the property to be remarketed, which may involve:

- Completing any necessary repairs.
- Deep cleaning the property.
- Redecorating where required.
- Testing appliances and safety equipment.
- Updating marketing materials if improvements have been made.
- Arranging new photographs if appropriate.

A smooth turnaround helps minimise void periods and ensures the property is ready to attract new tenants quickly.

12) Frequently Asked Questions

How much rent can I achieve?

The achievable rent depends on factors such as the property's location, size, condition, features, and current market demand. We will conduct a professional market appraisal to determine a realistic rental value and discuss this with you.

Can I choose my tenant?

Landlords can choose the most suitable tenant based on lawful criteria, including referencing results, affordability, and suitability for the property. Decisions must always comply with current equality and housing legislation.

What happens if rent isn't paid?

If rent is not paid but included in the property management solution that you select, we will address the issue promptly, appropriately and in line with industry guidance and regulations. Early communication can often resolve problems, but if arrears continue, the correct legal process will be followed.

Who organises repairs?

Tenants have access to our property maintenance platform ‘FixFlo’ 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to report issues, supported by our Maintenance Manager and Contractors to resolve issues in a timely and appropriate manner.

Do I need landlord insurance?

Landlord insurance is not usually a legal requirement, but it can provide valuable protection against risks such as property damage, loss of rent, liability claims, and other unforeseen events. Landlords should consider what level of cover is appropriate for their circumstances.

How long does it take to find a tenant?

The time it takes to let a property depends on factors including rental price, location, presentation, demand, and marketing. Accurate pricing and strong presentation can help attract suitable tenants more quickly.

What happens if the tenant wants to leave the property?

A tenant leaving the property depends on the terms of the tenancy agreement and current legislation. Speak to our experienced Lettings team on 01604 632433 who will be able to offer guidance on this matter.