**TENANT’S GUIDE TO RENTING (including FEES)**

**When should I start my search?**

We recommend you begin looking for a property six to eight weeks before your move date.

**What key points should I consider prior to starting my search?**

In addition to your move date, we advise you to think about the area/s you wish to move to, your budget, how long you would like to live at the property and any 'must have' criteria.

**What if none of the properties showing on the DS Churchill website match my requirements?**

We have access to a vast portfolio of properties that are not listed on our website and can always help in your search to find the perfect home.

**What are the next steps once I've found the property?**

When you've found the right property, we will ask you to submit an offer and clearly outline all requirements (i.e. you must inform us if you have a pet from the onset). We will then put forward your proposal to the Landlord.

Once the offer has been agreed, we will ask you to put down a one week initial deposit to secure the property (this deposit will go towards your first instalment of rent).

You will then be sent the Tenancy Agreement, Invoice and Referencing Forms with a detailed explanation of the administration required from your side before the tenancy can commence. All of the following must be in place:

* References received and approved by the Landlord
* Certified copies of each named Tenant's passport and (where necessary) visa
* Payment of the initial invoice, which includes the 5 week deposit & first instalment of rent (funds must be showing in our bank account).
* The Tenancy Agreement must be signed by all parties

We will arrange for the inventory to be checked-in by an independent clerk on the first day of your tenancy. Provided all the above is in place, keys will be available for you to collect from the property at the end of this appointment.

The Government have published a detailed leaflet that all Tenants are advised to read. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent

**Who should the Tenant contact if there is a problem with the Property?**

If DS Churchill manage the property on behalf of the Landlord, we will be your point of contact for all maintenance related questions.

We will notify you if the Landlord manages the property themselves. In this instance, you should contact the Landlord directly.

**What are my responsibilities as a Tenant?**

To respect and look after the property and notify DS Churchill (or the Landlord) as soon as possible of any necessary repairs.

Throughout your stay at the property, you will be responsible for paying all the following accounts: Council Tax, Electricity, Gas, Water Rates, the Television Licence, the Telephone Bill (and line rental), Broadband and Cable Television. If DS Churchill manage the property, we will set up your Council Tax, Electricity, Gas and Water Rates accounts.

All Tenants are advised to obtain contents insurance for their possessions. The Landlord will already have building's insurance in place.

If the rent exceeds £125,000, the Tenancy may be liable to Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT). You (the Tenant) are responsible for this cost. Further information can be found at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/)

Tenants are reminded that they have signed a contract for a private residence, which prevents them from ‘subletting’ the property or taking in paying guests.

**Is my 5 week deposit protected?**

DS Churchill are a member of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS), which are a government approved body. The TDS safeguard deposits and offer an impartial dispute service, if required at the end of a tenancy.

https://www.tds.gb.com/resources/files/What%20is%20the%20Tenancy%20Deposit%20Scheme.pdf

**What's the difference between a 'short term' and a 'long term' tenancy?**

A 'short term' tenancy will be six months or less. All rent for the tenancy will be payable in advance. Usually, all utility bills (with the exception of broadband and cable television accounts) are included in the rent.

**What references will I need to provide to the Landlord before the tenancy starts?**

We will put you in touch with an external referencing company. They will compile a report for the Landlord, which includes a standard credit check, references from a previous or current Landlord and an employer or accountant. It is now a legal requirement to provide documents which show your ‘right to rent’ within the UK. To ensure you have the correct documentation, the government have provided the following check-list:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-rent-document-checks-a-user-guide>

**On top of the rent, are there any fees and / or additional costs we need to be aware of?**

DS Churchill would like to ensure that Tenants are aware of all costs involved in renting a property. We hope the following breakdown clearly outlines all fees and additional costs to consider before entering in to a tenancy.

In addition to the rent, tenants should consider the following when budgeting for their property search:

Prior to the commencement of the tenancy:

* A maximum of 5 weeks’ rent - security deposit for each tenancy
* Stamp Duty Land Tax – if the rent is more than £125,000 (https://www.gov.uk/stamp-duty-land-tax/overview)

During the tenancy:

* all utility, council tax, phone, internet, television licence and cable television costs
* Interest on unpaid rent – 3% (in line with the Bank of England base rate) from 14 days following the date the rent is due to the date the rent is paid
* Insurance for the Tenant’s own possessions / contents
* Garden maintenance (if applicable)

At the end of the tenancy:

* Professional cleaning of the property (again, this cost will be dependent on the size and furnished status of the property minimum £300.00 - maximum £800)
* Dilapidations (mutually agreed deductions from the deposit for damages sustained to the property during the tenancy)

**Once my tenancy has ended, how soon will my deposit be returned?**

The inventory will be checked at the end of your tenancy and a report will be produced (by an independent party) listing the condition of the property. This report will be compared against the document compiled at the start of your tenancy.

Once both parties have read the report, the Landlord will draft a proposal in writing for any necessary deductions from your deposit. The amount will be relative to the cost of repair of any damages which have occurred at the property during your stay (with the exception of fair wear & tear).

When you have agreed to the suggested deductions, your deposit will be released accordingly. The full deposit cannot be released until DS Churchill have received written agreement from both parties that they are happy with the dilapidation amount.

Subject to negotiations, we aim to return a Tenant’s deposit as quickly as possible. As a rough guideline (depending on how quickly dilapidations can be agreed upon), Tenant’s usually receive the funds 15 - 20 working days from the end of their tenancy.

***If you have any questions, please contact our Lettings department on 020 7629 7563 or at*** [***Fiona@dschurchill.com***](mailto:sophie@dschurchill.com)

*DS Churchill is a member of The Property Ombudsman (TPO)* [*www.tpos.co.uk*](http://www.tpos.co.uk)

*Client Money Protection (CMP) provided by ARLA*

[*http://www.propertymark.co.uk/working-in-the-industry/member-requirements/client-money-protection/*](http://www.propertymark.co.uk/working-in-the-industry/member-requirements/client-money-protection/)