LIVING IN RENTED PROPERTY

A Guide for Renters of Leasehold apartments
About this guide

We’ve designed this guide to help you with the issues and queries that can often arise when renting a property on a development. We hope the guide will help you to enjoy living in your home.

About us

We’re Consort Property Management, a property management company that looks after complex privately owned residential developments in South England & South Wales. As managing agent, we provide services on behalf of your landlord and the building’s owners, making sure that everything runs smoothly so you can enjoy your home and surroundings in peace and safety.

Part of our legal duty as managing agent, is to make sure that all the properties in your building meet the terms of their lease. This includes any properties that are ‘sublet’ (i.e. rented out by property owners).

What is Subletting?

Subletting is the legal term for renting. It occurs when the leasehold owner of a property agrees to allow somebody else (you) to live in the property under some form of contractual arrangement, usually in return for money.

There are some things which you need to be aware of.
A Few Do’s and Don’ts (Lease Covenants)

Covenants are legally binding obligations in the property’s lease. They are there to not only protect the building itself but also to ease communal living.

The lease covenants usually cover subjects like noise, pets, communal areas, parking and so on:

1. Noise nuisance

- Noise will, and does, travel, which may interfere with your neighbours’ right to be able to relax in their own home. The majority of leases will state that all residents have the right to ‘Quiet enjoyment’ within their property.

- This, in simple terms, means that you should not make excessive noise, either by playing musical instruments, playing loud music, singing, or carrying out works which may be heard outside of the property. Please be considerate, especially after 10pm at night.

- The owner and tenant should also ensure that they don’t install or use any machinery or apparatus (other than domestic
appliances) that might cause noise or vibration that could be heard or felt by other residents in adjoining properties or outside of their home.

- Affected residents can contact the local council environmental health department who can investigate the issue. They may take steps to remove any item that has been the cause of noise nuisance.

If you experience a noise issue of any kind, speak to your landlord, or letting agent, in the first instance. We’ll then write to the property owner advising them of the complaint and ask that they take action to ensure this is not repeated.

2. Pet Consent

- Most leases will stipulate that owners obtain consent for any pet that is to be housed within the property. This information is often not passed onto you and we regularly see this rule being broken by renters through a lack of awareness.

- You need to know if pets are not allowed within the rented property.

Any pets housed in your home without consent can lead to us requesting that the pet is re-homed.

3. Storing Items within Communal Areas

We often find that in-coming tenants are not aware of the rules surrounding storage. You’re not allowed to store items within the communal hallways for several important reasons:

- Communal areas should be free from items at all times due to fire regulations.
Your items can be classed as fire hazards if left within hallways and stairwells; they can also become trip hazards.

If your items are found within communal hallways we’ll notify both you and the property owner to let you know of their intended removal, which usually occurs within 28 days. The cost to removing the items will be recharged to the owner of the property who may charge you.

Bin bags and boxes should never be left in the communal hallways or outside your front door.

4. Parking

If your property comes with its own parking space/s within the communal car park there are a few things you need to be aware of:

- It’s very important that you know which space is yours and that you only use that particular one.
- Within the lease it will state that your parking space is solely for
Customer Information Card - Inconsiderate Parking

- The parking of a motor vehicle or bike. Commercial vehicles are very rarely permitted.

- On some of our residential developments parking enforcement will be in place and a warden will patrol the car parks to ensure all vehicles are correctly parked and, if applicable, are displaying the correct permit.

- Visitor spaces should not be used by residents parking their second vehicle. If we find that this is happening we can take further action and the vehicle may be ticketed.

If you notice a problem on your development with one of the communal services, or you’ve witnessed an instance of unsociable behaviour please raise your concerns with your letting agent and/or landlord prior to escalating an issue to us.
How we deal with breaches of lease covenants

Should your Property Manager, Concierge or site supervisor notice breaches of covenants on your development, like those we’ve highlighted above, they will try and help you resolve the issue as a first step. Other lease covenants that often apply in residential blocks include not hanging washing over balconies or erecting a satellite dish.

❖ If we believe there has been a breach of a lease covenant, we’ll send you a customer information card to let you know that this is against the terms of the lease.

❖ If no action is taken, we’ll then write formally to the property and the owner, advising what action needs to be taken before we take the matter further.

❖ If our letters are ignored, our legal team may be asked to deal with the issue which will mean an additional fee is charged to the owner of the property (your landlord) who may ask you to pay.

Remember lease covenants are designed not only to protect the building but help create a pleasant and attractive environment in which to live.

Fire Alarm Maintenance

Should your property be within an apartment block, it’s likely that the building is fitted with a communal fire alarm system. The system may also be integrated into each of the apartments within the building.

As part of the freeholder’s (or their managing agent’s) responsibilities, they must ensure that the fire maintenance systems and alarms are serviced and maintained to comply with British health and safety fire standards.

❖ Our annual fire alarm service and maintenance plan usually consists of at least 2 service visits per year to ensure the
Bin Stores
Most managed communal developments have a number of communal refuse or bin stores which are there for the sole use of those living within the managed estate.

Please don’t leave your household rubbish bags within the communal hallways. Bin bags leak, can cause stains to carpets and also smell.

Larger household items such as beds, mattresses, washing machines, old televisions and other furniture must be disposed of by the items’ owner, and not left within communal refuse stores.

Additional battery powered smoke and CO detectors are readily available from most DIY stores and other retail outlets for around £20.

Refuse – Disposing Of Household Rubbish Correctly

On most residential developments there are a number of communal refuse or bin stores for the sole use of those living within the managed estate. We have helpful guidelines for rubbish disposal:

- Within the refuse stores there are usually found communal bins or individual wheele bins where you can dispose of your normal everyday household waste and rubbish.

- Please properly dispose of your rubbish within the bins provided. Don’t leave rubbish bags on the bin store floor as rubbish not thrown away properly can attract rodents, cats and other pests such as urban foxes.

- Rubbish bags which are left open or on the floor won’t be collected by the local council refuse collectors.

- Don’t leave your household rubbish bags within the communal hallways. Bin bags leak and can cause the communal carpets and flooring to become stained – which means extra cleaning.

- If we notice that residents have left rubbish or black bin liners outside of their front door we’ll write to them, and their landlord,
and ask that rubbish is disposed of correctly.

- **Larger household items such as beds, mattresses, washing machines, old televisions and other furniture must not be simply left within communal refuse stores.** They are classed as ‘Fly Tipping’ and won’t be taken away by the local council refuse collectors. Any large items should be taken to your local council ‘Tip’ or you can contact the council and pay a small fee to have them removed.

- If we find large items left in refuse stores, we’ll have to arrange to remove them and charge the cost of removal to the person/property involved. Fly tipping is illegal. Every effort will be made to find the perpetrator and legal action may be taken against them.
Condensation

Condensation is normally and understandably confused with damp. Hopefully this will assist you in dealing with this problem.

1. Condensation in your home

- Ordinary day to day activities, such as washing and drying clothes, cooking and bathing, produce moisture rich warm air.

- If warm moist air cannot escape through an open window or air vent it will find a cold spot normally a wall, window sill or dark area where it will deposit condensation. Persistent condensation on walls and ceilings can sometimes cause black mould growth.

2. Heating

- To prevent condensation room surfaces should be kept warm. It can take a long time for a building to warm up, so it is better to have a small amount of heat over a long period of time, than a lot of heat for a short time.

- If you're away during the day keep the heating on a low setting, rather than turning it off. If the heating is turned off while your home is unoccupied, condensation may occur as the temperature drops.

3. Ventilation

- Airing your home by opening windows a little and using extractor fans or vents, will allow moisture to escape outside.

- Use extractor fans while you’re cooking or bathing, and for a period of time after you’ve finished allowing the remaining moisture to escape.

- Keep the bathroom door closed while bathing. If you’ve a window in the bathroom open it for a period of time once you’ve finished allowing the moisture to escape.

- Keep a small window or a trickle ventilator (normally fitted at the top of a window) open.
Access arrangements and security
(Keys, fobs and remotes)

- If you require additional keys or fobs for any of the communal entrance doors, meter cupboards, bike stores, gates and vehicle gates/barriers then please contact your landlord or letting agent.

- Security within a communal residential development is paramount. Do check that your apartment door is locked before going out and that all communal doors are closed securely behind you when you leave and coming home. If communal doors are left open your landlord’s insurance will be invalidated.

Moving in and out

- Remember that any damage caused while moving in or out of the property may result in a contractor being called out to carry out necessary repairs. The cost will be charged to your landlord, who may then pass the charges onto you!

QUICK TIP

Be careful when moving in and out

Any damage occurred whilst moving in or out of the property may result in a contractor being called out to carry out any repairs required. Charges for the items and call out will be passed on to your landlord, who may then ask you to pay.
On your moving date please park all your vehicles in your allocated bay(s). If this is too far for your removal vehicle, you may park nearer the entrance so long as access is not restricted for other residents. It’s a good idea to attach a note to the vehicle stating that you’re parking there temporarily (3 hours maximum) and include your property number.

Take care when moving in and out. If any marks or scrapes have been made within communal areas, please ensure these are cleaned thoroughly. You could be charged for any permanent damage.

We realise that it’s often difficult to carry heavy furniture up stairs. Please don’t use the passenger lifts as they aren’t designed to take heavy furniture.

Check that your landlord or letting agent has given you with all relevant keys, fobs and permits for the property and communal areas including gates and bin stores.
Health and Safety

The safety and well-being of residents in all developments we manage is of paramount importance to us.

When living in a rented property you must act responsibly and safely at all times. Should you notice any hazards in your property you should immediately notify your landlord or letting agent.

Here are a few points to bear in mind:

1. Use the property responsibly to avoid causing damage to yourself, the property and your fellow neighbours.

2. Ensure any your appliances are installed and used safely.

3. Your landlord has to maintain the parts of any associated gas installations such as flues and ventilation grilles and the pipe work within the property.

4. Avoid storing hazardous or flammable materials within the property and in communal areas. Hazardous materials can include fuel, oil, paint, used cooking oil, fireworks but also items such as unused carpeting.

5. Storing petrol or fuel within the car parking areas is strictly prohibited.

6. Clear sinks clogged with food waste to avoid blockages.

7. Don’t display or hang any material on the external structure of your property.

Failing to adhere to Health and Safety regulations and failing to take reasonable care could invalidate your landlord’s insurance.

QUICK TIP

When reporting a maintenance issue

Please contact our Customer Care Department on 08451 947044 or 01582 401819, or register on our website to receive live maintenance and repair updates. (More details on page 14)

Our development number

When you want to get in touch with us, please make sure that your landlord or lettings agent has given you the first 5 digits of their customer account number. Quoting this number helps us quickly identify the development when you call us.
Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if I disturb my neighbours?

You’re putting your tenancy at risk. Your landlord will have grounds to serve you with a notice to leave which starts the process to end your tenancy. The local Council’s antisocial behaviour team may also take enforcement action against you.

What if I want to keep a pet in my flat?

This will all depend on the lease, please contact us and we’ll be able to advise you.

I have two cars but only one space; can I use the visitors’ spaces for my second car?

Sorry, this won’t be possible. Visitor spaces are for visitors only and not for second or third cars. Speak to your neighbours as they may have a space they don’t use.

Why will you not carry out a repair in my apartment?

This will depend on the nature of the repair. Normally a repair is the responsibility for your landlord or letting agent. If you’re not sure, please get in touch with our Customer Services team.
Register now for ‘Consort - Your Property Online’ our free online development information service including a guide to your development with contact details for the local council and other useful numbers. Our real-time Maintenance Updates shows all the latest news about work being carried out at your development. To register or see our demo videos visit [www.consortpm.co.uk](http://www.consortpm.co.uk).

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Customer Services

08451 947044 (lo-call*) or 01582 4001819

So we can get your call to the right team, please call us with the first five digits of your Landlord’s Customer Account Number handy. They can find the number on their statement or invoice - these 5 digits help us quickly identify your development.

Email: customercare@consortpropertymanagement.co.uk

Opening hours: 8am - 8pm, Monday to Friday
9am - 12pm on Saturday

Consort Property Management. Marlborough House,
Wigmore Place, Wigmore Lane, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 9EX

www.consortpm.co.uk

*The 08451 number allows customers calling from BT land lines to have their call charged at a ‘lo-call’ rate wherever they are in the country. As mobile and other providers’ charges may vary you can also call our customer services team on 01582 401819.