



RENTING GUIDE

RENTING & BUDGETING

Before you start looking for the right property, first consider what your priorities are – location, number of bedrooms, size of rooms etc and match them against your available budget. To determine your available budget we would recommend using a rental affordability calculator such as the one on www.moneyhelper.org.uk

Now you can then start looking for the right property that meets your criteria and is affordable. You can go back to the main website and register with us for property alerts so we will e-mail you when something that fits your criteria becomes available. Alternatively, please pop in to our office and see us or call us on 01666 338633 .

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN VIEWING

Viewing properties is one of the most exciting aspects of renting. After all, one of the properties you look at could become your new home. However, it's important to not get too caught up in the emotions that come with viewings. Stay focused on your needs and be thorough when looking around.

BE SURE TO:

Look at the property's exterior.

This will give you an idea of how well it's been maintained. Keep an eye out for damaged brickwork, cracked render or poorly maintained windows.

Measure all you need to.

Make sure the size of the property you're viewing meets your needs.

Test fixtures and fittings.

Don't be afraid to switch on lights, turn on taps and open cupboards and doors to make sure everything works as it should.

Check the mobile phone signal.

Look at your phone's reception in each room of the house.

Think about noise.

Assess noise levels from traffic or other properties inside and outside of the property you're viewing.

Check for storage.

Does the property have enough storage for your needs?

Questions.

Finally, make sure you ask your letting agent or landlord plenty of questions about the property and the tenancy.



THINGS TO CHECK QUESTIONS TO ASK

A Gas Safety Certificate before you occupy the property. The landlord should also give you a copy of the new certificate after each annual gas safety check, if there is a gas installation or appliance.

Deposit paperwork. If you have provided a deposit, the landlord must protect it in a government-approved scheme within 30 days and give you prescribed information about it. Make sure you get the official information from your landlord, and that you understand how to get your money back at the end of the tenancy. Keep this information safe as you will need it later.

The Energy Performance Certificate, which contains the energy performance rating of the property you are renting, free of charge at the onset of your tenancy. As of April 2020, all privately rented properties must have an energy performance rating of E or above (unless a valid exemption applies) before being let out. You can also search online for the energy performance certificate and check its rating.

Electrical safety inspection, a report that shows the condition of the property's electrical installations. The electrical wiring, sockets, consumer units (fuse boxes) and other fixed electrical parts in rented homes must be inspected and tested every five years.

Alarms, check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are present at the start of the tenancy. Tenants should then regularly check they are working.

Tenancy agreement. Make sure you have a written/ emailed tenancy agreement and read it carefully to understand your rights and responsibilities before you sign it.

Inventory. Agree an inventory (or check-in report) with your landlord before you move in and, as an extra safeguard, make sure that you take photos. This will make things easier if there is a dispute about the deposit at the end of the tenancy. If you are happy with the inventory, sign it and keep a copy.

Meter readings. Remember to take meter readings when you move in. Take a photo showing the meter reading and the date and time, if possible. This will help make sure you don't pay for the previous tenant's bills.

Contact details. Make sure that you have the correct contact details for the landlord or agent, including a telephone number you can use in case of an emergency.

Code of practice. Ask whether your landlord or agent has signed a code of practice, which may give you additional assurance about their conduct and practices. At Lockstones we are members of ARLA and The Property Ombudsman.

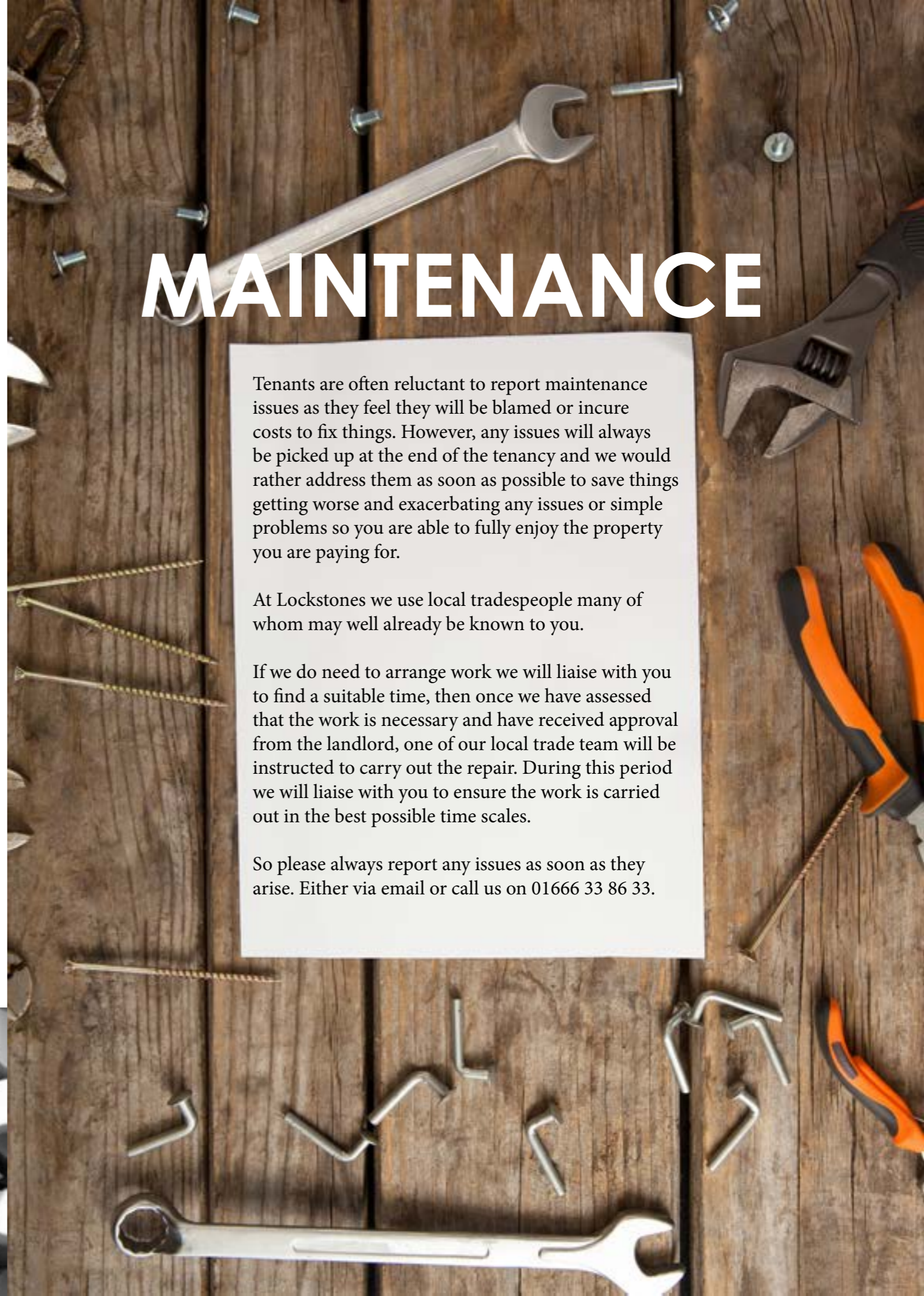
MAINTENANCE

Tenants are often reluctant to report maintenance issues as they feel they will be blamed or incur costs to fix things. However, any issues will always be picked up at the end of the tenancy and we would rather address them as soon as possible to save things getting worse and exacerbating any issues or simple problems so you are able to fully enjoy the property you are paying for.

At Lockstones we use local tradespeople many of whom may well already be known to you.

If we do need to arrange work we will liaise with you to find a suitable time, then once we have assessed that the work is necessary and have received approval from the landlord, one of our local trade team will be instructed to carry out the repair. During this period we will liaise with you to ensure the work is carried out in the best possible time scales.

So please always report any issues as soon as they arise. Either via email or call us on 01666 33 86 33.



RENTING WITH PETS?

They say that almost half of the population in Britain have a pet of some sort. However most landlords and letting agents routinely prohibit pets in their properties. The main reason for this is the potential for damage.

At Lockstones we take a different approach, we address this issue on a case by case basis and if you have a pet we will ask the landlord in each case if they are willing to consider renting a property with a pet. We can also offer insurance based products that can help in this instance to offer the landlord a greater degree of certainty that the property will remain undamaged. So in short, if you're looking to rent and have a pet, tell us all about it and we will do the best we can to help.



ENDING A TENANCY

Ending the agreement

Your tenancy agreement will say how much notice you must give the landlord if you want to leave the property. One month's notice is typical, and you must give it in writing. Make sure you keep a copy of the document and a record of when it was sent. If you want to leave sooner than the notice period set out in the tenancy agreement you can ask the agent to see if they can help but this will be at the landlords discretion.

Rent

Make sure that your rent payments are up to date. Do not keep back rent because you think that it will be taken out of the deposit.

Bills

Do not leave bills unpaid. This might have an impact on your references and credit rating.

Clear up

Remove all your possessions, clean the house, dispose of rubbish and take meter readings. Try to leave the property in the same condition that you found it in. Check this against your copy of the inventory and take photos that show how you have left the property. Dispose of any unwanted furniture via a local collection service.

Return the keys

Return all sets of keys that were provided. If you do not, the landlord may charge you for changing the locks.

Inspection

The property is inspected to check whether any of the tenancy deposit should be deducted to cover damage. If you do not agree with proposed deductions, contact the relevant deposit protection.

