



# TENANT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Alexanders Partnership

## Welcome Home!

Dear Tenant,

Welcome to your new home managed by Alexanders Partnership! This handbook is designed to provide you with essential information about your tenancy, our services, and important policies. Please take the time to read it carefully and keep it for future reference.

We are committed to providing you with a comfortable and enjoyable living experience. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Alexanders Partnership Team

## 1. Paying your rent

You will need to set up your standing order for the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month with your bank either by completing the Standing order form provided in your Welcome Pack and returning it to your bank or more commonly use your rent payment reference number provided and set up your standing order online with your bank. We advise that you set your banking order to leave your account 2 days before the rent due date. Please refer to your tenancy agreement as to whether you are paying Alexanders Partnership Ltd or your Landlord directly and set up your standing order accordingly.

## 2. Your Deposit

At the start of the tenancy you will have been required to pay a security deposit, which will be held against any damage that is not considered 'fair wear and tear'. This will be registered with the Tenancy Deposit Scheme Northern Ireland, which is a Government Approved Tenancy Deposit Scheme within 14 days of the payment being made to us and a certificate will be issued, as per the terms of your tenancy agreement.

### 3. Inventory

If instructed by your Landlord, we will arrange for an inventory to take place at your property and we will endeavour to have this available to you prior to move in or soon thereafter.

The purpose of the inventory is to:-

Detail the condition and contents of the property, and give us a record to help determine if any charges are required against your deposit at the end of your tenancy. Please read the inventory carefully, it will be assumed that you are in agreement with the inventory clerk's report unless you advise us within a 72 hour period that you are not in agreement via email with a description and photos included of the items you disagree with. Please note, when you come to vacate the property, a check out report will be conducted and the inventory will be used to compare the property from when you moved in until you vacate.

### 4. Keys

We will provide you with one set of keys for each person named on the tenancy agreement. Alexanders Property and your Landlord will keep one set of master keys for management, emergencies or gaining access with your permission.

#### **Lost keys/fobs and lock changes:-**

If you lose or damage any keys you must pay for their replacement. You may come and borrow the management set of keys if you have locked yourself out; please bring a form of photo ID and return them back within one hour. Your tenancy agreement does not allow you to change the lock(s) without prior permission.

### 5. Moving in Checklist

Please check you have organised the following where they are required:

- Rates If payable ( most properties are rented with rates inclusive)
- Utilities: Gas Water Electricity Telephone (if required)
- TV Licence
- Contents Insurance (please note you must insure your own contents)

## 6. Utilities

We advise all our tenants to take meter readings for all utilities at the start and end of your tenancy even if pay as you go meters are in place. This will enable you pass on information to energy providers and ensure that you are paying for the use of these services for your tenancy only.

There are a number of different types of energy meters out there. These range from modern smart meters, which tell you how much energy you're using in real-time, to prepayment meters, which you need to top up manually. Make sure you familiarise yourself with your meters, gas and electric and contact the relevant energy providers to avoid any surprises.

To Find out who supplies your utilities/MPAN use the link below, you will require the full postal address and meter number:-

<https://findmysupplier.nienetworks.co.uk>

### **Electricity Suppliers**

Power NI: 0345 745 5455

SSE Energy Electric: 0345 850 8940

### **Gas Suppliers**

SSE Energy Gas: 0345 850 8940

Firmus Energy: 0330 024 9000

### **How to apply credit to your pre pay meters**

Your supplier will provide you with a card that you can use at any retailer that displays the paypoint service logo. it will be a variation of the below.



You take the card into the retailer and purchase credit. You can pay with card or cash.

### **Pre paid electricity meters**

Once you have purchased credit, you will receive a print out with a power code. Go to your keypad meter and press \* button once on the keypad, the message keycode will be displayed.

Key in all digits of your power code, if you enter a wrong digit press the \* button to go back

Once all 20 digits are entered press the # button, if entered correctly an Accepted message will display.

Credit can also be purchased online via your suppliers website.

### **Pre paid gas meters**

Once you have purchased the credit, return to your meter. Insert the card with the chip facing up. wait until you hear a beep before removing the card. You will then see the credit applied as 'units'.

If you find yourself in a "no gas" situation it may be because the regulator at the meter has tripped. This is common particularly if you have recently topped up your meter following low credit or have had your gas supply turned off for some time. Resetting your regulator is simple, and you can usually be up and running quickly without waiting for an engineer.

Please see the link below of helpful videos to add credit or reset your gas meter.

<https://phoenixenergyni.com/already-connected>

<https://phoenixenergyni.com/already-connected/usingyourgasmeter>

Please be aware keeping your gas and electricity in credit is a tenant responsibility, if you require a engineer callout for any faults associated with running out of electric gas or oil you will be liable for the callout cost.

### **Oil heating tanks**

Check oil level regularly the amount of oil used will depend on the time of year.

Running out of oil can be costly as you will require an emergency oil delivery and possibly a heating engineer call out to restart your heating system and you would be liable for these costs, keep an eye on your oil level gauge.

The most cost efficient way to purchase oil is to carry out a simple online search of oil delivery companies in your area who can give you a quote and delivery information to suit your needs and budget.

## **7. Living and Loving your Home**

In this section you will find a guide to maintenance for your home and what to do when encountering basic problems. Please note that demonstrations of most of these tips are available through a simple Internet search and that manuals to most appliances can be found online with the make and model number.

### **Looking After your Home:-**

- You are responsible for keeping your home in good condition. To help you do this it is best to carry out small tasks and routine checks to prevent the build up of problems.
- Make sure you know where the main water stopcock is, and how to turn it off. It is usually where the main water pipe enters the property or by the kitchen sink.
- Be sure you know how to turn off Electricity and Gas supply in an emergency. If you are unsure contact us or ask a contractor when they next visit you.
- Wipe down all areas affected by condensation on a regular basis, and if any mould has formed, clean it off using a solution of 1 part bleach to 4 parts water, or an appropriate cleaning product.
- Limescale can be removed from baths, sinks, shower heads and taps with a de-scaler available from most supermarkets and DIY stores.
- Blockages in kitchen sink waste pipes can be prevented by flushing through an appropriate drain cleaning product on a regular basis (available from supermarkets and DIY stores).
- It is your responsibility to replace light bulbs and change batteries for smoke alarms and CO detectors during your tenancy.
- Carry out regular Maintenance Washes and checks to keep your washing machine and dishwasher clean and in good working order.
- Defrost your freezer compartment regularly. Letting ice build up could lead to your freezer not functioning properly or efficiently.
- Turning off electricity If you need to turn off all electricity (e.g. due to a leak), use the main ON/OFF switch on the electricity consumer unit (Fuse Box).

### **Checking your Fuse Box:-**

Familiarise yourself with your fuse box, which should be located either close to the main point of entry for electricity in your home (this may in fact be in a communal hallway). It will either have fuses or trip switches. Modern electric circuits are fitted with circuit breaker fuse system. A switch will tripped and the circuit will be broken, stopping power the circuit if a fault develops. Older units will have fuses that may need to be replaced. If in doubt, please contact your property manager. **When a switch is tripped: Open the cover on the fuse box to expose the trip switches. Check which switches have tripped to the OFF position and put them back to the ON position.** For more detail, please refer to any user manual supplied.

**Overloading Plugs:** A common cause of electricity trips or faults is overloading plugs and blowing fuses. Therefore do not use multiple adaptors on single plug sockets and be sure to check the appliance fuse. If a contractor is called out due to this kind of user error, you are likely to be liable for the cost.

### **Leaking, burst or frozen pipes:-**

Please contact your property manager and take the following precautions to stop this happening, **when pipes leak**, place a dish or bowl underneath the leak. Pull back and carpets and lay down

towels to absorb the dampness. **When pipes burst**, turn off the water at the main stopcock and switch off any water heaters. Open all taps to drain water from the system. **Can it be isolated?** Some appliances have their own isolation valve which can be used these to stop their water supply. If electric fittings get wet: Do not touch. Turn off electricity at the Fuse Box.

### **Controlling your central heating:-**

During freezing spells, keep the heating on to prevent the pipes from freezing. Turning the thermostat down to 10 C to 15C can prevent this when you are out.

**How to control the temperature:** The thermostat maintains the temperature in your property. To set it, turn the dial or press the digital arrow Up or Down so that the arrow or marker indicates the temperature desired. A comfortable temperature is between 18C and 22C. On many systems, the temperature of individual radiators can be controlled via the turn knobs on the side.

**How to set a digital timer:** If there is a manual please refer to it, if not, check the clock is showing the correct time. If not, put the timer switch to 'clock' and adjust the time. Reset the timer switch to 'auto' and set the 'heating' and 'hot water' switches to come on once, twice or stay on all the time as you require.

**How to set a clock timer:** Turn the clock until it is showing the correct time. Decide when you want the heating to come on and off and arrange the pins or arrows for those times.

### **Condensation**

Condensation occurs when there is an excessive build up of moisture in the air. There is always moisture in the air, but people create additional moisture in their homes by cooking or boiling water, taking Baths or showers, drying clothes indoors. Condensation is worsened by extreme differences in temperature, such as the outside temperature in cold weather versus the inside temperature in your home. This is why condensation is usually worse in the colder season. If condensation cannot dry out, it will cause mould on walls, in cupboards and on windowsills, and mildew to form on clothes and upholstery.

### **Things you can do to stop condensation forming:**

**Produce less moisture:** Cover pans and turn down the heat when boiling; switch off boiling kettles; and dry clothes outside, or in a well-ventilated room. Ventilate to let moisture out. Open a kitchen or bathroom window to let steam escape (in conjunction with the use of an extractor fan), and open windows for a while each day to allow air to circulate through your property. Keep your home warm. Drastic changes in the ambient temperature in your home can lead to more condensation. Wipe down anywhere where moisture settles.

### **Washing Machine:-**

To keep your washing machine in good running order, you should carry out a maintenance wash once a month, to dissolve any mould or soap scum build up in the machine. **Tip:** Leave the door on your washing machine open for a while after a wash to prevent damp build up. Maintenance washes: These should be carried out once a month to keep your machine in clean working order. They should also be carried out if you find any mould building up in your machine, or the machine starts to smell

damp. Do not put any clothes in the machine, fill the soap dispense with soda crystals or washing machine cleaner, not normal detergent. (Soda Crystals/WM cleaner are available from most supermarkets and DIY Stores) Set your machine on a hot wash and allow it to complete the cycle.

### **Washer Dryer :-**

Please be aware that most washer dryer units cannot take the same load in washing as in drying. Always refer to the user guide and do not exceed the recommended limits. Removing mould: Black mould can form on the door seal, particularly if you don't allow the machine to dry out between washes, or you don't carry out maintenance washes. This is best removed by using rubber gloves and making sure you remove all mould from the layers of inner and outer door seals, followed with a maintenance wash. see above **Checking the pump filter**: Many problems, such as the washing machine not draining properly or completing its cycle are caused by foreign objects finding their way into the pump area. You should ensure that all small objects are removed from pockets to prevent this from happening. Please refer to the appliance handbook to gain access to the pump area and remove such objects and be advised that any damage to the appliance caused by this sort of item will be charged to you. If you cannot gain access to the pump filter or you are unable to carry out the handbook instructions, contact your property manager, who will arrange for an engineer to attend. If a contractor is called out due to this kind of user error, you are likely to be liable for the cost.

### **Clearing blockages Sinks, Showers, Baths:-**

Most blockages are caused by a build up of foreign objects, such as food, grease or hair in your drains. You should use a drain cleaning product every so often to clear the drains, available from most Supermarkets and DIY Stores. If a blockage is caused by your misuse in this way, you are likely to be held liable for the full cost of clearing the blockage. Therefore, you should attempt to clear any blockages yourself before contacting your property manager. If more than one fitting is blocked: The problem may be in the soil stack or the main drain. This will need to be cleared by one of our contractors. Report the issue to your Property Manager during office hours.

### **Overflows :-**

To stop an overflow: If the toilet cistern is overflowing, try lifting the float to close the ball valve. If this stops the overflow, try to tie it up, and report to your Property Manager during office hours.

**Saniflo toilets**, Some toilets are fitted with a Saniflo Macerator Pump, which breaks up material and pumps water into the drains of the property. The important thing to note with Saniflo toilets is that you cannot put anything other than small amounts of toilet paper down them. Any larger items can break the macerator. It is expensive to replace Saniflo toilets and if they break down due to misuse, you will be charged for repair and/or replacement.

**Bleeding Radiators**, When to do it: If the top part of a radiator is cold, when the bottom part of it is warm, it means air is trapped within the system. Bleeding the radiator releases this air and allows hot water to fill the whole system. Before Bleeding: If the radiator is cold, check that the radiator valve is turned up. If more than one radiator is cold, the whole system may need to be checked by a heating engineer. Please report to your Property Manager during working hours. Turn off the heating system before bleeding; otherwise the pump might draw more air into the system. Make sure the radiator in

question is cold to prevent injury. You will need a special radiator key, available from most DIY and hardware shops. You will also need a rag cloth and a bowl in case water escapes from the system. **How to Bleed:** The bleed valve is the small square nut situated at the top end of the radiator. Place the key over the valve and hold the cloth around it to catch any water. Gently turn the key anti-clockwise until you hear a hiss – this is the air being released. When water starts to come through, turn the key back clockwise to shut the valve off. **DO NOT** unscrew the valve completely as the plug **will come out.**

### **Kitchen extractor filters**

The filters on kitchen extractor hoods should be cleaned regularly to ensure that they continue to work. You will notice discolouration when the filter needs to be replaced or cleaned. If you don't look after the filter, grease will build up around the cooker.

### **Changing light bulbs and batteries It is your responsibility**

To change the bulbs and batteries in your property. Normal and halogen bulbs can be purchased from most hardware shops. Changing bulbs tips, turn off the light at the switch. To be safe, switching off the 'lights' circuit on your fuse box is the safest option. Give the bulb time to cool. Remove the bulb with a light but firm grip. It is a good idea to use a cloth glove or other soft glove to avoid direct contact with the bulb. Replace with the same bulb type and turn the system back on.

**Changing batteries:** You should carry out regular checks on your smoke detectors using the test button to ensure they are working. Most of them are fitted with readily available 9 Volt batteries (the rectangular ones) and are easily replaced by opening the device.

### **Pest control**

It is your responsibility to carry out pest control. Traps and bait can be bought from some Supermarkets, or DIY Stores. Belfast City Council Pest Control provide a free service To make an appointment, email [pestcontrol@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:pestcontrol@belfastcity.gov.uk) or call 028 9027 0431

If the problem persists, please contact your Property Manager during office hours .

**Mice:** Mice are one of the most common types of pest and it can be very difficult to exclude them from properties, particularly conversion flats and terraced houses, as there so many points of entry. To lessen the likelihood of mice in your property you should ensure that food is stored in sealed containers and put away in cupboards/on shelves away from the floor. Food crumbs are cleaned away immediately. Waste is kept in closed bins and removed from the property regularly for the local authority waste collection service to remove. Check your local authority website for a calendar of their **collection service.**

### **Troubleshooting Tips :-**

**My electric oven has stopped working:** You may have accidentally re-set the timer. Check and re-set your clock. If there is no power at all, check your fuse box to be sure that the circuit hasn't been broken.



**My washing machine has stopped draining, or has stopped mid-cycle:-** Your pump filter is probably blocked. Drain the machine and check the filter for foreign objects.

**My sink is draining slowly/not draining at all:-** This is likely to be caused by a build up of food and limescale. Buy a sink/drain unblocking liquid to remove the blockage.

**My dishwasher isn't washing my crockery properly:-** You may need to replace your rinse aid or dishwasher salt.

## 8. Renewing your tenancy

At least two months prior to your lease expiring, or in case the case of HMO properties approximately 6 months your Property Manager will be in contact with you to advise whether your Landlord has agreed to another term and they will discuss any rent increases with you. Please respond with your wishes either way as, should you not wish to stay on, the property would need to be remarketed.

## 9. Ending the tenancy

Should you wish not to renew your lease at the property, please advise us with a minimum of one months notice in writing. Please take meter readings and provide these to the utility companies and pay all outstanding bills— you will be held liable for any unpaid bills during your tenancy term.

### **If all tenants listed on tenancy agreement request to end the tenancy early :-**

We can assist with this at your landlord's discretion. There are two options available:

**1. Finding a Replacement Tenant** You would be responsible for securing a suitable replacement tenant, either a full-time working individual who can cover the rent or a student with a UK guarantor. The new tenant must undergo reference checks and receive approval from your landlord. They must also agree in writing to accept the condition of the original inventory as agreed upon with the initial tenants. Once the replacement tenant has been successfully referenced and the landlord has approved the tenancy change, they will need to pay the deposit. Additionally, you would be required to pay an administration fee. A new contract will be issued to the incoming tenant, and your liability will end on the date they move in and sign the contract.

**2. Advertising and Marketing the Property** We can advertise and market the property to potential tenants. Once an applicant is found, they must undergo reference checks and receive approval from your landlord. The incoming tenant must agree in writing to accept the original inventory's condition, or a new inventory may be required, for which you would be liable for a £50 + VAT fee. Once the new tenant has been successfully referenced and the landlord has approved the tenancy change, they must pay the deposit. Additionally, you would

be required to pay an administration fee equivalent to one month's rent plus VAT before a new contract can be prepared and sent to the applicant for electronic signature.

### **Replacement Tenant Process**

During your tenancy, there may be instances where one of the joint tenants wishes to move out while the others remain. This may be possible at your landlord's discretion, but the following steps must be followed:

- You are responsible for finding a suitable replacement tenant—either a full-time working individual who can cover your share of the rent or a student with a UK guarantor. The new tenant must also be accepted by the remaining tenants in the property.
- The replacement tenant must undergo reference checks and receive approval from your landlord.
- The incoming tenant must provide written confirmation that they accept the condition of the original inventory as agreed upon with the existing tenants.
- Once the replacement tenant has been successfully referenced and the landlord has approved the change, all tenants must sign a new contract, which incurs an administrative fee of £300 plus VAT.
- The incoming tenant must arrange payment of their portion of the property deposit, which will be registered with the TDS and merged with the original deposit.
- The outgoing tenant can only be refunded their deposit by the TDS once all remaining tenants have confirmed that no cleaning is required and no damage has occurred due to their tenancy.

### **Important**

**Until a new contract has been signed/new takes possession, the original contract remains valid, and all named tenants remain responsible for rent and bills.**

### **Cleaning and check out procedures :-**

Our team will be in touch where applicable to arrange for a check out. Please have the property returned to the same condition of cleanliness as it was handed in.

### **Deposit refund :-**

We do not hold your deposit as it being held by TDS NI, when your deposit was registered the lead tenant would have received a unique reference number to access this account, please keep this information safe as we do not have access to your login details. After you vacate you need to Login to your TDS account and make a claim for your deposit. The request will be sent to us via email from the TDS however we cannot agree to any deposit refunds until the end of tenancy check out inspection has been carried out and any work has been arranged i.e. cleaning/damages and invoices have been processed for the relevant contractors who carried out the work. Please provide your forwarding address to us when you vacate the property and once we have received a full breakdown of charges

to be applied we will email you a breakdown of any deductions which the landlord feels need to be made from your deposit for your approval. Please note that the most common deduction is the professional end of tenancy clean having not been carried out. Please note, we do not take deposit deductions queries via telephone and all queries or disputes need to be emailed to [info@alexanderspartnership.com](mailto:info@alexanderspartnership.com) with any evidence/photos to support your dispute.

## 10. Emergencies

**Fire In case of fire**, Dial 999. Get everybody out and do not go back for any reason. Close all doors and windows. Warn your neighbours if any of them might be in danger. If you live in a block of flats set off the communal fire alarm.

**Smell of Gas**, Open the doors and windows to get rid of the gas. Check to see if the gas has been left on unlit, or the pilot light has gone out. If so, turn off the appliance, and do not try to relight it until all smell of gas has been cleared from the property. If the leak cannot be stopped by turning off an appliance, or you are uncertain whether it has been stopped, turn the main gas supply off at the meter: see helpful tips and phone the gas emergency service immediately: **Pheonix Energy 0800 002 001**. Do not turn any electrical switches on and off. Do not use the door bell. Do not smoke. Do not use matches or naked flames.

**Bursting or leaking pipes**, Turn off the water at the mains. If electrics are affected, turn off the electricity at the fuse box. See 'Turning off Electricity, Notify your Property Manager.

**Loss of electricity**, If your neighbours are also affected, call your electricity company or check online to see if there is a fault in the area. If no faulty is recorded check your Fuse Box to see if a switch has tripped or a fuse blown. If none of the above apply and the problem persist, notify your Property Manager.

### **If The Property Management office is closed; Should you call Our emergency line ?**

Please ensure you have first checked the items listed in 'What to do in an emergency'. An emergency is something that could not have been foreseen, and which could cause serious damage to the property. If a contractor is called out as an emergency when an emergency repair is not justified, you may be liable for all costs concerned.

Emergency contractors will attend to make the property safe to enable full and proper repairs to be undertaken during normal working hours. If your property is managed by Alexanders Property Ltd and you experience an emergency as outlined above and the Office please take the preventative measures outline previously and contact:

**Sheila Mellotte 07526 566471 or Lisa Rutherford 0791679974**

where you can leave a detailed message or text quoting the property address, the nature of the emergency and your name and contact details. We take emergencies very seriously and we will

endeavour to resolve the situation as soon as possible. If your property is managed by your landlord please call your landlord directly.

## Summary

This tenant handbook provides a comprehensive overview of your tenancy with Alexanders Partnership. We hope you find this information helpful and that it contributes to a positive living experience. Remember to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Looking forward to welcoming you into your new home.

Kind regards

Lisa Rutherford & Sheila Mellotte

Associate Directors



**ALEXANDERS**  
PARTNERSHIP