

BBfA Landlord Pack 2025

Guidance and best practice for landlords.



Better Business for All

*A local partnership between Businesses and
Regulatory Services to promote growth*

1. Introduction

Better Business for All are a partnership between Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and Businesses. Enabling Hertfordshire businesses to easily access the regulatory support they need from Local Authorities (i.e. Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Fire Safety, Licensing and others).

This pack is designed to provide essential information for navigating the complexities of UK property law, a vital consideration for every landlord. Understanding and staying compliant with legal requirements not only ensures the safety and well-being of your tenants but also fosters their satisfaction, which can lead to longer tenancies. Moreover, maintaining compliance protects your investment and helps you avoid potential disputes or penalties. By equipping yourself with the right knowledge, you can confidently manage your property and create a positive living environment.

This pack provides key information on areas such as:

- **Tenancy Agreements:** Understanding the legalities of creating and maintaining tenancy agreements.
- **Health and Safety Regulations:** Ensuring your property meets all health and safety standards.
- **Property Maintenance:** Guidelines for regular maintenance and emergency repairs.
- **Financial Obligations:** Managing deposits, rent, and other financial responsibilities.
- **Legal Updates:** Staying informed about the latest changes in property law.

By utilising the information in this pack, you can confidently manage your property. Understanding the responsibilities of a landlord is crucial in avoiding common legal pitfalls. With clear instructions and practical tips, this resource aims to support you in creating a successful renting experience. Let's get started on your journey to becoming a compliant and successful landlord.

Who is this guide aimed at?

Regardless of whether you are a landlord with multiple rental properties or just one, and whether your tenants are families or multiple households, it is essential to comply with specific standards to ensure your property is safe and suitable. Adhering to the relevant laws and regulations is crucial for maintaining the integrity of your rental business and protecting the well-being of your tenants.

Your Local Authority is always ready to help with any questions or advice you may need regarding compliance.

Further detail on the above can be found on the Government pages: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/housing-local-services/landlords>

This guide focuses on the areas of regulation that Local Authorities: Councils enforce, so if you need advice and guidance then your Local Council can help you further.

This document serves as a best practice guide for landlords and property managers. It should not be interpreted as legal advice. We strongly recommend conducting your own risk assessment prior to implementing any of the guidance offered. If needed, obtaining independent legal counsel is advisable to ensure compliance and appropriateness for your particular situation.

Legislation changes – please make sure you're using the latest version of the pack



2. Local Authority teams

Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing Teams are based in your district councils and work to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents, traders, workers and visitors to Hertfordshire. This includes supporting businesses to comply with relevant regulations and legislation to make sure their rental properties are in good repair: safe, and that any pests, waste and noise are controlled.

Landlords and property managers must ensure that their properties comply with the legislation and regulations applied to the private rented sector: when let to tenants, throughout tenancies, or even when empty.

It is possible to delegate this responsibility to a residential letting agent, although landlords remain ultimately liable.

3. Getting started.

If you're ready to become a landlord, ensure you have a plan to get started:

3.1 Stage 1: Preparation

- Research areas
- Research property and letting types
- Speak to mortgage advisors
- Decide on ownership structure: Personal vs. Company Ownership
- Join a landlord association. Complete landlord training.
- Start building a team: solicitor, accountant, builder, etc.

3.2 Stage 2: Property Acquisition

- View properties and make offers
- Arrange financing: Mortgage
- Order necessary surveys
- Complete legal process.
- Property Purchased – ensure all property documentation is in order and due diligence checks have been carried out.
- Set up utility accounts – this will depend on the type of tenancy agreement you chose.
- Arrange Insurance: Specialized landlord policies covering both structure and liability.

There is no law which says you must carry insurance as a landlord, but it is highly recommended.

Landlord Insurance is a special type of insurance policy for landlords. You need a policy which is specifically designed for letting and one which covers several additional risks. Additional items such as loss of rent, rent default, tenant damage, and damage to building or landlord's furnishings and fixtures are covered by landlord's insurance policies. If you have a mortgage your lender will almost certainly insist that the property is properly insured. The National Landlord Association is a good source for further information regarding landlord insurance.

- HMRC: Tax planning: How you structure your property investment has major implications for tax and liability: Personal vs. Company Ownership.

Living abroad as a landlord - A landlord who lives abroad for more than 6 months of the year must pay tax on any income they get from renting out property in the UK. If the landlord is a company or trustee, the rules about their usual place of abode apply.

The tax is collected using the Non-resident Landlord Scheme. You can find out more here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/paying-tax-on-rent-to-landlords-abroad

3.3 Stage 3: Letting Process

- Prepare property for rental – carry out repairs and complete any remedial works before occupancy.
- Arrange compliance certificates
- Market the property.

All properties marketed for rent or sale must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with an energy rating of E or above. A copy must be shown to all prospective tenants, and all tenants must be given a copy of the certificate with their tenancy. To find if a property already has an EPC or to find an accredited energy assessor, please visit www.epcregister.com

- Consumer Law.

Landlords must consider Consumer Protection law regarding misleading advertising of their rental properties. For example, you must not advertise a property with an incorrect rental price or claim to a prospective tenant that a property is still available once it has been let. Landlords must ensure they do

not promote their services in ways that are unfair to other businesses too, for example by providing misleading information about their qualifications or experience, or by making unfair comparisons between their properties or services and those of other landlords or letting agents.

If there is a dispute between a landlord and tenant which cannot be resolved through the landlord's own complaints-handling procedure, they must inform tenants if they are a member of an approved alternative dispute resolution (ADR) scheme relevant to their sector.

In Hertfordshire, the County Council has the responsibility for Trading Standards across the whole County – The Trading Standards pages on The Council's website has a wide range of information for businesses on these areas of regulation: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/business/business.aspx

- working with Lettings/Estate agents
- Finding /Screen and select tenants

Effective Tenant Selection:

Marketing

Screening – Credit checks, previous landlord references, employment verification

Affordability – Typical benchmark is annual income of 30× monthly rent

Viewing process – In person or virtual, with consistent questions

Documentation – Use comprehensive, legally-compliant tenancy agreements

- Inventory - Getting ready for letting. Conduct a full property inspection (internal and external)

Before the start of the tenancy, carry out an inspection of your property and look for any obvious hazards. The accommodation must be in good repair, well-maintained, and capable of being effectively heated. Any safety hazards must be promptly dealt with. Common hazards include fire safety, damp and mould, falls on stairs and security.

- Complete move-in process

Once tenants have moved in, owners, Landlords or the person responsible for the property have several key ongoing responsibilities. These include maintaining the property's habitability, addressing necessary repairs, managing the deposit, and ensuring the property is safe and compliant with relevant legislation and/or regulations. Regular communication with tenants is crucial for addressing issues promptly and effectively.

Key Management Tasks: Whether you self-manage or use an agent, you'll need systems for:

- **Manage the Tenancy Agreement** – Tenant checks - What checks should you be doing as a landlord?
- Immigration status
- Landlords should have a formal tenancy agreement in place that outlines the terms of the tenancy. The tenancy agreement should be clear and concise, this includes rent amount and payment schedule, deposit details, and tenant/landlord obligations.

Landlords should ensure they understand their responsibilities under the agreement.

In the UK, landlords must protect the tenant's deposit with a government-approved scheme.

- **Rent collection** – Set up standing orders and tracking systems
- **Deposit Management** - Landlords must protect the tenant's deposit with a government-approved scheme.

All deposits are required to be safeguarded within an approved tenancy deposit scheme; however, failing to do so does not constitute a criminal offense. If a landlord neglects to protect a deposit, the tenant has the right to seek a court or tribunal order for its return, which could result in the landlord being liable for up to three times the original deposit amount.

Additionally, non-compliance with this requirement prevents the landlord from issuing a Section 21 notice for eviction.

Upon tenants vacating the property, landlords must conduct a thorough inventory check. Damages beyond normal wear and tear may be deducted from the deposit. Landlords should provide a breakdown of any deductions to the tenant.

- **Utility bills** - In most tenancy agreements, landlords are responsible for utility bills during void periods (when the property is empty between tenants) and may be responsible for utilities in HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) or if they choose to include utilities in the rent. However, tenants are typically responsible for their own utility bills during their tenancy.
- **Property management, maintenance and repairs** – Network of reliable contractors, emergency protocols. Landlords are legally obligated to ensure the property is safe and habitable. This includes addressing any necessary repairs, both inside and outside the property.

Tenants should report repair issues promptly and in writing to the landlord.

Landlords should respond to repair requests in a timely manner.

Landlords should take all reasonable steps to minimize risks to tenants.

Health and Safety Compliance: Landlords must ensure the property complies with all relevant health and safety regulations.

❖ **Energy Performance Certificate (min. E rating, C by 2030)**

EPC - All property for sale or rent must have an EPC one and, yes, E or better. You must have instructed an assessor within 7 days of marketing and have it completed within 21 days. Failing to comply renders a penalty notice from us for £200. Commercial buildings of a certain size must have an EPC, and the penalty is much higher.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate>

❖ **Gas Safety Certificate (annual inspection)**

All gas fixtures and equipment you supply must be safely installed and maintained by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Every year, you must have a gas safety check carried out and give the tenant a copy of the certificate, before the tenant moves in and annually thereafter.

❖ **Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) every 5 year**

As the law stands, you have to have the system periodically inspected by an electrician. You are legally required to make sure the electrical system and any appliances you provide are safe to reduce the risk of electrocution or fire.

The best way to do that is by instructing a 'Part-P' qualified electrician to carry out an inspection on the system every 3-5 years and have an Electrical Equipment Test (EET) (formally Portable Appliance Test (PAT)) on appliances every 12 months.

❖ **Working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms**

Ensure at least one smoke alarm is equipped on each level of their homes where there is a room used as living accommodation. This has been a legal requirement in the private rented sector since 2015.

Ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers).

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

The guidance booklet can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-explanatory-booklet-for-landlords/the-smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarm-england-regulations-2015-qa-booklet-for-the-private-rented-sector-landlords-and-tenants>

These regulations should be considered alongside other relevant laws on fire and carbon monoxide safety in rented homes such as the Housing Act 2004, the [Fire Safety Act 2021](#) and the [Building Safety Act 2022](#).

- ❖ **Housing Act 2004:** The Housing Act 2004 primarily focuses on improving housing conditions and regulating residential properties in England and Wales. It introduces the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to assess hazards in homes and empowers local authorities to take action against substandard housing. The Act also regulates houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and introduces Key aspects of the Housing Act 2004:

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS):

This system assesses the seriousness of hazards in a dwelling, identifying potential risks to health and safety. [Housing Act 2004](#)

Enforcement Powers:

The Act grants local authorities the power to take action against landlords and property owners who fail to comply with housing standards. This includes serving notices, making prohibition orders, and taking emergency action.

Regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):

The Act introduces licensing requirements for HMOs, ensuring they meet specific standards.

The Housing Act 2004 outlines two types of HMO licensing: mandatory and additional. Mandatory HMO licensing applies to larger HMOs, while additional licensing allows local authorities to extend

licensing to other HMOs in specific areas to address local issues. Selective licensing, introduced under Part 3 of the Act, can require all privately rented properties in a designated area to be licensed, even if they are not HMOs.

Mandatory HMO Licensing:

- This applies to HMOs with five or more occupants forming two or more households who share amenities like a kitchen or bathroom.
- Local authorities must enforce mandatory licensing in these larger HMOs.

Additional HMO Licensing:

- Local authorities can introduce additional licensing schemes to cover HMOs that don't meet the mandatory criteria.
- This allows councils to address specific problems like anti-social behavior or poor housing conditions in smaller or atypical HMOs within a designated area.
- For example, a council might require all HMOs in a particular street or neighborhood to be licensed to improve management standards and tenant safety.

Selective Licensing:

- Selective licensing is a broader scheme that can apply to all privately rented properties, including those that are not HMOs.
- Local authorities can designate specific areas where all privately rented properties must be licensed.
- This is typically implemented to tackle issues like low housing demand, anti-social behavior, poor property conditions, or high crime rates in the area.
- For instance, if an area has a high number of poorly maintained privately rented properties leading to complaints, the council might introduce selective licensing to improve standards and management.

Key Differences:

- **Scope:**

Mandatory licensing focuses on larger HMOs, additional licensing targets smaller HMOs, and selective licensing covers all privately rented properties in a designated area.

- **Purpose:**

Mandatory licensing is a standard requirement, while additional and selective licensing are introduced to address local issues.

- **Implementation:**

Mandatory licensing is enforced by the local authority, while additional and selective licensing require the council to designate specific areas or types of HMOs.

- ❖ Fire safety - A key part of being a landlord is ensuring fire safety in your properties, this section includes a range of advice that you should be aware of.

A 'competent person' should complete a written risk assessment form for the property. The best solution is to have a fire safety specialist do this and then review it periodically – ideally each year or between tenancies.

Ensuring there are working smoke alarms fitted on each floor of their rented properties at the start of a tenancy.

Ensure there is a safe means of escape from the property in the event of a fire

5 Step Fire Door Check - www.firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk/toolkit/five-step-fire-door-check .

Follow the following link for a guide for all employers, managers and owners of premises providing sleeping accommodation: [Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation \(accessible\) - GOV.UK.](#)

Fire Safety in blocks of flats

Legislation requires that landlords carry out fire risk assessments in all common areas of properties.

You should also keep your residents and visitors informed by placing signs detailing actions to be taken in the event of a fire, and where their nearest fire assembly point is located, making sure that all residents are able to understand any instruction provided.

Advice or further information can be gained by contacting the Business Fire Safety Team at the County Council on 01707 292310, emailing administration.cfs@hertfordshire.gov.uk or by visiting www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/fire-and-rescue/fire-rescue-and-being-prepared.aspx

❖ Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act compliance. - **Repairs**

Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and recent amendment, the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, you're legally obliged to ensure the property is fit for habitation at the start of the tenancy and maintained in good condition. If the furnishings or fittings or fabric of the property itself fall into disrepair, it could cause serious safety issues for tenants.

The full act can be found [here](#).

Furnishings - Any furniture and furnishings they provide is fire safe – upholstered furniture should usually be fire resistant. All furnishings and upholstered furniture you supply (e.g. sofas & armchairs) must meet fire safety regulations – there should be a permanent manufacturer's label confirming this.

❖ **Product Safety**

A landlord, as the owner of the property, can be a 'distributor' for the purposes of product safety, and any products within the property should be safe.

It is important to note that a letting agent or management agent could also be defined as a 'distributor', if they have a contract with the tenant, because they are 'professionals within the supply chain'.

The responsibility under the General Product Safety Regulations is that only safe products are supplied to tenants within the property they are letting.

The initial date for the supply of a product will be the date the tenant moves into the property, and this supply will continue every day the product remains inside the property for use by the tenant. This applies to appliances that you may have bought with the property too.

You should pass on information on the risks posed by the product. This will include providing the product's instructions. If the instructions were damaged or missing, then steps should be taken to pass on vital safety warnings for safe use; this will include contacting the product manufacturer to obtain a new set of instructions or downloading a set from the manufacturer's website. You should keep documentation to assist in identifying the origin of the product (e.g. purchase receipt or invoice, where available).

Once the distributor knows that a product poses a risk to the tenant (for example it has been recalled), they should follow the action required by the recall notice.

If the landlord or agent failed to take action to prevent the risk to the consumer following a recall by leaving the product at the property, then they would commit an offence under regulation 20 of GPSR.

There is a statutory defence contained in regulation 29 of GPSR for distributors to prove that they took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid committing the offence.

What steps can I take?

It is important that the landlord and letting agent establish who between the two of them is responsible for product safety in let accommodation, in writing.

If the letting agent is only marketing the furnished property to find a tenant for the landlord, and the agent does not enter into any contract with the tenant directly, then the distributor responsibility would remain with the landlord. This should be clearly identified in the marketing contract between the landlord and agent.

If the agent offers a managed or partially managed service to the landlord and enters into a direct contract with the tenant, or receives payments direct from the tenant, then both the landlord and the letting agent would bear the distributor responsibility.

The landlord and/or letting agent responsible for products supplied in let accommodation should complete a thorough inventory of all the consumer products that are in the property and thus supplied to the tenant. As a minimum the inventory should contain:

- Address of the property
- Name of the Landlord (and/or Letting Agent)
- Date of inventory
- Name of the person completing it.

Within each room and for each product therein:

- Item description
- Manufacturer / brand name
- Model / batch number
- Serial number
- Instructions present & complete (if applicable)
- Purchase date / Installation date
- Current condition.

Once the inventory is complete, the landlord, as the owner of the products, should register any domestic appliances using the website below. This will enable the landlord to be notified immediately of any recall affecting the domestic appliances registered.

www.registermyappliance.org.uk/registration/

The landlord and/or letting agent should check that the consumer products listed within the inventory have not been subject to a product recall. This check should be carried out at the start of the tenancy, and the outcome of the checks should be documented. The national website below will assist in this:

<http://productrecall.campaign.gov.uk>

In some circumstances, it may not be possible to find a consumer product on one of the recall databases. This does not automatically mean that the product is safe, so the responsible person should still carry out a physical examination of the product (whilst compiling the inventory) to ensure that it is complete, undamaged, operational and accompanied by instructions (where applicable). Any checks and findings should be documented. A person carrying out these checks should be competent.

Additional checks should be carried out for specific products, such as upholstered furniture, gas appliances or electrical items

Products could be found to pose a risk at any time and then recalled. It would be sensible for the checks outlined above to be carried out periodically, e.g. once a year or at the start of a new tenancy, whichever comes first. This should be done even if turnover of tenants is high as each new let is considered a supply. These periodic checks and findings should be documented.

All documented checks that have been carried out under this best practice advice should be kept for a period of six years or until the end of a continuous tenancy, whichever is longer.

Should an incident occur, the landlord and/or letting agent should co-operate with an enforcement authority and produce evidence of the above checks when requested.

- **Waste management** - As the individual responsible for waste management at your properties, it is essential to address any accumulation of waste promptly by collaborating with tenants to resolve the issue.

Ensure tenants are well-informed about proper waste disposal methods and adhere to recycling guidelines.

“Waste management helps avoid fly tipping”

For your convenience, a waste management notification template can be found in appendix 3.

- **Inspections** – Regular (but not intrusive) property checks.

Right to Enter the Property - Landlords have a right to enter the property for specific reasons, such as repairs or inspections. However, they must provide at least 24 hours' written notice to the tenant before entering, unless it's an emergency. Tenants must consent to the visit.

- **Communication** – Clear channels for tenant queries and issues. Regular and open communication between landlord and tenant is essential. Landlords should be available to address tenant queries and concerns. This includes providing at least 24 hours' written notice before visiting the property, unless it's an emergency. Prompt and clear communication can help prevent disputes.
- **Handling Complaints and Disputes** - Landlords should have a system for handling tenant complaints. This may involve a formal complaints procedure outlined in the tenancy agreement. If disputes arise, landlords should seek legal advice or mediation services.
- **Record keeping** – Documentation of all interactions, payments, and maintenance
- **Keep your mortgage company up to date on any changes in letting type or personal circumstance**

By fulfilling these ongoing responsibilities, landlords can maintain a positive and legally compliant tenancy relationship with their tenants

4. Renters Rights Bill

At the time of writing (August 2025) the Renters' Right Bill is currently making its way through the parliamentary process. The bill is expected to implement this year, effecting the majorities of tenancies.

Landlords need to be aware and prepare for the changes outlined below:

- Removal of the Section 32 notice
- Tenants right to give two months' notice to end the tenancy from day one
- Ban on advance rent payments
- Ban on rent increase clauses in contracts – instead landlords will need to issue a section 13 notice to increase rents which is limited to once a year and capped at market levels
- Introduction of a new “decent homes standard” to the private rental sector
- Creation of a Private rented sector database and with it a new ombudsman service
- Ban on rental bidding wars and the exclusion of families of benefits.

This is a large change to the rental market. This document will be updated with further guidance once the bill has reached royal assent.

5. Grants

From time to time there are grants available from central Government and Local Authorities, it is worth keeping in contact with the local housing team to ensure you are aware of any grants are available.

6. Lettings Agents

Landlords should complete their own checks on any agent they are using. The section below provides you with basic details you can check before engaging with a landlord.

Redress Scheme

Since 1st October 2008 for all persons carrying out lettings/estate agency work, as defined by Section 1(1) of the Estate Agents Act 1979 (“the Act”) in relation to residential property, to be a member of an approved redress scheme.

There are currently 2 approved redress schemes:

[The Property Ombudsman \(TPO\)](#)

[The Property Redress Scheme](#)

The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014 came into force on 1st October 2014 and is a legal requirement for all lettings agents and property managers in England to join one of two government-approved redress schemes.

Landlords should ensure any lettings agent they are working with are a member of a redress scheme.

Publication of Fees

A letting agent is required to display a list of the relevant fees that tenants and landlords are required to pay at:

- (a) each of the agent’s premises at which the agent deals face-to-face with persons using or proposing to use services to which the fees relate, and
- (b) at a place in each of those premises at which the list is likely to be seen by such persons.

Such a person is also required to publish those fees on their own website or third-party websites

Fees do not include rent, deposits or any fees, charges or penalties which the agent receives from a landlord under a tenancy on behalf of another person.

The description of the fees must include

- (a) a description of each fee that is sufficient to enable a person who is liable to pay it to understand the service or cost that is covered by the fee or the purpose for which it is imposed (as the case may be),
- (b) in the case of a fee which tenants are liable to pay, an indication of whether the fee relates to each dwelling-house or each tenant under a tenancy of the dwelling-house, and
- (c) the amount of each fee inclusive of any applicable tax or, where the amount of a fee cannot reasonably be determined in advance, a description of how that fee is calculated.

In England, a letting agent has a duty to additionally publish, with the list of relevant fees, details of membership of the client money protection scheme which the person is a member as well as details of redress membership. This duty to publish covers an agent’s website (if they have one) and on third party websites, i.e. listings on property portals.

Client Money Protection

A “property agent” who holds client money must be a member of an approved or designated client money protection scheme.

If a property agent fails to belong to a client money protection scheme, a financial penalty of up to £30000 can be imposed upon them.

Once a property agent is a member of an approved or designated client money protection scheme they become a ‘Regulated Property Agent’ and must

- Display the certificate (if the CMP scheme provides a certificate of membership) at each of the agent’s premises in England at which the agent deals face-to-face with persons using or proposing to use the agent’s services as a property agent...in a place where the certificate is likely to be seen by such persons
- Publish a copy of the certificate on the agent’s website (if any); and
- Produce a copy of the certificate to any person who may reasonably require it, free of charge.

If a regulated property agent fails to comply with any of the above, a financial penalty of up to £5,000 can be imposed upon them.

Upon any change in client money protection underwriting the regulated property agent must also, within 14 days

- Notify their client’s (any persons who the client money belongs to) of a change in underwriter; or
- Notify their client’s that membership to the client money protection scheme has been revoked.

The sanction for breaching the above requirements is a maximum financial penalty of £5000. A due diligence defence exists in respect of the transparency obligations where a person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain a copy of a certificate confirming membership of client money protection scheme and the scheme administrator has not provided it.

7. Fees

The Tenant Fees Act 2019 sets out what payments are permitted or not permitted in connection with a tenancy. Government guidance is available here: [Tenant Fees Act 2019: guidance - GOV.UK](#) a summary is available below.

The Act limited the payments landlord and lettings agents can charge, permitted payments are:

1. Rent

Regular rent payments, these should be calculated in equal instalments over the duration of the tenancy.

If payment is broken into lower amounts of rent which are then “topped up” with additional costs, the rent stated will be deemed to be the actual of rent payable. Any surplus paid or extra costs will be deemed to be a prohibited payment.

Supplements to rent, such as a premium for pets, are not permissible and any surplus above the actual rent amount would be classified as a prohibited payment.

2. Tenancy deposits

These must be capped at no more than 5 weeks rent if the annual rent is below £50,000.00, or in the case of annual rent which is £50,000.00 or more, the tenancy deposit is not to exceed 6 weeks rent

Amounts paid as a deposit in excess of these thresholds will be deemed to be a prohibited payment.

3. Holding deposits

A holding deposit, to secure the tenancy at a later date, is to be capped at no more than one week’s rent. Surplus sums are deemed to be a prohibited payment.

Any holding deposit must be refunded to the tenant: -

- (a) within 7 days of the tenancy commencing,
- (b) within 7 days when the landlord decides not to proceed with the tenancy as long as this decision is made at least 15 days before the tenancy is scheduled to commence, or
- (c) if the landlord and the tenant cannot agree the terms of the tenancy agreement the holding deposit is to be refunded no later than 7 days beginning with the date the tenancy was scheduled to commence.

Tenants can agree to offset the holding deposit towards the first instalment of rent or to offset the holding deposit towards the tenancy deposit but such offset, with other sums paid, cannot exceed the imposed caps. The date of offset is deemed to be the date of payment towards either the rent or the tenancy deposit.

The landlord or the letting agent can retain the holding deposit if prospective tenant is disqualified as a consequence of their immigration status, the prospective tenant unilaterally withdraws from entering into the tenancy agreement or otherwise reasonably fails to enter into the tenancy.

The landlord or the letting agent can also retain the holding deposit if they have evidenced the prospective tenant has provided false or misleading information, and that false or misleading information is fundamental in deciding to grant the tenancy.

A landlord or letting agent who has retained the holding deposit must notify the prospective tenant in writing within 7 days. Failure to do so will invalidate the entitlement to retain the holding deposit and it must be repaid as a prohibited payment.

4. Default payments

The landlord or letting agent is entitled to claim the cost of recovery for replacement security devices (keys, alarm fobs, etc.) but only the reasonable costs of replacement and where the tenancy agreement requires the payment to be made.

A landlord or letting agent is entitled to apply interest (calculated at no more than 3% above the Bank of England's base rate, per annum) to unpaid rent if that rent is unpaid for a period in excess of 14 days. Interest is calculated daily¹. Again, the tenancy agreement must require such a payment to be made.

Compensatory amounts for damage, etc. are still permissible subject to contractual terms expressly identifying where deductions can be applied. These deductions can originate from the tenancy deposit should there be sufficient sums or can otherwise be recovered through the usual civil remedies.

A fixed aggregated fee for damage within the property is not permitted.

5. The tenant has requested variations to the tenancy agreement

If the tenant has requested the tenancy agreement be varied, assigned or novated the landlord or letting agent can request payment of no more than £50 to process the change. Any payment in excess of £50 is a prohibited payment.

6. Early termination

If the tenant requests the term of the tenancy is curtailed, the landlord or letting agent is entitled to an amount of rent which would have been paid if the tenancy had continued. Should the landlord or letting agent be able to enter into a new tenancy agreement with a new tenant during the void period the amount of any rents received from the new tenant cannot be claimed from the former tenant. In such circumstances the amount of the double recovery is a prohibited payment and is payable to the original tenant.

7. Inclusive utility bills, broadband, Council tax, TV subscriptions, TV licence, etc.

If a tenancy agreement is inclusive of these items, the landlord or letting agent cannot separately apply liability to the tenant for these sums and such a payment by the tenant would be regarded as a prohibited payment.

The tenant is liable for payment of such services only if the tenancy agreement expressly identifies liability lies with the tenant.

The Act also specifies a list of prohibited payments

Any sums which are a condition on the granting, continuance, assignment, termination or renewal of the tenancy are outright banned which includes payments to third parties.

Supplementary charges for the following items, as examples, are subject to the prohibition:

- Credit referencing or the provision of an exit reference
- Administration fees
- Management service charges
- Cleaning
- Inventory checks
- Fees associated with a guarantor

8. Health and Safety Regulations

Landlords must ensure their property complies with the appropriate Health and Safety Legislation; a few key areas are listed below:

Gas Safety

- Ensure all gas appliances, fittings and flues are safely installed and maintained by a Gas Safe Registered engineer
- Provide annual gas safety checks
- Give tenants a copy of the gas safety certificate before they move in or within 28 days of a gas safety check.

Electrical Safety

- Ensure the properties electrical systems are safe – this includes sockets, wiring, light fittings etc.
- Complete an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) every 5 years.
- Ensure all supplied electrical appliances are safe – see product safety section.

Fire Safety

- Smoke alarms need to be installed on every story and checked during routine inspections
- Carbon monoxide alarms must be fitted in rooms with solid fuel-burning appliances
- Escape routes must remain clear, and tenants might need to be reminded about this
- Furniture and fittings must meet fire safety standards
- For HMOs fire alarms and extinguishers must be fitted.

Each district council typically provides a **Guide to Fire Protection in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**. This guide draws on LACORS national guidance from 2008; it outlines local requirements and best practices for fire safety, including electrical safety standards.

To access the relevant guide:

- Visit your local district council's website
- Or contact the council directly by phone to request a copy

9. Financial Obligations

Any letting agent or property manager who holds client money must be a member of a client money protection scheme. Clients both landlords and tenants should know which scheme the letting agent/property manager is a member of. The membership should be on display at any premises and published on the agent's website. The certificate should be available to anyone who may reasonably require it, free of charge.

If there is a change in membership status – all clients need to be informed within 14 days of the change.

A mandatory clients money protection scheme is intended to give landlords and tenants confidence that their money is safe when it is being handled by an agent.

What is client money?

- Holding deposits
- Security deposits
- Rents
- Utility payments
- Funds for repairs and maintenance work
- Maintenance floats
- Interest
- Miscellaneous money

Note that this doesn't include fee due to the property agent from their client

10. Tenancy Agreements & Adverts

It is important that landlords are aware that adverts must describe the property appropriately and the pictures must show the property in its current state or as reasonably close. If pictures include certain white goods such as a washing machine but this isn't included in the rental agreement then this should be made clear.

Tenancy agreements need to comply with all appropriate legislation and cannot be too restrictive, the law will trump anything that is put into a tenancy agreement, and it will be frowned upon if landlords have used the tenancy agreement to mislead tenants. An example being the tenants right to quiet enjoyment, landlords or maintenance staff cannot turn up unannounced and without 24 hours' notice no matter what they have put into the tenancy agreement.

11. Property Maintenance

Properties must be in a good state and checked regularly.

Please see the sections on damp and mould and Health and Safety.

12. Damp and Mould

What is Damp and Mould?

Dampness is the presence of unwanted moisture in a building. It can be caused by leaks, condensation, or rising damp.

Mould is a type of fungus that grows in damp and humid environments. It can cause health problems, such as allergies, asthma, and respiratory infections.

The Risks of Damp and Mould

Damp and mould can damage your property, including the structure, walls, and furnishings.

Damp and mould can also affect your tenants' health and wellbeing, which can lead to complaints, legal issues, and financial costs.

More information: www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/lifestyle/can-damp-and-mould-affect-my-health/

How to Prevent Damp and Mould

Keep your property well-ventilated and heated to prevent condensation.

Insulate your property to reduce heat loss and cold spots.

Fix leaks and maintain gutters, downpipes, and drains to prevent water damage.

Use mould-resistant materials, such as paint, wallpaper, and flooring.

Encourage your tenants to report any damp or mould problems promptly.

How to Treat Damp and Mould

Identify the source of the dampness and fix it. This could be broken guttering, poor drainage or a range of other sources.

Dry out the affected areas using dehumidifiers, heaters, or ventilation.

Clean and remove the mould using a fungicidal cleaner or bleach.

Dispose of any contaminated materials, such as carpets or curtains, safely.

Your Legal Responsibilities as a Landlord

Landlords have a legal obligation to provide a safe and healthy living environment for their tenants.

Landlords must comply with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and other relevant legislation.

Landlords who fail to address damp and mould problems can face fines, legal action, and damage to their reputation.

Damp and mould are serious issues that can affect your property and your tenants' health.

By taking proactive measures to prevent and treat damp and mould, you can protect your investment and your tenants' wellbeing.

If you're unsure about how to handle damp and mould problems, seek advice from a qualified professional.

You can also reach out to your Local Authority who could also support you with advice and assistance.

It is recommended you make yourself aware of what tenants are being advised if damp and mould issues are not addressed.

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs/damp_and_mould_in_rented_homes

13. Developments to a Property – Planning and Building Control

Most new buildings or major changes to existing buildings or to the local environment need consent – known as planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area. Any new HMO property with six or more people may require planning permission for change of use.

When will I need planning permission?

There is no set answer for this as it varies depending on what kind of use or development is proposed. The first step would be to check with your District Council Planning team.

How do I make a planning application?

You can submit a planning application directly through the Planning Portal (<https://www.planningportal.gov.uk>) and it will be received by the correct District Council.

Building Control

Building Control (sometimes referred to as building regulations) ensures that any changes to a property or any new buildings built are in line with current legislation and that changes are made to a high standard. It is a different process to planning permissions and sometimes you may need both.

When would I need to contact Building Control?

You would usually need approval from Building Control to construct new buildings or to add extensions or make alterations/renovations to existing buildings.

Certain types of building work, such as installing a new or replacement central heating system or boiler, installing a new or replacement fuse box and fitting new electrical sockets in a

bathroom, must be certified by Building Control bodies as being compliant with the regulations

(www.gov.uk/government/collections/approved-documents). Check with your District Council's Building Control Team to find out if a Building Regulations application is required

14. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Useful Contacts

District Council contacts

Contacts for most licensing, environmental health, planning and building control enquiries.

Broxbourne – 01992 785555 / www.broxbourne.gov.uk

Dacorum – 01442 228000 / www.dacorum.gov.uk

East Herts – 01279 655261 / www.eastherts.gov.uk

Hertsmere – 0208 207 2277 / www.hertsmere.gov.uk/home.aspx

North Herts – 01462 474000 / www.north-herts.gov.uk

St Albans – 01727 866100 / www.stalbans.gov.uk

Stevenage – 01438 242242 / www.stevenage.gov.uk

Three Rivers – 01923 776611 / www.threerivers.gov.uk

Watford – 01923 226400 / www.watford.gov.uk

Welwyn & Hatfield – 01707 357000 / www.welhat.gov.uk

Legislation.gov.uk - Home to all UK legislation

Hertfordshire Growth Hub – Provides support for Hertfordshire businesses

www.hertsgrowthhub.com

GOV.uk – the portal to all central government services, including HM Revenue and Customs

www.gov.uk

Useful articles:

www.gov.uk/renting-out-a-property

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-private-rented-property-minimum-standard-landlord-guidance-documents

Health and Safety Executive – National regulator for health and safety matters

www.hse.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

ico.org.uk/for-organisations

National Landlords Association (NLA)

www.landlords.org.uk

Residential Landlords Association (RLA)

www.rla.org.uk

Shelter

england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/landlord_responsibilities

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Hertfordshire Trading Standards

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/trading-standards.aspx .

LACoRS Fire Safety Guidance

www.cieh.org/media/1244/guidance-on-fire-safety-provisions-for-certain-types-of-existing-housing.pdf

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/fire-and-rescue/your-home/fire-safety-in-your-home.aspx .

HHSRS Guidance for landlords

www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals

Appendix 2 - HMO Checklist.

Fire precautions and safety	Yes, No, N/A
<p>Fire alarm system - All HMOs will require a main wired, interlinked fire alarm system. The size of the property will determine what system will be needed. It must meet the LACORS Fire Authority requirements. Please see a link to this document, which provides illustrative examples of properties and what is required.</p> <p>Also refer to Herts Fire Safety Guide</p>	
<p>Fire Doors - 30-minute fire resistant doors - Hollow doors are not acceptable due to having poor fire resistance. It should be fitted to the kitchen, communal rooms and let bedrooms, fitted with smoke and heat seals and self-closer devices.</p> <p>All other doors throughout the property should be solid to provide at least 20 minutes of fire resistance.</p> <p>All doors should be well-fitting with no bigger than 3mm gaps between the door and frame. All door props and over-the-door hangers should not be used in the property. Please see the following link to the Herts Fire Safety Guide for more information: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/fire-and-rescue/your-home/fire-safety-in-your-home.aspx</p> <p>High Rise Flats - www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/fire-and-rescue/your-home/high-rise-flats.aspx</p>	
<p>Means of escape - All hallways and landings must be free from obstruction, trip hazards, sources of ignition or items that aid the spread of fire?</p> <p>The means of escape include any spaces on hallways and landings, like under the stairs. Common items to be moved from the means of escape are; shoe racks, shelving units, clothes, internet cables, fridges or freezers.</p>	
<p>Fire blanket - must be wall mounted in the kitchen. Ideally at 1.5m, away from the cooker next to the exit door.</p>	
<p>Consumer unit, electric meters and gas meters - If an HMO has the meters are situated on the means of escape, they must be encapsulated with 30-minute fire resistant material with an access door. No gaps should be present in between the casing and the wall or around the access door.</p>	
<p>Fire extinguishers - are not a requirement, however, where they are provided:</p> <p>Check the service date; fire extinguishers must be serviced annually.</p> <p>All fire extinguishers must be wall mounted.</p> <p>Ensure any new tenants have been shown how to use them if they are installed at the property.</p>	
<p>Water Suppression System, where fitted: has this been maintained and tested within the last year and a record of testing kept.</p>	

Internal Checks	Yes, No, N/A
Decoration: Is the decoration inside the property in good condition	
Furniture , where provided: is it fire safe, in good, clean condition	
White Goods , where provided: is it in good clean condition and plugged into its own dedicated socket	
Damp and Mold: Is the property free from damp and mold? Government advice can be found here .	
Windows : are they in good condition ? can be opened and closed freely. Windows with windowsills under 800mm need to be suitably guarded or the windows should be prevented from opening wider than 100mm - check this is in place. Windowsills under 1100mm will need a restrictor or guarding fitted if children live or visit the property – check this is in place.	
Lights Bulbs (all): are they working in the communal areas?	
Landing and stairs banister rails – ensure that all rails are in place and there are no gaps bigger than 100mm. Are the rails in good repair?	
All flights of stairs and external steps must be provided with a secure handrail. They should be secure and not loose.	
Locks – Security devices on bedrooms and final exit doors must be capable of being opened from the inside without the use of keys, i.e. Yale type or thumb turn locks Ensure locks to the inside of the bedroom and the main entrance/exit doors do not have a key to open them. It is recommended that keylocks to the inside of the doors are appropriately filled in, covered or removed.	

Heating.	Yes, No, N/A
Fixed heating must be provided to all rooms, and access to heating must be provided at all times to be controlled by the occupier	
All dials, thermostats and switches need to be in good condition	
Electrical heating provisions: Review any electrical room heaters and look to install high heat retention heaters with economy 7 tariff . Here is a good article about the benefits of HHR heaters: https://energysmartworld.co.uk/high-heat-retention-storage-heaters/	

Exterior checks:	Yes, No, N/A
Is the property should be free from structural cracks	
Are the rainwater goods free from vegetation and in good working condition	

Are the all drain/gully covers in place and fitted correctly.	
Is the grey water system and foul sewage system free flowing and clear	
Is the garden free from weeds, vegetation and maintained? Is the garden free from general waste/unwanted items and litter?	
Decking, where fitted: is the decking slip free and free from rot.	
Fence panels, where fitted: are all the fence panels in good condition	
Internal and external waste and recycling bins - are there bins, and are they of an adequate size?	

Management – all HMOs	Yes, No, N/A
Are you aware of the Management Regulations 2006 . please refer to the following link https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/372/contents	
The Landlord and/or manager must ensure that their name, address and any telephone contact numbers are clearly displayed in a prominent position in the HMO. The Recycling and Rubbish notice should be displayed at the property with the correct information. The HMO License should be available at the property. Read the license and ensure it matches the property layout, and the conditions are being met.	
Have all tenants signed a tenancy agreement for property? Is the deposit protected under one of the Government Schemes? https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent	
Is there is an EPC dated within the last 10 years for the property? And is this rating E or above? if you have carried out any remedial works or improvements after the EPC was carried out, you may want to have an new EPC carried out.	
Is there is a satisfactory Gas Safety Certificate dated within the last 12 months for the property? Gas safety (installation and use) regulations 19989 (as amended) .	
Is there is a satisfactory Domestic Electrical Installation Condition Report dated within the last 5 years for the property with no C1 or C2 faults or FI listed? Electrical safety standards in the private rented sector (England) regulations 2020	
Have the electrical appliances provided to the tenants been checked and are safe to use, e.g. Electrical Equipment Testing (EET. Formally PAT testing) or visual test which is documented	
Has the Fire Detection and Alarm system been maintained and tested to BS 5839-6, including a test certificate dated within the last 12 months for the property? (N.B Applicable to Grade A fire alarm systems only).	

Do you have a logbook available for the inspection and testing of the fire detection and alarm system? Is it up to date?	
Where fitted, have the fire extinguishers been tested within the last year, and is there a record of testing?	
Has the legionella risk assessment been completed, and all control measures implemented? See HSE for more information	
Carbon monoxide alarm is required: wall mounted in kitchens with gas appliances, next to the gas boiler, gas cooker/hob or near to any solid fuel source. The smoke and carbon monoxide alarm (England) (amendment reg 2022)	
Has a <u>Fire Risk Assessment</u> been carried out? If yes, has all remedial works stated within the Assessment been completed?	
There are documents or labels to show all furniture meets the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended) ?	
The property should be free from Rodent and/or pest activity – if you find any evidence of pest/rodent activity, engage the services of a competent pest control company to carry out suitable treatment.	

Appendix 3 – Waste Management Notification.

This property is licensed under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004

License Holder:	
Property Manager:	
Out of Hours contact:	
Recycling & rubbish collections: UPDATE FOR YOUR AREA Recycling is collected weekly Household waste is collected fortnightly Garden waste are collected fortnightly Enter your postcode at [DISTRICT BIN WEBPAGE]	STATE DAY: Put out your recycling and rubbish for collection by 7am on your collection day, or as late as possible after 8pm the previous evening at the front edge of your property. Please note that you can be fined for leaving your recycling and rubbish out at the wrong time or place For more details visit: [DISTRICT RECYCLING AND WASTE INFORMATION PAGE]

Displaying management information is also a requirement under The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006.

Appendix 4 – Legionella Checklist

Legionella: Re-activate Water Checklist.

Prior to re-occupying properties that have remained vacant for extended durations, it is essential to recognize that certain systems, such as water, cannot simply be reactivated and returned to standard operation.

We have produced this re-start checklist guide* for you to use before initiating the use of the water systems at the property. For further advice and information on a landlords responsibilities please refer to the [HSE](#) . The following steps will assist you in formulating a restart plan for water systems:

Re-active Water Checklist		
Risk factor. If your property has been vacant for extended periods, there could be a risk of legionella in your water systems.		
If you have any of the below risk factors, corrective action will be required;		Corrective actions / comments:
Has water been stored between 20°C and 50°C?	Yes / No / N/A	
Has water been left without routine flushing; poor or no flow in the water system for longer than a week?	Yes / No / N/A	
Are there any outlets that create inhalable droplets such as aerosols? E.g. opening a tap, showering, indoor fountain, flushing a toilet, other equipment such as pressure washers, hoses, spray irrigation systems, footbaths.	Yes / No / N/A	
Are there any dead legs of pipework that could hold stagnant water, including hose pipes?	Yes / No / N/A	

If you answer yes to any of the above checks, please refer to the next section: re-occupy the property.

Re-occupy the property		Corrective actions / comments.
Increase the temperature of hot water systems to at least 60°C if possible, drawing it through to all hot water outlets. A temperature of at least 60°C will kill Legionella bacteria over time.	Completed on:	
Flushing through simple hot/cold water systems with fresh mains water for several minutes. (Slowly turn tap on to prevent spray).	Completed on:	

Ensure the system is capable of delivering water at a safe temperature. Check temperatures ahead of property reoccupation. Including considering a safe water temperature to avoid scalding.	Completed on:	
For complex systems or if your risk assessment identifies further action is required:		
Undertake a chemical or thermal disinfection of the water system.	Completed on:	
Undertake microbiological sampling for Legionella bacteria.	Completed on:	
Has a legionella risk assessment been completed, and all control measures implemented?	Yes / No / N/A Date completed:	

Finally, when you are satisfied the hot and cold water systems are under control then the property can be safely reoccupied. Ensure you keep documentation for the inspection and checks you have made.

Should you have any concerns regarding the water system you should contact a competent water treatment company.

Completed by		Date	
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Appendix 5 - Fire Safety Checklist for Landlords in the UK (Before Renting Out a Property)

Legal Fire Safety Requirements Before Tenancy Begins

- Install at least one smoke alarm on every floor used as living space. Test and confirm working on the first day of tenancy.
- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in any room with a solid fuel-burning appliance. Test before tenancy begins.
- Obtain an annual Gas Safety Certificate from a Gas Safe registered engineer. Provide tenants before move-in.
- Provide a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) every 5 years. Ensure all supplied appliances meet British Safety Standards.
- Ensure all furniture and furnishings are fire-resistant and comply with safety regulations.
- Maintain clear and accessible escape routes at all times. Keep communal areas free of obstructions.
- Has a Fire Risk Assessment been conducted by a competent person?
This requirement applies only to rental premises that include communal areas, such as shared hallways, stairwells, or kitchens. The assessment should be carried out in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and documented appropriately.

Additional Fire Safety Tips from the Home Office (for tenants)

- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Avoid overloading electrical sockets.
- Keep candles and heaters away from flammable materials.
- Plan and communicate an escape route.
- Keep keys accessible near doors and windows.

Appendix 6 - Other support available:

Healthy Hubs

Free health and wellbeing support

No matter where you live in Hertfordshire, there's a Healthy Hub to help you with your health and wellbeing needs.

Taking that first step to change a habit or ask for help isn't always easy. You might not be entirely sure what support you want or need, but talking with us can help you figure that out.

Healthy Hubs Hertfordshire will listen, explore the options available and provide free, non-judgmental information and advice to support you with:

- losing weight
- reducing drug and/or alcohol intake
- quitting smoking
- getting fitter and healthier
- your mental wellbeing
- improving employability and digital skills
- getting money advice
- sexual health testing kits
- and much more.

Find your local hub and pop in for a friendly chat. Let us help you on your journey to stay healthy and well - www.healthyhubs.org.uk

Beezee Healthy Lifestyle Programmes

Maximus is the organisation funded by Hertfordshire County Council to provide free lifestyle support to help children and young people build healthy habits across Hertfordshire through their lifestyle programme, [Beezee Families](#). The programmes run across the county, families can attend in-person with a choice of various locations. This programme runs for 12 weeks and is also available [online](#). [Beezee Families 1:1 support](#) is available all year round. [Beezee Youth](#) is a programme made with the help of teenagers and explores topics that are important to young people around healthy lifestyles. [HENRY 0-5s parenting support](#) programme is the under 5s service provided as part of this service. Beezee also provide training to professionals as well as delivering family workshops on various topics related to healthy lifestyle.

Just Talk - Emotional Wellbeing Support for Young People

[Just Talk](#) is a Hertfordshire-based website that provides emotional wellbeing information and signposting for young people.

It covers a wide range of topics including mental health support, exam stress, body image and support for LGBT+ youth. The site connects young people with both local and national resources to help them feel supported and improve their wellbeing.

Family centres in Hertfordshire

The family centre service can help from before your baby's born, right through to thinking about starting school and there are centres throughout Hertfordshire. Whether families are coping fine or having a struggle, there's plenty of help and advice out there for them. This can range from health and development, feeding baby, antenatal and post-natal classes and tips, balanced diets to mental health, and support to prepare children for school, whether its nursery, pre-school or a childminder.

Visit www.hertsfamilycentres.org for all the information.

Safe Sleeping

Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children's Partnership, in collaboration with local health and family services, has worked hard to involve wider organisations working with families, to engage with Hertfordshire's safer sleep framework and work together to reduce unexpected infant deaths during co-sleeping.

Housing associations and private landlords play a crucial role in spreading Safe Sleeping messages. Bed poverty, including issues like broken beds and shared sleeping spaces, is a significant concern. Infants under one year should always have their own sleeping environment, even if co-sleeping with a parent. If as a landlord, you witness bed poverty in your homes, you can refer the family to the Hertfordshire Community Foundation who may be able to offer a small grant through the [Hertfordshire Children's Fund](#) to provide for essentials such as children's beds and bedding.

More safe sleeping information is available from the Lullaby Trust. [Safer sleep overview | The Lullaby Trust](#)

Access a free Child Safety Parents' Pack here for information on preventing burns, choking and poisoning alongside other key safety advice: [Free educational resources | Child Accident Prevention Trust](#)

Safeguarding

If you're concerned that a child is at **immediate** risk of harm, call 999.

Call 0300 123 4043 for urgent out of hours safeguarding support.

Or see here for more information:

[Professionals – report a concern about a child or young person | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Early Years Physical activity

Check out Herts Mini Movers for ideas on how to move more with children aged 0-5 years [Herts Mini Movers](#)

Pre and Post Natal Physical Activity

Helping people in Hertfordshire to find ways to be more physically active, includes pre and post-natal search function [Moving More](#)

Healthy Start

With the NHS Healthy Start scheme, you could get help towards the cost of healthy fruit, vegetables and milk. You could be entitled to weekly support towards:

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk
- Pulses
- Healthy Start vitamins

Find out if you're eligible online today: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

You can also receive free vitamins from your local family centre – find out more at <https://www.hertsfamilycentres.org/healthystartvitamins>

Children's Health

Health Services for children: [Children's services | Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust](#)

Health Visitors in Herts - [Health visitors in Hertfordshire](#)

School Nurses in Herts - [School nurses in Hertfordshire](#)

For Healthy Happy pregnancies, babies, toddlers and pre-school children - [Home Page - Hertfordshire | Health for Under5s](#)

Health for Kids - [Health for Kids | Hertfordshire](#)

Healthier Together - [Home :: Hertfordshire and West Essex Healthier Together](#)

Chat Health for Teens - [Chat Health | Hertfordshire](#)

Oral Health

The Hertfordshire Public Health programme to improve oral hygiene and promote healthy eating is aimed at vulnerable under 5's, to help prevent tooth decay.

[Hertfordshire Healthy Mouths programme](#) distributes free oral health packs of a toothbrush, toothpaste, timer, oral health leaflet to vulnerable families through Health Visitors and key Family Centre networks. Call 0300 123 7572 to find out more.

Hertfordshire Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme

Hertfordshire businesses can support public health messages by signing up to the [Hertfordshire Breastfeeding Friendly scheme](#). Aimed at encouraging breastfeeding mums to continue breastfeeding their child while out and about, the scheme invites Hertfordshire business and leisure venues to sign up and advertise their venue is a welcoming, helpful place to be with a young child. Public Health will add you to a local Hertfordshire online map, and provide stickers, posters and a certificate to highlight the business commitment

Breastfeeding benefits the health of both babies and their mothers and encouraging breastfeeding on a business' premises gives encouragement.

Stop Smoking Service

Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of health inequality in England. There are 7.3 million adult smokers and over 200 people a day die from a preventable smoking related illness. More information for professionals can be found [here](#).

Quitting smoking is therefore one of the best things you will ever do for your physical and mental health and is better for your family and friends.

If you live, work or are registered with a GP in Hertfordshire, we can offer you a one-to-one 12-week service to help you quit smoking.

[Find your nearest Stop Smoking Service here](#)

More information on the products we offer and their benefits can be found [here](#)

For advice on which product would suit you best, speak to a [Stop Smoking Advisor](#).

Keep Active

- [Free and cheap activities](#) – From park runs to health walks, Hertfordshire is full of great value opportunities to get active, for all ages.
- [Older adults](#) – Moving with age. How to build your confidence and get moving.
- [Pregnancy, children and teenagers](#) – Getting active early. Some fun, free and friendly starters.

[Learn how much activity you need for your age](#)

Healthy weight

A healthy lifestyle gives you more energy and reduces the risk of illness.

If you're 18 years or above and registered with a Hertfordshire GP you can refer yourself to one of our weight management programmes.

When you join, you can expect:

- Free support to help you maintain a healthy weight
- Individual sessions with your dedicated health advisors
- A personalised healthy eating and exercise plan
- Regular weight checks
- Access to a digital learning platform.

[Check you're eligible for one of our programmes and refer yourself to a weight management programme](#)

More information is also available on [eating well](#) and [advice for families during pregnancy, the early years and childhood](#).

Drugs and alcohol

Find advice and services if you're worried about yours or someone else's [drinking](#) or [drugs](#) use.

Gambling

Whether you're struggling personally or affected by someone else's gambling, there's free and confidential support for you.

- [Support services in Hertfordshire](#)
- [National support services](#)
- [Self-help options](#)

Sexual health

- [Sexually Transmitted Infections \(STIs\)](#): Access testing and treatment services, order home testing kits, and learn about symptoms and effects.
- [Contraception](#): Find contraceptive services, including condoms and emergency contraception, and explore various options available.
- [HIV](#): Locate HIV testing services, order home testing kits, and read about symptoms, support, and medication.
- [Sexual Assault](#): The Herts Sexual Assault Referral Centre offers support to anyone who has experienced sexual assault.
- [Termination of Pregnancy](#): Find clinics in Hertfordshire.

Healthy Places

Public Health are working with a range of organisations across the public and private sector to make Hertfordshire a healthier place to live.

We address important health issues through our programs:

- [Healthy homes](#)
- [Active travel and transport](#)
- [Healthy food environments](#)
- [Air quality](#)

Get a free NHS Health Check

If you're 40-74 years old, you may be able to get a free NHS Health Check.

This can help you reduce or manage your risk of developing health conditions such as heart disease, strokes, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes, and dementia.

[NHS Health Check, see if you can get one](#)

Mental health and wellbeing

Whether you are looking for self-help resources to boost your mental health, need a listening ear or emotional support, or you are in crisis and need urgent help, there are [services available to support you](#).

What is Domestic Abuse?



Physical Abuse can look like...

Hitting, biting, kicking, hair pulling, burning, strangling or other forms of physical intimidation and violence.

Coercive Control can look like...

Using various tactics to control your daily activities and routines (for example, what you do, say, spend, where you go or who you communicate with), or your ability to leave a relationship. **Coercive control is the basis for most other forms of abuse.**

Psychological or Emotional Abuse can look like...

Verbal insults, accusations or threats, gaslighting, blaming you for things going wrong, or making you feel like a burden or a failure. Words are used to manipulate, hurt, weaken or frighten you, or distort, confuse or influence your thoughts and actions.

Economic Abuse can look like...

Controlling or withholding your access to money, dictating how much you spend or on what, or taking control of your personal finances and assets.

Sexual Abuse can look like...

Using force, threats or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts, having sex with you when you don't want it, forcing you to have sex with other people, or any other degrading treatment related to your sexuality.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse...

If there is an immediate need to flee for safety



Contact the Safe Accommodation Service
Run by Safer Places

03301 025811 (24-hour emergency line)
info@saferplaces.co.uk
[Online referral form](#)

Safer Places will assess the situation and, if appropriate, arrange safe accommodation for you and any other at-risk individuals (e.g. children).

If there is NOT an immediate need to flee for safety, but you would still like to receive support from a service



Call the Domestic Abuse Support Hub (DASH)
Run by Hertfordshire Beacon

0300 002 0008 (Monday-Friday, 09:00-17:00)

The Domestic Abuse Support Hub is for anyone who is or has been subjected to domestic abuse in Hertfordshire. It will connect you to the support you need in your local area.

When you call the number above, a member of the Hertfordshire Beacon team will talk with you about your situation and needs, and refer you directly into the best service.

If you just want to talk to someone



08 088 088 088

(Mon-Fri: 09:00-21:00, Sat-Sun: 09:00-16:00)
Kim@mailpurple.org

It's an anonymous and confidential listening, support and signposting service for anyone who is or has been affected by domestic abuse. The helpline cannot directly refer you into support services (for this, call Hertfordshire Beacon).

If you want to do your own research



Visit the Herts Sunflower Website

Run by the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership
www.hertssunflower.org

It's your first stop for information and advice about domestic abuse, and to find out about groups that can help you.

www.hertssunflower.org

These referral pathways are for local businesses and the public. Professionals should use the DASH risk assessment model and refer according to risk.

With thanks to:

Watford Borough Council

Watford Borough Councils Housing and Environment Health Team

Hertfordshire County Council Trading Standards Team

Dacorum Borough Councils Housing and Environment Health Team

National Trading Standards Estate and Letting Agency Team (NTSELAT)

Hertfordshire County Council Public Health

Hertfordshire Business Fire Safety Team