

# Broad Court

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

496 - 498 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6BD | Tel: 0121 414 1617 | Fax: 0121 472 5893  
www.broadcourt.com | bcpm@broadcourt.com

# Broad Court Property Management

# Property Handbook

496 - 498 Bristol Rd  
Selly Oak  
Birmingham  
B29 6BD

0121 414 1617

[bcpm@broadcourt.com](mailto:bcpm@broadcourt.com)

## Contents

### Emergency contact telephone numbers

1. Introduction
2. Lead Tenant
3. At the start of your tenancy
  - Rent
  - Gas, Electricity and Telephone
  - Water
  - Council Tax
  - Insurance
4. During your tenancy
  - Maintenance Problems
  - Household Hygiene
  - Saniflow Toilets
  - Dealing with Condensation
  - Central Heating
  - Keys and Security
  - Smoke and Heat Detectors
  - Re-letting for the Following Year
5. At the end of your tenancy
6. Deposits / Charges
  - Deposit legislation
  - Licensing and Accreditation
  - Code of Practice
7. Notes on completing the Property Inventory
8. Setting up your Media Account
9. Utility Suppliers

## Emergency Contact Telephone Numbers

Almost all problems you have out of office hours will have to wait for the next working day before we can help, but please use the following “self help” checklist.

### **GAS**

If you smell gas, you should **immediately** turn off the gas supply to your property at the meter. **All tenants should know where the meter is and have access to this room (often the downstairs bedroom) at all times.** The problem should then be reported to us and we will arrange an engineer to call as soon as possible. If you believe the leak is outside your property, or you are unable to turn off the supply for any reason, please call **Transco on 0800 111 999**. They will visit and make safe by turning off the supply, but will not carry out any repairs.

### **WATER**

If you have an uncontrollable water leak, turn the supply off at the stopcock (make sure everyone knows where it is – usually just under the kitchen sink) and then report the problem to us. If the leak is outside your property, please call **Severn Trent Water on 0800 783 4444**

### **ELECTRICITY**

If your power supply is interrupted, please check your electricity fuse board to see if one of the circuit breakers has tripped. Usually you will be able to reset the breaker without any problems by simply flicking it across to the original “on” position. Circuit breakers tripping can be caused by a light bulb failing, which will need replacing, or by a faulty appliance (e.g. kettle or hairdryer) – try unplugging all appliances and then resetting the circuit breaker /s. If this does not remedy the problem please report the details to us.

### **BURGLARY**

If your property is broken into, immediately phone the police and report the incident on **999** or phone **0845 113 5000** and ask for your local police station. Please keep a note of any crime number issued. Any such incident must be reported to the office as soon as possible.

### **OTHER EMERGENCIES**

If you have a personal contact number for your landlord (this will be given to you separately) **you must contact them** for out of hours help or advice before following the directions below.

If you have a problem which needs urgent attention outside office hours, you can call **07772 781210**. **This number is for genuine emergencies only** that can not wait for the following day. You may have to leave a message for us to phone you back – if we are out on a call we will not answer a call immediately. You will be expected to pay for the cost of the call out if the problem is your responsibility.

If you are locked out of your property you can also call this number and a contractor will attend to let you in – please note there will be a £25 (+ Vat) charge for this call out before 11.00pm, rising to £50 (+ Vat) after 11.00 and at weekends and bank holidays.

You should not use this service if the problem is covered by any insurance policy your landlord may have – you will be notified of any on a separate information sheet – for example some landlords have 5\* boiler cover with British Gas, and if this is the case you must contact British Gas direct.

**Please remember – we will not reimburse you the cost of calling out any other contractor unless it is approved by us in advance, and you are issued with an official order number.**

## 1. Introduction

This booklet is designed to guide you through the year. Some of the information is common sense, whilst some is based on various leaflets that the utility companies or the City Council have produced. Please make sure that everyone is aware of its contents.

Above all it is important to remember the basic rule of: if in doubt - **don't do it, ask us first!**

### Contacting us:

If you do experience problems please contact the office during normal working hours, **Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. (during term time only, excluding bank holiday weekends)** Our preferred method is by email to our maintenance department, on [maintenance@broadcourt.com](mailto:maintenance@broadcourt.com). When reporting a problem, please give us as much information about the problem as possible – for example, rather than saying “our vacuum doesn’t work”, please tell us exactly what the problem is and provide the make and model number etc.

Outside office hours you will be able to leave us a message on an answering machine, which we will respond to as quickly as possible, but would prefer you to email us.

**Help us to help you:** the normal procedure is for your lead tenant, or one nominated tenant, to contact us about the problem and for them to keep everybody else in the house up to date with progress. The situation can become very confusing when several people get involved in reporting the same problem, often not speaking to the rest of the group.

**In the case of emergencies outside office hours please refer to the emergency contact telephone number list given at the start of this handbook. A copy of this is given to each tenant when the house keys are collected, together with a summary of this handbook.**

## 2. Lead Tenant

In the interest of greater efficiency in managing your property, we have asked you to nominate one person from amongst you as "lead tenant". We can then deal directly with this person on matters such as collection of rent, safety and security procedures, cleanliness and for notifying us of any required maintenance etc.

We should like the person designated to take responsibility for:

- a) Ensuring that all standing orders are set up and kept up-to-date.
- b) Safety procedures within the house - being aware of the location and correct operation of smoke detectors and fire blanket, the procedures to be followed in case of fire, location of spare keys to the front and back doors.
- c) Security procedures - operation of window and door locks and availability of keys. Awareness of the importance of using all locks and alarms when the house is empty and also of having adequate contents insurance in place.
- d) Organising and supervising a cleaning rota for common areas of the house.

e) Organising the communal payment of gas, electricity, water (where applicable), tv licence and telephone/internet bills, the registration of the property for Council tax payments or claiming exemption from payments, and the communal purchase of household items, food etc.

Note that this is not in any way intended to establish the position of a "head tenant", in the sense of somebody who then sublets the remainder of the property to his colleagues, but merely to establish the principle of one person taking responsibility for the organisation of the entire shared household.

### **3. At the Start of Your Tenancy**

The contract you signed when agreeing to take the property is a legally binding document. It will give you the date from which your tenancy begins. From that day onwards you are responsible for the rent and utility bills. Sometimes out-going tenants may request to be allowed to stay on for a few extra days or weeks, for example to cover their graduation day. If you make any arrangements for the previous tenants to stay, it is a private agreement you have come to between the two of you, but let us know what is happening. You will remain responsible for the rent for that period. We suggest that you arrange for them to pay you to cover the period they remain in the house and that you make sure that they pay the correct amount for any gas and electricity used. It would be a good idea to discuss it with your entire group first, as we will not accept claims against rent for their occupation. Nor will we be able to hand over keys for the property at the beginning of your tenancy if they are still there.

When you actually take over your house you will be asked to sign for keys and the inventory (the inventory may require updating, in which case it will be posted to you as soon as possible). If the previous tenants have failed to leave the house clean then we will employ contract cleaners to rectify this situation and the cost will be taken from the out-going tenants' deposits. If every house needs attention, it is obviously not practical for us to get every house cleaned on the first of July, so your patience in this regard is appreciated.

**If you arrive after the start date of your tenancy, for example in September, please note that your property will not be cleaned again – if it has been empty for a few months it will almost inevitably need a dust and a vacuum, but this will be your responsibility.**

Please check the condition of the property carefully within a week of collecting the keys. When you collect the keys, (or shortly afterwards) you will be given a copy of the Property Inventory for you to complete and return to the office within 2 days of receipt. Items that you believe require attention should be recorded on this form. Especially note the condition of the windows – any broken windows will be deemed to be your responsibility if not reported to us immediately. Also make a special point of checking that the smoke detector system works properly. Routine maintenance will be dealt with as soon as possible. Any items regarded as improvements, rather than repairs, will be discussed with the landlord of the property, and carried out only if his/her permission is granted.

The tenancy agreement you have signed commits you jointly and individually until the expiry date stated. If any of your group wishes to drop out at any stage it is your responsibility to find a replacement tenant, although we will do what we can to help by advertising any vacancy on our website and in our office. Until a replacement is found the leaving tenant's share of the rent will still be expected (usually from the leaving tenant).

## **Rent**

In signing your contract you have agreed to make your rent payment on the day stated, usually the first day of each month, by standing order. There are occasions when this is not the case but your contract will specify any differences. Payment for rent must be received on or by this date unless other arrangements have been made with us. If there is likely to be a problem with paying you should discuss this with us as soon as possible. Interest may be charged on overdue rent as set out in your contract.

**Letters we send out regarding rent arrears incur an administration charge of £25.00 (inc Vat). This charge also applies to any bounced cheques or recalled standing orders.**

## **Gas, Electricity and Telephone**

One of the most important jobs you must do at the beginning of your contract is to let your chosen suppliers of gas; electricity, water and telephone etc. know the date that your tenancy begins. This is **your** responsibility to carry out, not Broad Court's. You will need to supply them with the meter readings taken when your tenancy begins. It is also sensible to keep a copy of these readings for future reference.

There are two reasons for this – firstly, you do not want to end up paying for the fuel used by previous tenants. If you do not wish to use the existing supplier you must inform them accordingly, as the standing charge (if any) will continue to accrue if you have not formally cancelled the supply.

Secondly, most of the suppliers will not discuss your or previous tenants' accounts with us, so sorting out problems becomes difficult. We do not pay bills left over by any previous group, so make sure that when you tell suppliers you have taken over the property, they are instructed to send the final bill to the out-going tenants (not to us).

If you choose to get a phone line please let the office know **immediately** the telephone number, as they are often different from the previous year. We may need to contact you in an emergency, and without the correct number we cannot.

## **Water**

If your rent includes water rates, you may well still receive the water bills at your house. If this is the case, please bring the bill to the office and we will arrange a payment on behalf of the landlord.

On some properties the water rates are not included in the rent, and the tenants are responsible for paying the charge on the property. Water rate bills are normally issued every six months, on the first of October and April. We recommend that you contact Severn Trent Water and request that they supply you with a monthly payment booklet covering the duration of your contract, which you can then use to settle your bill.

## **Council Tax**

Houses occupied entirely by students are usually exempt from Council Tax **but only** if **each tenant** completes the relevant documentation. When you collect your keys, we will issue you with the correct form for completion, or you can download the **Council Tax Exemption Self Signed Declaration** direct from the University of Birmingham website. Please complete the form and return it to the Broad Court office as soon as possible. If you fail to do so, or are not eligible to claim exemption, Birmingham City Council will charge you the Council Tax due for the full term of your contract. Under the terms of your contract payment of Council Tax (or claiming exemption) is always the responsibility of the tenants, not the landlord.

If you have one or more members in your group who are not students then you will be required to pay Council Tax. It is up to you to decide how that bill is split. There is a 25% discount on the amount due if only one member of the household is a non-student. If necessary, we are obliged to give home address details to the Council to enable any problems to be resolved in the future.

## **Insurance**

It is essential that you insure all of your belongings from the day that you move in - don't even leave it until the day later! You may find that you can do this on the back of your parents' household insurance, at little or no extra cost.

## **4. During Your Tenancy**

### **Email addresses**

If you change your email address at any time during your tenancy please let us know! It is important that these are kept up to date. As well as information throughout your tenancy, we will also send information about your deposit return to your email address.

### **Post**

If you receive post at your house that is not addressed to you, please bring it into our office and we will deal with it for you. This is especially important if you receive bills that are the responsibility of the landlord or former tenants – please do not simply ignore them, but let us have them as soon as possible.

### **Maintenance Problems**

It is essential that all maintenance problems are reported to the office as soon as possible, during office hours. Help us to help you – please do not phone the office on Friday afternoon saying the heating broke down on Wednesday and you want it fixed by the weekend! We ask that wherever possible you let us know of problems in writing or by email. If you are in any doubt about safety, turn electricity, gas or water off at source. **All tenants must familiarise themselves with how to do this.** Bear in mind that meters - and hence turn-off points - may be inside the downstairs front room: **IT IS VITAL** that access can be gained even if that room's occupant is away, so if the room has a lock on the door, **ensure a key is available at all times.** If we are asked to open this door for you a charge may apply.

We will attempt to carry out repairs within a few days of being notified of a problem, but you need be aware that the waiting time for maintenance work may vary due to the nature of the problem and its urgency, or for a landlord to be contacted for authorisation. (See our Maintenance Standard at the end of this handbook.) Occasionally there may be a waiting time for parts/replacements to be ordered. Most of the people who attend to work at the houses are self-employed and therefore their time costs money. If they make an appointment to call we expect you to keep that appointment unless you contact the person concerned to rearrange the time. If this is not done and the workman charges for a wasted call, this charge will be passed on to you. Also remember that their working day usually starts at approximately 8.30 a.m.

When reporting a maintenance problem, we will make arrangements with you to allow our workmen access to the property. With your agreement, workmen are usually issued with keys so that they can let themselves in if no one is at the property. Please be assured that keys are only issued to workmen who have our full confidence.

**Please note** – Broad Court have contacts with tradesmen and suppliers who carry out jobs for us at reasonable costs. All these approved contractors invoice us direct so you will not be asked to settle their bill. **We will not reimburse you the cost of calling out any other contractor** unless this is approved in advance, and you are given an official order number to quote.

Replacement light bulbs and vacuum cleaner bags/belts are your responsibility. We will, however, usually change bulbs in sealed light fittings and fluorescent light tubes. If reporting a faulty tube, please measure the length of the tube and let us know this when calling us.

### **Decorating**

**You must not decorate or alter any part of the property without the written permission of the landlord or Broad Court.**

If you want to decorate the property in any way, it is **essential** that permission is sought initially from Broad Court who will in turn consult the landlord. In the instance where permission is granted, colours used should be neutral, pale, pastel shades only and all decorating should be completed to a satisfactory standard. This includes finishing off edges and ensuring a reasonable standard. Any damage to fittings, furnishings and carpets will incur a charge.

If your landlord permits you to put up shelving in the property, upon leaving, the wall must be left in its original condition with any holes or marks covered up and redecorated. Failure to do so will result in deduction from deposits of any costs incurred by Broad Court to return the walls to an acceptable condition.

Please do not use blue-tac or other adhesive products that cause damage to the walls – use mapping pins instead.

### **Household Hygiene**

You will not wish to encourage unwelcome guests such as rats, mice or ants to share your house by leaving food around. Keep all food in suitable containers and wash up dirty plates and saucepans regularly, at least once daily. This also stops bacteria forming and causing stomach upsets. Use a bin liner in the kitchen waste bin. Don't put refuse directly into the dustbin: use the bin liner supplied weekly by the council, not plastic shopping bags. If this is not collected directly from the back of the house by the dustbin men then leave the bag, securely fastened, out at the front of the house on the



morning of collection (usually Wednesday). Do not leave it out the night before, or cats, dogs or rodents will tear it open and leave its contents all over the road. If this does happen please tidy any mess left. Please do not leave any rubbish in the front garden. Always remember it is your responsibility to keep the area free from rubbish. The local authority have recently introduced £50 “spot fines” which are charged to households leaving rubbish out on the wrong day – please be aware of this!

If you switch off the fridge/freezer, for example over the holidays, first of all defrost it and dry it inside, and then leave the door slightly ajar. Fridges and freezers left closed when they are turned off go mouldy and smelly very quickly. When defrosting either a fridge or freezer do not be tempted to speed up the process by using sharp items like knives to remove the ice as this will puncture the hidden pipes and render the fridge useless. Most of the fridges have a drain hole just above the salad compartment; this often gets blocked with bits of food or dust. If this happens your fridge will leak - use either a cotton bud or a drinking straw to carefully unblock the hole.

Remember to clean the cooker regularly especially in the oven and on top of the grill, as once fat or dirt are baked on they become much more difficult to clean later.

If you put fat or food residues down the sink, rather than into a refuse bag, then the outside drain can quickly become blocked and overflow. You must try to clear this yourself using boiling water to break up the fat, or by clearing the drain grille by hand. If this fails then let us know. Also let us know if there is evidence of gutters becoming blocked, e.g. with leaves. **If we are required to clear drains that have become blocked with food residues, you will be charged the cost of the contractor.**

If your toilet flush mechanism does not work, let us know – in the meantime as a temporary measure toilets can usually be flushed using a bucket of water.

### **Saniflow Toilets**

Some houses, usually the larger properties we manage, have a Saniflow toilet; this can be recognised by the (electrically powered) box behind the toilet bowl that breaks up the waste into small particles.

These toilets are different to a standard toilet as they will only tolerate small amounts of toilet paper and will block if any sanitary towels, tampax or condoms are put in them, so please do not attempt to dispose of these items via these toilets. Do not attach deodorant containers to the toilet bowl - if these fall into the mechanism then a very costly repair bill could follow.

We do not cover faults with the system that are caused by these items under general maintenance and **any damage caused in this way will be charged** to the tenants of that property.

### **Dealing with Condensation**

Condensation is caused by the build-up of moisture in the air, and is almost always the cause of any mould growth in the property. There is always some moisture in the air but people create additional moisture by cooking, boiling a kettle, taking baths or showers and drying clothes indoors. Many litres of moisture may be produced each day in this way. The moisture in the air condenses on any cool surface, and if left for a period of time may result in the accumulation of mould and mildew.

What can you do to stop this happening? First, produce less steam, cover saucepans when cooking, turn a kettle off when it has boiled and prevent any of this steam going into other cooler rooms. When taking a shower run the hot and cold water together at first, rather than running the hot and then adding the cold later. Open windows after cooking or taking a bath/shower or if there is an extractor fan please use it. If the weather is not suitable to dry your washing outside then dry it in a well-ventilated room.

You will also get less condensation if the house is kept at a constant temperature throughout the day. This stops any moist air cooling and turning to water. If you are unable to do this have a window or two open occasionally, although you should also bear in mind security considerations.

### **Central Heating**

If in any doubt as to how the central heating operates then do not hesitate to contact us. You should not need to operate anything on the boiler itself, with the possible exception of a switch that allows it to be set for hot water use only. In the winter this switch should be set to allow the central heating to come on as well.

The timer usually allows two or three on-off periods for the central heating only, each day. If you can't work out how to program this for your needs then let us know and we can supply a timer manual.

Each radiator usually has its own thermostatic valve to control the room temperature. These should usually be set at about halfway through the range. Do not set the heating too high: for each increase in temperature of 1°C your fuel bill will increase by 10%. If the top of any radiator in the house is cold it may need bleeding. Purchase a radiator bleed key from a hardware store to release the trapped air, or contact us if you have problems with this.

In the winter months please leave the heating on low, even if you are away from the property, to stop the pipes freezing.

### **Keys and Security**

We hold keys to most properties for use in emergencies and some maintenance purposes during vacations. We carry out routine inspections from time to time on various properties - we will usually give you 24 hours notice. Emergency situations apart, we will not gain entry without your prior knowledge.

If you lock yourselves out of the property, and require our assistance to regain entry, we make a £10 (+ Vat) charge for the call out during office hours (please refer to the emergency contact phone numbers list for advice on problems outside office hours).

As you are no doubt aware Selly Oak suffers from a high level of burglaries, what you may not know is that 85% of these are committed via open doors and windows, with valuables left on display.

To keep your property safe please consider the following:

## **Property Security**

- Keep windows and doors locked whenever possible – never leave the house unattended with open windows or doors, even if just for a few minutes.
- Use timer switches on lights when you are away from the property overnight – particularly during the longer holiday breaks.
- Keep side gates locked and secure at all times.
- Report any problems with the windows, doors or gates to us or your landlord as soon as possible!

## **Valuables and belongings**

- Over the holidays take any valuables home with you.
- Never leave your valuables on show, or near open windows.
- Please **never** chain valuables to radiator pipes in your room – it can cause damage to the pipes, and will not safeguard your property in the event of a break in.
- Have you ever considered registering your valuable items on the national property database ([www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)) or having tracking software installed on your laptop?

It is unfortunate that regardless of the steps we take sometimes burglaries occur, but please do all you can to make sure you don't become one of the 85% whose burglaries could have been avoided!

## **Smoke and Heat Detectors**

The type of smoke detector installed will vary from house to house. The vast majority of them will be mains linked (with battery backup) but some may be battery operated only. Both sorts need to be kept free from dust and have the system tested regularly.

If you live in a larger property (usually those with three storeys) your house may be equipped with a smoke detector system operated via a control panel. If this is the case you will be issued with a separate instruction sheet on how this system works which will normally be stored in your property folder.

These detectors are there for your safety and it is unlawful to disconnect them. Broad Court will check the operation of all systems during July / August, replacing / testing batteries then. It is the tenants' responsibility to replace smoke detector batteries as necessary during the remaining months of the tenancy to ensure the system works at all times. The detector will "beep" when its battery needs changing.

We have experienced a lot of problems due to tenants disconnecting smoke and heat detectors. If there is any damage to them or they have been disconnected without our agreement the cost of an electrician reconnecting or replacing damaged detectors will be charged to tenants. In some areas if the detectors are sensitive it may mean that it is not possible to smoke in that room/area.

Disconnecting the smoke detector system has very serious implications. Some landlord insurance policies are invalid if the system has been tampered with. Tenants will be held liable for **ALL COSTS INCURRED** in these circumstances.

Occasionally, smoke detectors become faulty and the alarm is sounded when there is no smoke. In this event all the alarms throughout the property will go off, but only on one of them will the light flash. This one is the faulty unit – if reporting a fault in the system to us, please let us know which alarm triggered the system off.

### **Re-letting for the Following Year**

We will contact all houses during November / December to find out what your plans are for the following academic year. Obviously we would prefer all tenants to stay for the next year if you are continuing your studies, so you will usually be given first option for rebooking your house. However we cannot hold the house for too long waiting for your decision as prospective tenants start looking from November onwards. If most of your group want to stay but some cannot, it may be possible to help you fill vacancies by putting you in touch with other small groups. If you decide not to stay we will advertise the house on our list of available properties. We will normally accompany prospective tenants on viewings however, some groups may simply call or knock on the door asking to look round. Please only arrange viewings yourself if you feel comfortable doing so, if not ask us to accompany groups round the house (or ask them to call us to arrange a viewing).

## **5. At the End of Your Tenancy**

At the end of your tenancy all keys should be in our office by your final day (usually the 30th June), clearly marked to say which house they are from. The next group will require them from the first day of their tenancy so any keys which are not returned by that date will be charged for. Any key returned unmarked will be treated as not returned as we will obviously not know which house it is from. **Rent will continue to be charged until all keys are returned.**

If you wish to stay for an extra few days you will have to make arrangements with the new tenants, it is not an automatic right. They will probably want you to pay rent, as they will not be prepared to pay for a time when they are not able to live there themselves. Try to come to a sensible compromise. If the new tenants do not give permission you will have to move out, although it is possible that we can help with short-term accommodation elsewhere.

Since you will have moved into a clean and tidy house when you took over the tenancy, you must also leave it clean when you vacate. Failure to do so will result in cleaners being engaged and their charges deducted from your deposits.

The definition of “clean” seems to vary between different people and in the past has tended to cause a few problems. We would expect a house to be returned having had the cooker cleaned both inside and out, with special attention given to the grill top. The fridge/freezer should be emptied, wiped through and left turned off with the doors left open to stop mould forming. All cupboards in the kitchen should be wiped through and emptied of all food. The bathroom should have bath, toilet and sink cleaned and old shampoo bottles etc should be removed. Any mould that has formed should be cleaned. Both the kitchen and bathroom floors should be cleaned. The other rooms should have all posters, blue-tac and pins removed from the walls, and any damage to wallpaper repaired and redecorated. The skirting boards should be wiped clean. All carpeting should be well vacuumed, including under beds and settees, etc. Please also check all cupboards, drawers and under the bed for leftovers - it is amazing how many pairs of socks or pants are left behind!

More detailed instructions will be sent to you towards the end of your contract.

## **6. Deposits / Charges**

There are very few reasons for a charge being made during your tenancy. Please be aware, though, that landlords will not pay for items such as unblocking drains clogged by cooking fat or kitchen waste, for repairs to Saniflow toilets caused by inappropriate use, for emptying vacuum cleaner bags or unblocking vacuum hoses, or for repairing broken windows. Costs for these items, together with other items deemed to be caused by careless or inappropriate use will be charged to tenants.

At the end of your tenancy the majority of deposits are returned in full. We do not pay interest on money held as a deposit. The deposits are usually returned within 45 days of the end of your tenancy, and are sent by bank transfer to the account you nominate.

Tenants clearing a house at the end of their tenancy can accumulate a huge amount of rubbish. The local dustbin men will remove a moderate amount, but will refuse to collect excessive amounts, rubbish that is inaccessible to them (behind back gates, etc.) or to gather rubbish from split bags or boxes. Also, they will not remove very heavy bags or boxes. In such circumstances we will have to clear this rubbish for you, for which you will be charged. Please organise your departure – do not leave huge amounts of rubbish out in one lot, or leave rubbish out on a day other than the normal collection day – remember you may be fined by the local authority for doing this. Sometimes the local authority organise bulk collections of rubbish from the area, if you want to check details please go to their website.

Deductions from your deposits could include the cost of cleaning, if necessary, the cost of replacing broken or missing furniture, the replacement of discharged fire extinguishers or fire blankets (when there has been no fire), the cost of any redecoration as detailed in section 4, the cost of any overdue rent letters and any rent arrears (plus interest as per clause 3(a) of your contract). As stated, though, the majority of our tenants - last year over 80% - have their deposits returned in full. If a deduction is made, a statement will be sent to you by email detailing the reason.

### **Deposit Protection legislation.**

All deposits paid to Broad Court are protected in either a custodial or an insurance based scheme. Both schemes provide an independent arbitration service in the unlikely event of a dispute relating to the return of your deposit at the end of your tenancy.

Your lead tenant will receive a certificate confirming that your deposit has been protected as required by law. The two schemes we use operate in slightly different ways as follows:

- An insurance based scheme operated by mydeposits (Tenancy Deposit Solutions Ltd). Shortly after your deposit has been paid, your lead tenant will be contacted by us and asked to come into the office and sign the deposit protection certificate, which confirms details of the deposit we hold and have protected. You will then be given a copy for your records.
- We occasionally use a custodial based scheme operated by DPS (Deposit Protection Service). If we use this company to protect your deposit, your lead tenant will be contacted directly by DPS shortly after Broad Court have sent them a payment covering the amount involved.

If you have any queries about your deposit protection, please do not hesitate to ask us for details.

## **Licensing and Accreditation**

Legislation was introduced in the 2004 Housing Act making it compulsory to licence all properties let out to five or more tenants and with three or more storeys.

A separate accreditation initiative, sponsored by Birmingham City Council, the University of Birmingham and the National Landlords Association, is being promoted in the area, with landlords and letting agents being encouraged to attend an information seminar where all new legislation and safety requirements are explained in detail.

If you have any questions about either of the schemes we will be happy to discuss how they relate to you or your property on a personal basis.

## **7. Notes on completion of the Property Inventory**

On collecting the keys to your property, you will have been asked to sign to confirm you have been issued with two copies of the Inventory for your property.

**Please check these inventories, make any relevant comments in the space provided, then sign both and return one copy to us within 48 hours of you receiving the inventory.**

The inventory is designed to be a fair record of the cleanliness, the furniture, fixtures and fittings at the property. A list of items is given alongside each room, together with a very brief description. For example, in bedroom 1 the carpet may be simply described as “blue with gold fleck”. Please use the space in the comments column to record any comments you may wish to make regarding the item. Before returning the inventory, please make sure you check that all the appliances are working correctly.

Please note – this is not intended to be a detailed description of every item, merely a summary of those items present and a general comment on their condition - it is not necessary to provide us with notes on every mark or chip on paintwork etc! There is no need to worry if your inventory was not available to you when you collected the keys for the house. We inspect each house when the former tenants move out, then update the inventory and print it for the new group. If you move in before we have managed to complete this, we will post the inventory to you as soon as it is available. You will appreciate that if the former tenants do not move out until the last day of their contract, and you collect the keys within the first few days of July, it may not have been possible for us to complete the inspection before you move in. If this is the case, we will be calling at the house as soon as possible to complete the inventory and carry out safety checks, etc. If on arrival at the property you find major problems, please telephone the office on the number above and we will send someone out to assist you.

**It is really important that you complete the whole inventory and return it to us** so that both you and the landlord have a fair record of the condition of the furniture and fittings at the start of your tenancy – it is for your benefit! In the unlikely event of a dispute involving your deposit at the end of your tenancy, this document will be referred to by the independent arbitration service that will deal with any problem. **If you cannot be bothered to complete the inventory, they will not help you.**

Please do not hesitate to call into the office to discuss any aspects of completing the inventory you are not completely clear on.

## 8. Setting up Your Media Account

### For BT<sup>†</sup>

Check your line is broadband capable, visit:

<http://www.productsandservices.bt.com/consumerProducts/displayTopic.do?topicId=25795>

### For Virgin Media

Check to see if your property has a Virgin line visit:

<http://shop.virginmedia.com/>

Or you can call:

0845 840 7777

### Other Companies Available

- Sky<sup>†</sup>: <http://www.sky.com/shop/new> or 08442 411 818
- TalkTalk<sup>†</sup>: <http://broadband.talktalk.co.uk/> or 0800 049 7802
- O2<sup>†</sup>: <http://www.o2.co.uk/broadband/> or 0800 380 0402
- Orange<sup>†</sup>: <http://shop.orange.co.uk/broadband/> or 0800 072 5563

Most companies offer a 12 month contract, so it is best to set up your account as soon as your tenancy contract starts – otherwise, you may end up paying the bills after you leave. Also, most companies require thirty days notice to cancel your account.

The best way to pay you bill is by monthly direct debit, which is usually required a month in advance. It may also be best to put the account in the name of one person, who can deal with the company on all of the tenant's behalf; or you may wish to create a joint account.

### TV Licences

By law, if you watch **any** live broadcast TV, you are required to purchase a TV Licence. This includes watching live TV on **any** device via **any** method, e.g. live streaming from the Internet onto a laptop or games console. You do not need a licence if you only watch on-demand services such as the BBC iPlayer, 4oD or SkyPlayer – so long as the program you are watching is not being broadcast live on any TV channel at the **same time**. It does not matter if your package is Freeview, FreeSat or provided by Virgin Media, Sky, etc. If it is broadcast live, you need a TV Licence.

Currently, licences for colour TVs cost £145.50 for twelve months. If you do not need the whole year, you can get a refund for the time you are not living at the property. See the TV Licensing website for details.

To purchase a licence, visit: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay/>

(Generally, for joint tenancy contracts, you need one TV License for the whole house.)

If you do not need a TV Licence, register this at: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/notv/>

If you are still unsure if you require a TV Licence, visit:

<http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/students-aud1/>

<sup>†</sup> - May require BT phone line rental.

## 9. Utility Suppliers

Water in the West Midlands is supplied by Severn Trent Water. Please contact them on 0845 750 0500 to set up your account. **This is only required if your landlord does not pay your water rates (this will be shown on your contract).**

To find out which companies supply your property:

- Gas: National Grid Gas – 0870 608 1524
- Electricity: MPAS Services – 0845 603 0618

You will need your full address and postcode (these can be found on your contract).

Contact numbers for major gas and electricity suppliers for the Selly Oak area:

Scottish Southern Energy	0800 980 2475
British Gas	0800 048 0202
EDF	0800 056 5927
e.on	0800 051 0760
Scottish Power	0800 408 1644
npower	0808 156 0056

It is the tenant's responsibility to:

- Pay for the gas and electricity supplied to the property
- Record the gas and electric meter readings at the beginning and end of the tenancy and give copies of these readings to Broad Court for our records. (Failure to do this often results in tenants receiving incorrect and often expensive bills.)
- Provide suppliers with the names of all tenants and the period of your tenancy
- NEVER assume that the gas and electricity are supplied by the same company
- Provide suppliers with forwarding addresses for tenants at the end of the tenancy so they can issue a final bill.

If you have not paid for all of the gas/electricity/water that you need to, Broad Court will provide contact details to the suppliers in order for them to collect monies owed.

Please note: Suppliers require thirty days notice in order to close an account. Please bear this in mind at the end of your tenancy.



# Broad Court

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

496 - 498 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6BD | Tel: 0121 414 1617 | Fax: 0121 472 5893  
www.broadcourt.com | bcpm@broadcourt.com

### **Landlord/Tenant Code of Practice**

#### **A) The Landlord or Letting/Managing Agent will adhere to the following standards:**

##### Property Standard

- 1) The property provided will be clean and in a good state of repair, free from damp and obvious structural defects.
- 2) All gas appliances will be inspected and a certificate issued annually by a registered Gas Safe installer.
- 3) All electrical installations will carry a current N.I.C.E.I.C. or equivalent certificate, or will be inspected by an electrician appointed by Broad Court and compliance with relevant standards confirmed.
- 4) All soft furniture and furnishings will comply with current fire safety standards.
- 5) Security precautions will be fitted in conjunction with recommendations made by Broad Court's security consultants.
- 6) An appropriate fire/smoke detection system will be fitted, together with the provision of a fire blanket in the kitchen.
- 7) Adequate heating and ventilation will be provided in all rooms.

##### Management Standard

- 1) All relevant legal and statutory requirements currently in force will be complied with.
- 2) All dealings with existing and prospective tenants will be non-discriminatory in respect of colour, creed, disability, sexuality, age or politics.
- 3) A legal tenancy agreement will be provided, which clearly sets out the financial responsibilities of both parties, specifies who is responsible for paying gas, electric and water charges, and which includes an inventory of contents to be agreed to by both parties.
- 4) Deposits will normally be refunded within 45 days of the end of the tenancy, and the reasons for any deductions will be clearly explained in writing.

## Maintenance Standard

A clear procedure for reporting problems will be established, and these will be attended to in adherence with the guidelines appended below. The procedures to be adopted in the case of an emergency will also be clearly set out.

Broad Court and the landlords we work with have pledged to meeting the following specific targets, which follow, or even improve upon, targets set in other university cities.

The following completion performance standards will be achieved in at least 75% of all reported problems:

- a) Emergency Repairs - any repairs required in order to avoid danger to health, risk to safety of residents or serious damage to buildings or residents' belongings: within 24 hours of report of defect.
- b) Urgent Repairs - repairs to defects that materially affect the comfort or convenience of residents: within five working days of report of defect.
- c) Non-urgent day-to-day repairs - repairs not falling within the above categories: within 21 working days of report of defect.
- d) Planned programme of repairs/improvements - maintenance and servicing, redecorating etc: to be carried out with prior planning and agreement with tenants with regard to their convenience.

## **B) The Tenant agrees to:**

- 1) Pay his or her rent promptly and in full when due.
- 2) Report any maintenance problems etc. without undue delay. Problems of any kind **MUST** be reported in writing directly to Broad Court in the first instance, following the procedure laid out in the earlier part of this Handbook. Resort to other bodies will only be made if Broad Court fails to satisfactorily resolve the problem within the terms of its guidelines as set out above.
- 3) Not interfere in any way with the working of the smoke detector system fitted.
- 4) Adopt a responsible attitude towards the local community (noise, offensive posters etc).
- 5) Keep the property clean and in good order and dispose of rubbish via the weekly refuse collection.
- 6) At the conclusion of the tenancy to leave the property in a clean and tidy condition, to return all keys provided, and to deal with the termination of existing gas, electricity and telephone contracts, providing a forwarding address to the service provider concerned.