

How to prepare for a new tenancy

A landlord's guide



EXPERT
ADVICE
INSIDE



Come Live By The Sea

147 Northdown Road
Cliftonville
Margate
Kent
CT9 2QY
(01843) 231833
cliftonville@cookeandco.com

56 High Street
Broadstairs
Kent
CT10 1JT
(01843) 600911
broadstairs@cookeandco.com

78 Queen Street
Ramsgate
Kent
CT11 9ER
(01843) 851322
ramsgate@cookeandco.com

www.cookeandco.com

Page 2	Contents
Page 3	Welcome
Page 4	Why proper preparation pays off
Page 5	The 10-step new tenant preparation plan
Page 6	The 10-step new tenant preparation plan (continued)
Page 7	Five ways we can help you prepare perfectly
Page 8	Your new tenancy checklist



Hello,

I'm Damien Cooke, Managing Director at Cooke & Co.

It's my pleasure to welcome you to this guide on perfectly preparing your rental property for new tenants.

At Cooke & Co, we understand the importance of getting your property ready – not only to make a positive first impression, but also to keep high-quality tenants, reduce turnover and make your life much easier in the long run.

A well-prepared property demonstrates professionalism and care, ensuring your tenants feel confident about their decision to rent from you.

Over the years, we've helped hundreds of landlords get 'tenant ready' in the best possible way.

With our expert knowledge of the lettings market, we've learned how proper preparation can prevent future issues and boost rental returns.

From basic cleaning to ensuring legal compliance, every step you take now can save you time and money.

This guide will walk you through the essential steps to prepare your property, explain the benefits of thorough preparation, and show how we can support you at every stage.

We've included 'Brilliant basics' on each page that set out small things you can do that make a BIG difference.

Whether you're a first-time landlord or an experienced investor, these tips will help you make the most of your rental property and keep your tenants happy.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please get in touch with us.

Thank you for reading,



Damien Cooke MNAEA MARLA
Founder and Managing Director
Cooke & Co Estate and Letting Agents



*Disclaimer: The information in this guide is based on our years of experience in the lettings market. It does not constitute legal or financial advice.

Why proper preparation pays off

There are significant benefits to properly preparing your rental property before tenants move in.

One of the most obvious advantages is that a well-maintained, clean property attracts better-quality tenants. Tenants who see a home that is cared for are more likely to treat it respectfully and stay longer, reducing turnover and void periods.

Proper preparation also reduces the chances of disputes. When tenants move into a property that is clean, functional and compliant with all safety regulations, it sets the right expectations.

This minimises complaints and the likelihood of tenants requesting repairs shortly after moving in, making the tenancy smoother.

Financially, a well-prepared property helps maximise your return on investment. By addressing potential issues upfront, you avoid expensive emergency repairs or dealing with void periods caused by dissatisfied tenants leaving.

Taking care of your property in the long term also preserves its value.

Regular maintenance prevents wear and tear from becoming serious problems, protecting your investment and helping you achieve the best rental price.

And don't forget the old adage, 'fail to prepare, prepare to fail'. It's so relevant when talking about your chances of enjoying a smooth, mutually beneficial tenancy. By paying attention to seemingly small details, the bigger picture tends to look after itself in our experience.

Finally, having everything in place and double-checked means your stress levels will be lower and you'll enjoy that most valuable of things... peace of mind.

Brilliant basics:



Get the property ready by deep cleaning and making necessary repairs. Consider the property's kerb appeal as first impressions matter. Take advice from your local letting agent to see what you need to do to attract attention, interest and ultimately, prospective tenants.



The 10-step new tenant preparation plan

Following our 10-step plan outlined over the next two pages will give you the best possible chance of starting out on the right foot for long-term tenancy success.

Step 1: Property inspection

Conduct a thorough inspection of the property's structure, fixtures and fittings. Pay special attention to potential hazards like loose tiles or leaking pipes. Address all necessary repairs, no matter how small, to ensure your tenants don't face any immediate issues once they move in.

Step 2: Safety checks

Ensure that all smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers are installed and functioning correctly. Double-check that all these devices comply with the latest safety regulations, offering peace of mind for you and your tenants.

Step 3: Professional cleaning

A clean property sets the tone for a positive tenancy. Hire professionals to clean every area deeply, including carpets, windows and kitchen appliances. This ensures tenants walk into a spotless home, showing you care about their living environment.

Step 4: Utility set-up

Confirm that essential utilities – gas, electricity and water – are fully functional. If you've handled the transfer of these accounts, provide tenants with all relevant details. If they need to set up the utilities themselves, guide them with account numbers and supplier contacts.

Step 5: Appliance checks

Test all appliances the tenants will use, such as boilers, washing machines and ovens. A broken appliance can cause significant inconvenience and lead to early disputes, so ensure everything is in working order before the tenants move in.

Brilliant basics:



Get ready by decluttering, deep cleaning, making necessary repairs and learning to think like a buyer. Consider your home's kerb appeal, as first impressions matter. Liaise with your letting agent to see what you need to do to attract attention, interest and ultimately, new tenants.



The 10-step new tenant preparation plan (continued)

Step 6: Locks and security

For added peace of mind, consider changing the locks between tenancies. Ensure that all doors and windows lock securely. If your property has a security system, test it and provide clear instructions for its use, helping tenants feel safe in their new home.

Step 7: Inventory list

Compile a detailed inventory of the property's condition and contents, including furniture, fixtures and fittings. Take photographs of each room, especially of high-value items or areas prone to wear. This will help avoid disagreements over damage or missing items at the end of the tenancy.

Step 8: Legal documents

Review and finalise all legal paperwork, including the tenancy agreement, deposit protection certificates and other required forms. Make sure both parties sign these before the move-in date. This ensures you comply with legal obligations and protects you and your tenants.

Step 9: Tenant welcome pack

Create a comprehensive welcome pack with essential information about the property and local area. Include details like rubbish collection days, local services and contact numbers for emergencies or repairs. A thoughtful pack helps tenants settle in more quickly and feel welcomed.

Step 10: Final walkthrough

Before handing over the keys, walk through the property one last time. Check everything is in perfect working order, from light switches to heating systems. This final check ensures the property is ready and reassures you and your tenants of a smooth move-in.

Brilliant basics:



Consider repainting the property in neutral tones between tenancies. It freshens up the space and appeals to a broader range of tenants.



Five ways we can help you prepare perfectly

We have a range of services to help you prepare for new tenants moving in should you choose to use our management services for your let.

1. Organising professional cleaning and repairs

We have a network of trusted cleaners and tradespeople. Using our contacts, you can ensure the property is in perfect condition without the hassle of sourcing services yourself.

2. Handling compliance checks and documentation

We can arrange all necessary safety checks – like gas safety certificates and electrical inspections – ensuring your property complies with legal requirements before tenants move in.

3. Streamlining deposit and inventory management

We can handle the deposit protection process and compile a comprehensive inventory with photographs. This protects you legally while ensuring a smooth start to the tenancy by avoiding future disputes over the property's condition.

4. Coordinating the handover process

We handle the entire handover process, ensuring a smooth transition. This includes preparing all relevant documents, managing key exchanges and completing a comprehensive handover checklist. This way, you can be confident that nothing is missed when your new tenants move in.

5. Regular property reviews and maintenance

Once your tenants move in, we will manage ongoing property maintenance and inspections, ensuring your property remains in top condition throughout the tenancy.

Brilliant basics:



Leave a small welcome pack for tenants – items like local takeaway menus, handy contact numbers and basic household essentials to make tenants immediately feel at home and appreciated.



Your new tenancy checklist

This checklist will guide you through the essential steps to ensure your property is perfectly prepared for your new tenants.

	Yes	No
Property inspection: Start with a full inspection of the property. Check for any repairs, such as loose fittings, leaks or worn flooring.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety checks: Ensure all smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers are functioning and compliant with current regulations. Check all gas and electric certifications are up to date.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleaning and repairs: Arrange professional cleaning, including carpets, windows and appliances. If any minor repairs (such as repainting or fixing locks) are needed, use this time to complete them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appliance testing: Test all provided appliances (e.g., boiler, washing machine, oven) to ensure they are in working order.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Key and security updates: Consider changing locks between tenancies for added security. Ensure all windows and doors have working locks and check any security systems. Providing clear instructions on how to use these systems is also recommended.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utility transfers (optional): Organise the transfer of utility accounts (gas, electricity and water) to the tenants' names. Provide them with all necessary contact details or account numbers to ensure everything is set up seamlessly before their arrival.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inventory preparation: Create a detailed inventory that documents the condition of the property and its contents. Take clear photos of each room and major items, which helps prevent disputes over damage or missing items at the end of the tenancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal documentation: Finalise the tenancy agreement, deposit protection details and other required legal documents. Make sure both parties sign these before the tenants move in, ensuring compliance with legal requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final walkthrough: Conduct a final walkthrough of the property to ensure everything is as it should be. Test light fixtures, plumbing and heating systems. This last check ensures the property is ready for the new tenants, offering peace of mind before the handover.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thanks for reading our guide to preparing properly for a new tenancy.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Brilliant basics: 

Make sure all manuals for the boiler and appliances are kept where the tenants can easily find them.