

start of tenancy information

what you need to bring

All Lawson & Thompson properties are provided fully furnished. This includes furniture (including bed, wardrobe, desk, lamps, bins etc) along with 'essential' items including a vacuum cleaner, iron, ironing board, mop, dustpan and brush etc. **You will need to provide your own duvet, pillows, bed linen and towels.**

A basic **kitchen inventory** is provided to get you started, consisting of the items below:

Surface appliances: microwave, kettle, toaster.

Cutlery: knives, forks, dessert spoons, teaspoons (2 per tenant).

Crockery: mugs, dinner plates, side plates, cereal bowls (2 per tenant).

Sundries: washing up basin, place mats, chopping board, bin.

The following items are **NOT** provided and need to be supplied by you:

Tableware & cooking equipment: frying pan, small and large saucepans, baking tray, wok, microwaveable bowl, mixing bowl, measuring jug, oven gloves, glasses (wine glasses, pint glasses, tumblers), salt and pepper shakers.

Kitchen utensils: chopping knives, wooden spoon, cheese grater, vegetable peeler, masher, colander, sieve, spatula / fish slice, scales, scissors, cock screw, bottle opener, tin opener.

Personal items: duvet, pillows, bed linen and towels.

collecting keys

- **Key collection (MONDAY - FRIDAY 9AM TO 5PM)** - we will provide the **FIRST TENANT** to arrive with **ALL** sets of keys to the property. Keys will be available from the day the lease starts. Our office hours are Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm. If none of your group are due to arrive until a later date, there is no need to let us know. We simply ask the **FIRST TENANT** who is collecting the keys to send an email to info@lawsonthompson.co.uk at least 48 hours before arrival. Please have your matriculation card ready and **ensure the rent and deposit has been paid in full.**

- **Key collection (OUT OF HOURS)** - If the **FIRST TENANT** is due to arrive out with the above working hours, please email info@lawsonthompson.co.uk at least 48 hours before arrival. We will then confirm details of collection instructions. As above, we will provide the first tenant with **ALL** sets of keys for the property.

OFFICE DIRECTIONS: Our office is top floor of The Malt Barn, 205b South Street, St Andrews, KY16 9EF. Full directions can be found on the [contact us](#) page of our website.

property inventory

The property will have been thoroughly checked and cleaned prior to your arrival, and the condition of the property at the start of the tenancy will be detailed in the **inventory report**. This report also details the items within the property and which room they are in.

This report will be emailed to you at the start of the tenancy. It is the responsibility of the lead tenant to check the contents are an accurate representation of the property. If you disagree with anything stated in the inventory, you are required to inform us via the inventory report online system **within 7 days of the start of tenancy OR the first tenant to collect keys (whichever is later)**. If you do not do this, you accept the inventory as being a true and accurate representation of the property.

setting up wifi

You will need to set up wifi as this is not provided (unless stated on the property listing on our website). We recommend this is arranged in advance of moving in so it is ready to use from day 1. Ensure you opt for a contract with a minimum term of **no more than 12 months** to minimise termination fees if you stay only one academic year. We recommend the following steps to set up your phone and broadband:

1. Visit a wifi providers website and select the internet service you want. Have the property address ready to know what packages are available in your area.
2. The provider will tell you if the property has an existing phone/broadband line or if one needs to be installed. In the vast majority of cases, a line will already be installed.
If there is already an active line installed: the provider will be able to post the equipment to you so it is ready for you to set up when you arrive at the property.
If there is no active line installed: an Openreach engineer will need to visit the property to install one follow your moving in.

Please note, providers often require a UK bank account in order to process the setup.

setting up your gas & electricity contract

Electricity and gas* (*assuming your property has a gas supply and is not electric-only: this will be outlined in the meter reading email we sent you at the start of the tenancy) will be connected and running when you arrive and will be with the same provider that has been providing the utilities previously. On the first day of the lease we will take the opening meter readings and email these to you with 48 hours together with a note of the utility provider. We ask that you use these readings to contact the supplier to open your account. Use the start date of the lease as the opening date, NOT the actual date you moved in to the property.

SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT

Have the following information to hand before contacting the utility provider to open your account:

- **Full property address & lease start date** (lease start date NOT the date you actually moved in);
- **Opening meter readings we sent you via email within 48 hours of the lease start date.**
- **Your bank details for setting up a payment method** – we recommend signed up for e-billing and paying by direct debit.

Where there are multiple tenants living at a property, one tenant usually takes responsibility for the payment of the bills and collects the funds from the remaining tenants. Some students decide to open a bank account (in all the tenant names) for payment of the shared household bills.

CHOOSING A PRICE PLAN

Our recommendation is to stick with the standard variable rate tariff (with no fixed term) offered by your utility provider as this is subject to the energy price cap and generally seen as the cheapest option available currently. But the choice is yours – we encourage you to do your own research before deciding.

Paying by direct debit is usually the cheapest method. The provider may ask you to pay by:

- **fixed monthly direct debit** – this is where the supplier will estimate the monthly amount you should be paying. Sometimes they do this accurately, however sometimes they have grossly over or under estimated the monthly amount. Things will only become clear the longer you live in the property. As long as you take regular monthly meter readings and send these readings to your supplier, they will adjust how much you are paying to reflect ACTUAL rather than estimated usage.

- **variable directly debit based on actual invoices received** – this is our recommended option as you will pay whatever the amount is listed on the quarterly invoice. Assuming you take regular monthly meter readings and send these to your provider, they will be able to send you an invoice every quarter for the ACTUAL amount of energy used. Many find this method more straightforward.

Both of the above options do not alter how much you pay overall, they are just two different ways of paying. If you happen to overpay (say the provider over-estimates the bill, or sets the monthly amount too high) you will get any credit back when the lease ends and your account is closed.

how to read your meter

TAKE ACTUAL METER READINGS REGULARY: It is important you take actual meter readings of BOTH the electricity and gas meters on a MONTHLY basis and forward these to your utility provider to ensure you are receiving accurate bills. Fail to do this and the utility provider will estimate your readings, which might lead to a large bill at the end of the tenancy should the estimated readings be less than actual.

LOCATION OF ELECTRICITY & GAS METERS: The location of your electricity and gas meters can be found on the emergency sheet of your noticeboard under 'POWER CUT' and 'GAS LEAK' respectively.

HOW TO READ YOUR METER

Electricity Smart / Digital Meter: these are more difficult to read without knowing what to press. See guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/5b88nkyc>

Gas 'old-style' analogue meter: read the big numbers, ignoring any after a comma or decimal point and any numbers in red or surrounded by red.

Gas Smart / Digital Meter: these are more difficult to read without knowing what to press. See guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc87tfsr>

DON'T KNOW WHO YOUR GAS SUPPLIER IS? Visit: <https://www.findmysupplier.energy/>
DON'T KNOW WHO YOUR ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER IS? Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/jc9d3nsj>

SWITCHING PROVIDERS: You are not obliged to remain with the same utility company, you can switch if you wish. Though if your property only has electricity (with no gas), we strongly recommend you remain with the same utility provider as costs can increase if you switch if the new provider is not compatible with the meter in the property. Please contact us for more information in this case. Typically accounts are with SSE, and we recommend tenants stay with SSE as they have proven themselves to be good on the customer service front and are generally competitive price wise. Also, if your property is fitted with a smart meter, it may lose this functionality if you switch.

how to operate your heating & hot water

Please take time to learn how to use the central heating and hot water when you move in, including how to set a time schedule to ensure the system only comes on when you want it to.

There will usually be an instruction manual in the property, but many people find watching a video a bit easier! YouTube is a great resource – simply search for the make and model of the control panel followed by 'instructions' and 9 times out of 10 there will be a guided video how to set the time schedule.

If you are having difficulty operating the system, or would like any further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to visit the property in person to provide instruction if required or do it over Facetime.

council tax

You need to register with Fife Council for Council Tax. If the property is inhabited entirely by students in full-time education, they will award you a full exemption (including water and sewage provision).

Register by calling Fife Council (council tax) on **03451 55 11 55**, or by visiting the Council Tax office next to the Students Union on St. Marys Place. You can also email them at benctax@fife.gov.uk

television licence

If you watch or record television programmes as they are being shown on TV (watching either on a television, a computer, or any other device), you need to purchase a TV licence. One licence covers the whole property. Visit www.tvlicencing.co.uk for more information and to purchase a licence. IMPORTANT NOTE: if your property was

supplied with a TV, your landlord may already hold a TV licence covering all tenants at the property. Please confirm this with the agent before hand.

contents **insurance**

The landlord holds an insurance policy which covers the building against fire, flood and storm. However the policy does not extend to tenants personal belongings. We recommend all tenants take out separate insurance to cover their personal belongings whilst in the property as the landlord or agent will NOT be liable for any damage to these items caused through things like theft, fire, flood or storm.

waste and **recycling**

TO FIND OUT WHICH DAYS YOUR BINS ARE COLLECTED:

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/services/bin-calendar>

Take time to familiarise yourself with the rules on waste and recycling collection – **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT**. You are responsible for ensuring your bins are placed on the roadside and retrieved from the roadside at the appropriate times. Failure to do this can result in a fine being imposed by the council and/or additional charges should we need to appoint a contractor to removed any overflowing rubbish on your behalf.

Many homes in St. Andrews have FOUR bins (though this may vary depending on property location):

1. **Blue Bin**: landfill waste (emptied every two weeks).
2. **Brown Bin**: food and garden waste (emptied every two weeks).
3. **Black Bin**: paper and cardboard (emptied every four weeks).
4. **Green Bin**: cans and plastics (emptied every four weeks).

If your property does not have space for wheelie bins, Fife Council provide 40 black sacs (2 per week x 20 weeks) and these are collected once per week from the street on the dates outlined in the link above).

Ensure all waste is securely bagged and the wheelie bin lid closes completely, otherwise the council will refuse to empty it. Place the bin on the kerbside the evening before collection day. Ensure you collect the bin as soon as it has been empty (otherwise the council may fine you for leaving it out on the street).

If you have any items too large for the bins, take them to the free recycling centre (behind Morrisons supermarket), or contact a private contractor to uplift these for you subject to a fee (Paul Meldrum: 07850 249655).

tenancy **deposits**

Scottish Law requires that security deposit is held by Safe Deposits Scotland. Upon paying your deposit to us, we transfer it to Safe Deposits Scotland within 30 days of the tenancy start date. Where a tenancy involves more than one tenant, we are required to nominate one of the tenants as the **lead tenant** to act on behalf of all joint tenants when communicating with Safe Deposit Scotland. The lead tenant will be the first person named in the lease.

weekly **safety checks**

If you live in an HMO property (i.e. a property containing three or more unrelated people), you are required to conduct a weekly test of the smoke alarms, carbon dioxide alarms and heat detectors plus a visual check of the fire fighting equipment. **The log sheets on your main noticeboard require to be signed each time this is done.**

We will give you training on how to do this when you move in, including details of what to do in the event of a fire. This training will be repeated every six months. We will conduct our own safety checks (including tests to the emergency lighting) during our monthly visits. More information can be found in our **fire safety and carbon monoxide poisoning** fact sheet.

do's and do not's

DO NOT:

- stick posters or hang pictures to the wall (blu-tack, white-tack, Sellotape, pins etc are BANNED as these damage the wall). If you must hang something to the wall, we find 3M Command Strips are the most effective if used properly, however they are used at your own risk;
- use door stops (do: keep fire doors closed at all times);
- use candles or fairy lights (do: use LED alternatives);
- move furniture (do: ask us to arrange this for you);
- fail to report damage or maintenance (do: report this to us immediately);
- place hot pans directly onto kitchen worktop (do: use heat mats);
- overfill your external bin (do: ensure the lid closes fully);
- store rubbish in your property (do: place bags in external bin);
- forget to place your bin on the street at the appropriate time;
- leave any obstacles or combustibles in common areas (including stairwell);
- flush anything down the toilet apart from toilet paper as this blocks the drains.

cleanliness

We expect the property to be kept to a high standard of cleanliness and tidiness throughout the term of the lease. We inspect properties on a **monthly basis** to monitor this. Whilst we allow a reasonable amount of tolerance, we do expect certain baseline standards to be adhered to. For instance:

- dishes in the kitchen are to be washed and put away after use (for the courtesy of the other tenants);
- household rubbish bagged and removed from the property;
- clothes removed from floors (a cause of damp / moth infestations);
- flooring vacuumed regularly;
- work surfaces wiped;
- any blackness / mould removed using a mould-inhibiting spray (particularly in bathrooms).

Lawson & Thompson are always on hand to assist you and offer advice, so please do not hesitate to call us with any queries or questions... we have seen it ALL before!

maintenance

It is your responsibility to report any maintenance issues as and when they occur. We aim to attend to all priority issues within 1 – 2 working days (depending on contractor availability).

Please follow this link to report maintenance:

<https://www.lawsonthompson.co.uk/lettings/report-maintenance-issue/>

IMPORTANT NOTE: we endeavor to provide tenants with at least 24-hours notice of a contractor arriving at a property to undertake maintenance or safety-related work, however due to the unpredictable nature of contractor schedules in St. Andrews this is not always possible. We will write to you separately with our contractor notice policy.

agent inspections

We carry out monthly inspections on our properties. These are typically undertaken on the **last Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of every month** between the hours of **10am to 6pm** (we are unable to specify a more accurate time of when we will visit the property due to the unpredictable nature of these inspections).

These inspections are for us to conduct safety checks, check for maintenance issues and ensure any problems relating to the tenancy are addressed. If you have any maintenance issues you would like to bring to our attention, please ensure these are raised via our reporting software (see link above under maintenance).

Address: Lawson & Thompson Ltd, The Malt Barn, 205b South Street, St Andrews, KY16 9EF

Tel: 01334 845 145 | **Email:** info@lawsonthompson.co.uk | **Web:** www.lawsonthompson.co.uk