


QUANTOCK LETTINGS

TENANT GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

# Renting your next home, made simple.

A plain-English guide to renting with us in Taunton and the Quantocks: finding a home, moving in, your rights in 2026, and what happens when you move on.

07918 612847 office@quantocklettings.co.uk Updated for the Renters' Rights Act

WELCOME

# A home, not just a let

Moving home is a big step. This guide explains what to expect at every stage of renting with Quantock Lettings, what you'll need to do, and the rights you have as a tenant in 2026.

We're a small, local team in Taunton. We look after homes across Taunton, Bridgwater, Wellington, Bishops Lydeard and the Quantock villages, and we'd like you to feel settled and looked after in yours.

We believe renting works best when everyone knows where they stand. We'll be clear about costs from the start, fix problems properly when you report them, and treat you fairly and with respect throughout your tenancy.

The law on renting changed on 1 May 2026, giving tenants more security and more say. We've explained the main changes in plain English on page 6. If anything isn't clear, just ask us.

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**Neil, Cheryl and Hattie**



**Neil Hudson**
Has built long-standing relationships with the people we help through hard work and honesty.



**Cheryl Hudson**
Knows the local area well, from town houses to rural homes on the Quantocks.



**Hattie Rogers**
Makes renting as simple and stress-free as possible, from your first viewing onwards.

SEARCHING AND VIEWING

# Finding your home

Good homes in our area often let quickly, so it pays to be ready. Here's how to give yourself the best chance.

## Start your search

You'll find our available homes on our website, quantocklettings.co.uk, and on the major property portals. Tell us what you're looking for and we'll let you know when something suitable comes up, often before it's advertised.

## Before you view

- Work out what you can comfortably afford each month, including bills and council tax.
- Think about who will live with you, any pets, and when you'd like to move.
- Have your ID and proof of income ready, so you can apply straight away if you find the right home.

## At the viewing

We'll show you round and answer your questions. Take your time, open cupboards, check the heating and look at the garden. If tenants still live there, please respect their home.

> **Fair renting rules.** Since 1 May 2026, every home must be advertised at a clear rent, and nobody can ask you to bid above it. Landlords and agents can't refuse you just because you have children or receive benefits.



### Questions worth asking

- [ ] What's included: white goods, carpets, curtains?
- [ ] How is the home heated, and what's the EPC rating?
- [ ] What's the council tax band?
- [ ] Is there parking, and is the broadband good?
- [ ] Are pets considered? (You can always ask.)
- [ ] When is the home available?
- [ ] Who should I call if something goes wrong?

APPLYING AND REFERENCING

# Applying for a home

Found the one? Here's what happens next, and exactly what you can and can't be asked to pay.

## Holding deposit

To take a home off the market while we check references, you may be asked for a holding deposit of up to one week's rent. It's usually put towards your first month's rent.

You'll get it back within 7 days if the landlord decides not to go ahead. It can only be kept if you give false or misleading information, fail a Right to Rent check, pull out yourself, or don't take reasonable steps to complete the tenancy within the agreed deadline (normally 15 days).

## Referencing

We check every adult who will live in the home. Be ready to provide:

- ✓ Photo ID and proof of your right to rent in the UK
- ✓ Proof of income, such as payslips or bank statements
- ✓ Details of your employer or other income
- ✓ Your current or previous landlord's contact details
- ✓ Permission for a credit check

If your income doesn't quite cover the rent, a guarantor can help. They agree to pay if you can't, and we'll reference them too. Referencing is free for you.

## What you may be asked to pay

The law limits what tenants can be charged. You can only be asked for:

| Payment | Limit |
|---|---|
| Rent in advance | No more than one month, and only after you've signed |
| Holding deposit | Up to one week's rent |
| Tenancy deposit | Up to five weeks' rent (six if the annual rent is £50,000 or more) |
| Changes you ask for to your tenancy | Up to £50, or reasonable costs if higher |
| Lost keys or security devices | The reasonable cost of replacing them |
| Rent paid more than 14 days late | Interest of up to 3% above the Bank of England base rate |
| Bills | Utilities, council tax, TV licence and broadband, if your agreement says you pay them |

> We never charge for viewings, referencing, tenancy paperwork or check-in.

STARTING YOUR TENANCY

# Moving in

We want moving day to be straightforward. Here's what happens, and what to do in your first few days.

1. **Sign your tenancy agreement.** We'll send you a written agreement setting out the rent, the payment date, what's included and who looks after what. Read it carefully and ask us about anything you're unsure of.
2. **Pay your deposit and first month's rent.** Your holding deposit is usually taken off the first payment.
3. **Your deposit is protected.** We register it in a government-approved scheme within 30 days and send you details of how it's protected and how to get it back.
4. **Check the inventory.** You'll get a detailed record of the home's condition, with photos. Check it carefully and tell us within the agreed time if anything is missing or wrong. This protects you when you move out.
5. **Collect your keys.** On moving day we'll hand over the keys, show you the meters, stopcock and boiler, and check the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working.
6. **Keep your documents.** You'll receive the gas safety certificate, electrical safety report, Energy Performance Certificate and deposit information. Keep them somewhere safe.

### In your first week

- [ ] Take meter readings and photos of them
- [ ] Set up your gas, electricity and water accounts
- [ ] Register for council tax with Somerset Council
- [ ] Arrange broadband and a TV licence if you need one
- [ ] Take out contents insurance for your belongings
- [ ] Set up a standing order for your rent
- [ ] Find the stopcock, fuse box and boiler controls



RENTING IN 2026

# Your rights as a tenant

The Renters' Rights Act came into force on 1 May 2026 and covers every private tenancy in England, including ones that started before then. Here's what it means for you.

- **No fixed terms.** Your tenancy rolls on from month to month. You can stay as long as you keep to your agreement, and leave whenever you like with two months' notice.
- **No "no-fault" evictions.** Section 21 has gone. A landlord can only ask you to leave for a reason the law allows, such as selling the home, moving in themselves, or serious rent arrears. They must give you the correct written notice, and for selling or moving in that's four months.
- **A settled first year.** Your landlord can't use the selling or moving-in reasons during the first 12 months of your tenancy.
- **Fair rent increases.** Rent can go up only once a year, with at least two months' written notice on the official form. If you think a rise is above the going rate, you can ask the First-tier Tribunal to decide.
- **Pets.** You can ask to keep a pet. Your landlord must reply within 28 days and can only refuse for a good reason.
- **Fair treatment.** No one can refuse you a home because you have children or receive benefits.
- **A safe home.** Your landlord must keep the home safe and in good repair, including the structure, heating, hot water and any gas and electrics, and deal with serious damp and mould.
- **Your deposit is safe.** It must be protected in a government-approved scheme, and there's a free service to settle any disagreement at the end.

> **Coming soon.** A national register of landlords opens from December 2026, and a Private Rented Sector Ombudsman is expected in 2028.

## If your landlord needs the home back

| Reason | Minimum notice | Good to know |
|---|---|---|
| Landlord selling, or moving in themselves or family | 4 months | Can't be used in your first 12 months |
| Serious rent arrears | 4 weeks | At least three months' rent owed |
| Breaking the tenancy terms | 2 weeks | A court decides whether it's reasonable |

You don't have to leave until a court orders it. This is a summary of the law in England as of October 2026, not legal advice. Shelter and Citizens Advice offer free, independent help.

DURING YOUR TENANCY

# Living in your home

Most tenancies run smoothly with a little give and take. Here's how things work day to day.

## Paying your rent

Your rent is due on the date in your tenancy agreement. A standing order is the easiest way to make sure it always arrives on time. If you're struggling to pay, please tell us early. It's far easier to find a way forward before arrears build up.

## Reporting repairs

Tell us about any repair as soon as you notice it, using the Report maintenance form on our website, by phone or by email. Photos help us send the right contractor first time. We'll let you know when someone will visit.

## Inspections

We visit from time to time to check the home is in good order and to spot any repairs needed. We'll always give you at least 24 hours' written notice, except in a genuine emergency.

## Changes in your circumstances

Let us know if someone wants to move in or out, if you're going away for a long period, or if your contact details change.

**Emergencies: call us straight away**

For a gas leak, flooding, no heating or hot water in cold weather, an electrical fault that's dangerous, or a home that isn't secure, call **07918 612847**.

If you smell gas, leave the home and call the **National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999** first. For a power cut, call **105**.

## Damp and mould

Everyday life puts a lot of moisture into the air. You can help keep your home healthy:

- ✓ Use extractor fans when cooking and showering
- ✓ Open windows for a while each day, even in winter
- ✓ Dry washing outside or in a well-ventilated room
- ✓ Keep furniture slightly away from outside walls
- ✓ Wipe away condensation from windows each morning

If you see damp or mould, please report it straight away. We'll find the cause and put it right.

YOUR PART

# Looking after your home

Your landlord looks after the building and its main systems. Day-to-day care is down to you, and a well-kept home makes getting your deposit back simple.

## Everyday care

- ✓ Keep the home clean and aired
- ✓ Test the smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries if needed
- ✓ Keep the garden tidy, lawns cut and paths clear
- ✓ Put bins out on the right day
- ✓ Replace light bulbs and keep drains and sinks clear
- ✓ Keep the home heated in winter to stop pipes freezing
- ✓ Lock up and close windows when you go out

## Going away

If you'll be away for more than a couple of weeks, especially in winter, let us know. Leave the heating on low and tell us who holds a spare key.

## Please ask us first

Some changes need your landlord's written permission. Please check with us before you:

- ☐ Decorate, put up shelves or change fixtures
- ☐ Let someone else move in, or sublet
- ☐ Keep a pet
- ☐ Change the locks
- ☐ Run a business from the home
- ☐ Fit a satellite dish or make alterations

We'll pass your request to the landlord and come back to you promptly. Pet requests must be answered within 28 days.



ENDING YOUR TENANCY

# Moving out

When it's time to move on, a little planning makes it smooth and helps you get your full deposit back.

## Giving notice

You can end your tenancy at any time by giving at least two months' notice in writing. Email is fine. If you're renting with others, talk to them first, as notice from one tenant usually ends the tenancy for everyone.

## Check-out

We'll arrange a time to check the home against your inventory, allowing for fair wear and tear. Please hand back every key, including spares.

## Getting your deposit back

If there are no deductions, we'll arrange for your deposit to be returned promptly. If we think something needs deducting, such as cleaning or damage beyond fair wear and tear, we'll explain why and show you the evidence. Once the amount is agreed, it must be paid within 10 days.

If you don't agree, the deposit scheme offers a free, independent dispute service that looks at the evidence from both sides.

### Moving-out checklist

- [ ] Give two months' written notice
- [ ] Clean thoroughly, including the oven, fridge and windows
- [ ] Remove all your belongings and rubbish
- [ ] Cut the lawn and tidy the garden
- [ ] Repair any damage you've caused, or tell us about it
- [ ] Take final meter readings and photos
- [ ] Tell your energy, water and broadband suppliers
- [ ] Tell Somerset Council about your council tax
- [ ] Redirect your post
- [ ] Give us your forwarding address
- [ ] Return every key

**Tip:** compare the home with your check-in inventory and photos before you leave. It's the quickest way to spot anything that needs doing.



AT A GLANCE

# Checklist and useful contacts

Keep this page handy. It has everything you need in one place.

**Ready to apply**

- [ ] Photo ID for every adult who'll live there
- [ ] Proof of your right to rent
- [ ] Three months of payslips or bank statements
- [ ] Employer and previous landlord contact details
- [ ] Guarantor details, if you need one

**Before you move in**

- [ ] Tenancy agreement read and signed
- [ ] Deposit and first month's rent paid
- [ ] Deposit protection details received
- [ ] Gas, electrical and EPC certificates received
- [ ] Inventory checked and returned
- [ ] Contents insurance arranged

| Who | Contact |
|---|---|
| **Quantock Lettings** | 07918 612847<br>office@quantocklettings.co.uk |
| **Gas emergency** | 0800 111 999 (24 hours) |
| **Power cut** | 105 (free, 24 hours) |
| **Emergency services** | 999 |
| **Council tax and bins** | Somerset Council, somerset.gov.uk |
| **Free housing advice** | Shelter, shelter.org.uk<br>Citizens Advice, citizensadvice.org.uk |



QUANTOCK LETTINGS

TALK TO US

# Looking for your next home?

Tell us what you're after and we'll let you know as soon as something suitable comes up. You can see the homes we have available at quantocklettings.co.uk.

## 07918 612847

## office@quantocklettings.co.uk

**Where we work**
We're based in Taunton and cover Taunton, Bridgwater, Wellington, Bishops Lydeard, the Quantock villages and the surrounding area.

**Already renting with us?**
Report a repair any time using the Report maintenance form on our website, or call us. In an emergency, always phone.



**Neil Hudson**



**Cheryl Hudson**



**Hattie Rogers**

Quantock Lettings Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, company number 15929562. Registered office: 1 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4EA.

This guide is general information about renting a home in England and reflects the law as we understand it in October 2026. It isn't legal advice, and the rules continue to change, so please ask us, Shelter or Citizens Advice about your own situation.