

Property Owners Handbook

All you need to know



Sulets

Better student living





Contents

3	Why choose Sulets?	18	Contents and maintenance
4	About our services	19	Matters of interest
6	Sulets Leased Service	20	Repairs
7	Sulets Managed Service	22	Keys
8	Further information	23	Security
9	Bills and utilities	24	Gas and electric checks
10	Rent	25	Safety of the property
12	Contracts	26	Safety best practice
14	Property requirements	27	What to do next

Why choose Sulets?

Why choose Sulets?

High quality service

We're there at every step to make life easy for our landlords.

Value for money

As a not-for-profit organisation we are committed to providing best value for all.

Transparent and fair

We're clear, straightforward and upfront, what you see is what you get with us.

A unique offer

We have a range of options to find the perfect fit for our landlords and access to thousands of students on campus.

Honesty

We believe in honest, transparent, fair dealing. Unlike most other agencies we make no secret of our fees and we won't charge you extra for what some agencies call additional services.

A different approach to lettings for landlords

Launched in September 2011, Sulets is a joint venture between De Montfort and Leicester Students' Unions. We are a unique charity dedicated to providing high quality housing and a fair service to both landlords and students.

Increase your reach

Sulets can offer you unparalleled marketing of your property. Our lettings office is based in the middle of the DMU campus with direct and unrivalled access to over 20,000 students. No one else can offer you this level of marketing for your property. We also have a strong brand presence and regularly visit the Uni of Leicester campus.

Partnership links with both Student Unions

Our unique and exclusive links with both Leicester student unions allows us to promote your property via various channels including direct email campaigns, on campus branding & advertising, exhibitor access to freshers fairs and other student events, social media campaigns and much more...

University links

Both De Montfort University and the University of Leicester recommend Sulets as the only trusted private student accommodation agency. They allow us to attend and promote at open days, special events and promote us on their accommodation web pages.

About our services

Sulets offer two types of service to our property owners, here is an overview of what is included:

	Leased Service	Managed Service
Initial appraisal and valuation	★	★
Marketing	★	★
Accompanied viewings	★	★
Tenant selection	★	★
Production of tenancy agreements	★	★
Production of guarantor documents for each tenant	★	★
Deposit collection	★	★
Deposit registration*	N/A	★
Collection of rent and transfer	★	★
Inventory	★	★
Termly property inspections	★	★

About our services

	Leased Service	Managed Service
Maintenance service for minor repairs	★	★
Chasing of rent arrears	N/A	★
Guaranteed rent payments	★	
6 mid-term cleans**	★	
Safety certificates included*	★	
Check out inspection	★	★
Dilapidations and arbitration of bond deductions	★	★
Return of deposit	★	★

Valid safety certificates must be provided at the start of the lease and will then be renewed by Sulets once they expire. The certificates covered include the gas safety record, the periodic inspection/fixed wiring test and the portable appliance test. The HMO licence is not covered.

* For leased properties, Sulets holds the deposit. It does not have to be registered with a deposit scheme.

** The property will require an opening clean, which Sulets will arrange and deduct a charge from the first rental payment.

Leased Service ★

You lease your property to Sulets for a fixed term at a fixed and guaranteed rent. Sulets will then sub-let the property to a group of tenants and take over the day-to-day management of the property. Your property will be returned to you at the end of the lease empty and in a similar condition to the start of the lease, allowing for fair wear and tear.

Q What does the service include?

The service is meant to be fully inclusive for property owners and tenants. We take care of the cleaning, the main certificates and managing the property.

Q How much does it cost?

There is no set up fee, management fee or VAT. The Landlord agrees to let the property to Sulets, when Sulets has found suitable prospective occupiers.

Q Do I let the house to the tenants or to Sulets?

You will let your property to Sulets for a guaranteed rent. Sulets will then sub-let the property to tenants.



Managed Service ★

Sulets will rent the property for you, collecting the rent and dealing with all the day-to-day management issues on your behalf.

❏ How much does it cost?

Sulets charges a management fee of 11% + VAT. In addition, there is a setup fee equivalent to 25% of the first month's rent (minimum £300 + VAT) when we first rent the property. If the same tenants remain in the property in future years, the setup fee is reduced to £200 + VAT.

❏ Do I let the house to the tenants or to Sulets?

Sulets lets the property direct to the tenants on your behalf.



Further information

Q What size property do Sulets deal with?

- ★ **Leased Service:** Any property large enough for 3–8 people.
- ★ **Managed Service:** Any property large enough for one person upwards. Please contact us for further pricing information for properties for 10+ people.

Q Which locations do we deal with?

We generally only consider properties within one mile of the campuses. However, each location is considered on an individual basis as there are areas within this radius which are not considered appropriate for placing students.

Q What sort of tenancy do you use?

- ★ **Leased Service:** Sulets has a special status in law and so we don't need to issue assured shorthold tenancies. We use a special common law tenancy similar to the type that universities use. This is exempt from the Housing Act which means that we can intervene far quicker if we have problem tenants than a normal property owner or agent could. Sulets is not required to issue section 21 or section 8 notices if we want to evict a tenant.
- ★ **Managed Service:** Sulets uses an assured shorthold tenancy and serves the necessary section 21 notice at the appropriate time.

Q What about deposits?

- ★ **Leased Service:** Due to our special status, we don't have to register deposits with a deposit scheme and have no requirement to comply with deposit protection rules. Sulets hold deposits in a separate client account. This means that we can deal with deposit issues far easier than an ordinary agent would at the end of the tenancy if there is damage in excess of fair wear and tear.
- ★ **Managed Service:** All deposits are registered with MyDeposits who protect the deposit and act as an adjudicator in the event of a dispute. Sulets register the deposit when the payment is made and liaise with the tenants after the closing inspection in relation to any damage or cleaning costs. More information on MyDeposits can be found at www.mydeposits.co.uk

Bills and utilities

Q Who pays the gas and electricity bills?

★ **Leased Service:** Sulets offers a Silver Package for properties with 2 bedrooms or less, where tenants are responsible for the bills. On properties of 3 bedrooms or more, Sulets includes a Gold Package where Sulets pays all utility bills so there is no risk that you will be left with any bills during the contracted period.

★ **Managed Service:** The tenant is responsible for paying all bills, which will be in their name.

If meter readings are required, £25 per property per occurrence will be charged to the property owner. Sulets will not accept properties with pre-payment meters.

Q What about a TV Licence?

Sulets expect all tenants to pay their own TV Licence, unless the property owner decides to provide this.

Q Who is responsible for insuring the property and its contents?

The owner is responsible for protecting their interests in the property.

The owner should have a valid and comprehensive policy of insurance to protect the building and contents. Repairs for forced entry would be charged to the property owner in the event of a break-in, so cover for this is recommended.

★ **Leased Service:** Tenants possessions are covered by Sulets.

★ **Managed Service:** Tenants are advised to take out insurance.

Q What about a telephone and internet connection?

The property must be equipped ready for internet connection.

Q What is the situation regarding Council Tax?

Both property owner and tenants are exempt from paying council tax when the property is occupied solely by students. Sulets will liaise directly with the local authority on this matter.

Q What form of heating is best?

Gas central heating is preferred. The heating system should cover the entire house, be economical to run and adequate ventilation should be provided to help prevent damp and mould. Gas fires and boilers are not acceptable in any bedrooms.

Rent

Q How is the rent paid?

We make payments direct to your bank account in line with the rent payment schedule that matches the tenant's student loan payment dates.

The first payment will normally be paid at the end of August and subsequent payment dates are in November, February and May. International students usually pay their rent in three instalments rather than four, so your payments would correspond to that.

For leased properties your rent is paid in full. For managed properties we pay all collected rent minus our fees. Payments are made within 7 working days of the rent due date.

Payment details must be received at least six weeks before the commencement of the contract if the first payment is to be prompt.

Q How much rent can I charge?

Sulets staff will discuss this with you when they inspect the property.





Q What happens if a tenant doesn't pay their rent?

- ★ **Leased Service:** Rent is guaranteed by Sulets so you don't have to worry.
- ★ **Managed Service:** Sulets will send students reminders to pay their rent.

Sulets actively chases outstanding rent via emails and calls to the tenant and guarantor along with visits to the property.

Q What happens if a tenant leaves the property during the year?

- ★ **Leased Service:** Rent is guaranteed by Sulets so you don't have to worry.
- ★ **Managed Service:** The tenant and their guarantor are held to contract until a suitable replacement is found to take over the tenancy.

Contracts

Q Do the tenants have a full year long contract?

Although Sulets will lease your property from you for a full year (or less if you enter the service at a later date) the premises will be let to our tenants for a 52 week period, of which up to 48 weeks will be chargeable*. The property is usually unoccupied during July to enable any necessary maintenance and redecoration to take place.

Q What about immigration checks?

Due to our special status, Sulets does not need to undertake immigration status checks like other agents do.

*Subject to council tax arrangements

Q Building society and bank mortgages

If you have a mortgage you are advised to obtain written permission to let before signing a contract with Sulets, as permission to let may not be automatic and may affect your mortgage conditions.

If you believe there may be any difficulties with your bank or building society then please address these prior to entering into a letting arrangement with Sulets.

If any property owner resides out of the country they are required to declare this to the tax office.





Property requirements

Each tenant bedroom

- › Lockable bedroom door with thumb turn
- › Bed, double where possible, or three-quarter with good quality mattress and sound bed base
- › Mattress cover
- › Chest of drawers
- › Wardrobe with hanging rail
- › Sturdy, height adjustable chair with a medium back, on wheels
- › Desk of correct height to suit the chair (60cm x 120cm)
- › Waste paper bin
- › Bookcase or bookshelf providing min 3.5m total storage space
- › Large notice board attached to the wall (60cm x 90cm)

- › Plain net curtains and 'dim out' or 'black out' draw curtains
- › Lightshade

Bathroom

- › WC and washbasin per five tenants
- › Bath with overhead shower or separate shower cubicle per five occupants (shower must be thermostatically controlled) with screen or curtain
- › Lavatory brush and holder
- › Toilet roll holder
- › Towel rail
- › Mirror
- › Bin
- › Extractor fan (humidity sensitive extractor fan is recommended)
- › Window blinds

- › Sufficient shelves and storage suitable for the household
- › Light fittings to be enclosed to meet electrical regulations
- › Vinyl or similar flooring

Kitchen

- › Mains wired interlinked heat detection
- › Cooker with a minimum of four rings (sited in a safe place with minimum 30cm worktop at either side of the hob), a grill and oven per five tenants
- › Large half and half fridge-freezer per four occupants
- › Fitted cupboards (double cupboard per Tenant is recommended)
- › Large kitchen waste bin and a separate bin for recyclable items
- › Fire blanket, fixed to the wall in an appropriate place

Kitchen continued

- › Dining table and chairs for all occupants
- › Tumble dryer (in exceptional cases a combined Washer-dryer will be acceptable)
- › Cooker hood or extractor fan
- › Washing machine
- › Chopping board
- › Microwave oven
- › Window blinds
- › Kettle
- › Toaster



Common room

- › Sofas and chairs – to seat all occupants together
- › Wall-mounted TV (minimum 32", connected to TV aerial)
- › Plain net curtains or blinds with draw curtains
- › Dining table and chairs for all occupants (if not in the kitchen)
- › Mains wired interlinked smoke detector

Entrance Hallway

- › Large notice board attached to the wall (60cm x 90cm)
- › Doormats (front and back door)
- › Light bulbs and lamp shades throughout
- › Suitable carpet or flooring throughout
- › Mains wired interlinked smoke detectors in hallway and each landing
- › Iron and ironing board
- › Dustpan, brush and broom
- › Mop and bucket



Burglar alarms

Where burglar alarms are fitted, property owners shall ensure that they are properly maintained and are fitted with a 20 minute cut out.



Miscellaneous

- › Shed (space for a bike per occupant)
- › Vacuum cleaner with fittings
- › Thumb-turn lock (front door and back)

Any items listed not provided will be purchased by Sulets and charged to the property owner.

Ventilation

All living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, water closets, staircases and passages shall be provided with adequate means of ventilation.

We strongly recommend that humidity sensitive extractor fans are fitted in the bathroom, toilet and kitchen to limit condensation, mould damage and excessive damp.

Contents and maintenance

❗ What about damage? Who pays and how is the amount decided?

At the end of the lease any damage a tenant is responsible for is deducted from their deposit.

Sulets will carry out a pre-tenancy inspection and produce an inventory which will be given to the household to make any comments within seven days of occupancy. We will use this at the end of the tenancy to determine damage.

❗ What about cleaning?

Tenants are responsible for cleaning their accommodation through the year. At the end of the tenancy, it is expected that tenants leave the house in a clean and tidy state.

We would expect the property owner to carry out and pay for a spring clean at the end of the tenancy (windows, curtains, paint work, flooring, and carpets).

Any additional cleaning and rubbish removal will be arranged by Sulets and charged to the tenants.

★ **Leased Service:** We will arrange an opening clean (chargeable to you then we will provide six interim cleans as part of the service

In case of emergency

Sulets operates a 24/7 emergency call out system. In the event of a serious issue in the building, the tenant can ring our emergency call centre who will instruct one of our nominated contractors.

These call-outs are for electrical or plumbing emergencies which are either life threatening or risk serious damage to the building. Sulets operates the emergency response service at its own cost with property owners only being responsible if the contractor is called out.

❗ Who is responsible for the garden?

The property owner is expected to maintain the garden throughout the growing season and remove any contractor's waste material. If neglected, Sulets will arrange for a gardener to visit, at a cost to the property owner. Tenants are responsible for keeping the garden area tidy and free from rubbish and will be charged if the area needs to be cleared.

Matters of interest

Q Pests

We will instruct a pest control contractor or the council to attend a property as soon as a report of vermin is received into the office. The cost will be charged to the property owner.

Q How do I access the property?

During the tenancy period your access to the property must stay strictly in accordance with your contract with Sulets. Property owners are asked to note that they may not enter the premises without giving the occupants at least 24 hours' notice, except if previously agreed with the residents or in an emergency.

Q What guarantee do I have that the tenants will behave themselves in my house?

Sulets staff will inspect your property at various points during the period of the tenancy. Our tenancy allows us to remove problematic students from the property in the event that someone is causing real problems.

★ **Leased Service:** Sulets will manage the process completely until problems are resolved.

★ **Managed Service:** Sulets can instruct solicitors to issue an eviction notice at the property owner's expense.

Q What if I want the house back within the year to use it for myself or to sell?

Your contract with Sulets commits you to the full period of the leasing agreement before having your property back. It is therefore only

possible for you to sell the house if the new owner will take over the current agreement with Sulets up to its completion. This includes payment of bills, because the tenants have a contract with Sulets to live in the accommodation for the duration of their agreement.

Q Are there likely to be problems in regaining vacant possession?

Whilst it is possible, there has never been a case of this kind in any of Sulets leased properties. Also, due to our unique contract, we can obtain possession far quicker than under a normal assured shorthold tenancy.

★ **Leased Service:** Sulets guarantee to give you vacant possession.

★ **Managed Service:** the costs of eviction will be payable by the property owner.

Repairs

Q Who is responsible for repairs?

You are responsible for any repairs required on the property, including heating systems, fixtures, fittings and furniture. Sulets can arrange to carry out certain repairs for you if you wish, as per the details below.

★ **Leased Service:** Property owner pays for repairs. We will hold a £300 float per property to cover minor repairs.

★ **Managed Service:** Property owner pays for repairs. We will hold a £300 float per property to cover minor repairs.

We charge 12% (10%+VAT) on the total cost of any repair for the commissioning, checking and invoicing of the repairs for managed service properties.

Q What type of repairs are handled by Sulets?

Minor decorating: touch ups to walls and woodwork, emulsion only full walls, reattaching wallpaper, treating and redecorating following mould damage.

Minor heating repairs: small repairs to the boiler and heating system, replacement parts, bleeding radiators, topping up pressure, replacing thermostatic radiator valves.

Plumbing: leaking taps, leaking sinks, resealing showers, baths, basins, unblocking sinks and toilets, shower head and hose replacements.

Minor electrical works: replacing light bulbs, tube lights, electrical sockets, light pendants, and renew microwaves and hobs to our specification.

Minor joinery works: Repair or replace broken door furniture, repairs to any furniture that can be fixed, attaching or replacing curtain rails, making good damaged doors and frames, fencing repairs, renewing double glazed units (not the full window frame), repairs to floorboards, fitting or renewing door threshold pieces, replacing internal doors.

Other minor repairs: gutter cleaning and repairs, loose carpets on stairs, frayed carpet edges. Repairs to white goods if property owner agrees.

Q What type of repairs are handled by property owners*?

- › Boiler or central heating replacements
- › Major painting and decorating
- › Replacement of furniture
- › Replacement carpets or flooring
- › Replacement windows and external doors
- › Roofing repairs and replacements
- › Replacement of appliances (ovens, televisions, fridges)
- › Attending to damp issues (renewing damp course and joists)
- › Major electrical works (anything that will trigger the 18th edition)
- › Major plumbing works (bathroom, shower, toilet replacement)
- › Major drainage works (works to external drains)

*If repairs are not attended to within our specified timetable, we reserve the right to rectify the problem and deduct any costs from your next payment.

If there is an emergency, or if security or safety of the property or tenant is for any reason at risk, Sulets reserves the right to send a contractor to solve the problem and pass the charge on to the property owner.

Response time guidance

Priority one - 24 hour emergency repairs

Problems that pose threats to tenants health and safety or material issues that risk of serious damage to the property.

A response is required within 24 hours of the issue being reported.

- › Forced locks
- › Broken windows (board up)
- › Gas leaks
- › Electrical faults affecting all power to the property
- › Uncontrollable leaks and floods
- › Blocked toilet (if only one in the property)
- › No hot water (Friday – Saturday, between November and February)

Priority two - 7 days

Urgent material problems that affect the comfort or convenience of the tenants.

- › Cooker faults
- › Heating system failure
- › Leaking plumbing, toilet repairs, blocked drains
- › Leaking roofs and guttering repairs (first attendance)
- › Fridge-freezer, washer-dryer, microwave repairs
- › Urgent repairs to stair carpet
- › Broken windows (reglaze)
- › Vacuum cleaner repairs
- › Unexpected major structural faults
- › Bed repairs

Priority three - 21 days

Non urgent day-to day repairs should be completed in reasonable timescales but within 21 days of being reported.

- › Furniture repairs
- › Dripping taps
- › Garden maintenance
- › Fences
- › Loose tiles

Keys

For any property coming onto Sulets we need a set of keys for each tenant, plus a full master set. For leased properties, an extra set for the cleaner is also required.

The front and back doors will have a thumb turn for easy locking on entry and quick escape in the event of a fire. All bedrooms must be lockable with a lock that must be turned in order to lock the door.

Sulets reserves the right to have keys cut to meet the requirements and pass the charge on to the property owner, if keys are not received in time to carry out first inspection of the property.



Security

Window locks and window restrictors are required on all ground floor and other windows which could be accessible to an intruder. Window restrictors are required for all windows where a fall from an open window would be possible.

All lockable windows must have a key provided, located on a hook on the window reveal. If these are not provided, Sulets will arrange this and charge the property owner.



Gas and electric checks

Sulets are required by law to ensure gas certificates are provided by a registered Gas Safe professional on an annual basis.

Sulets properties must have building work that complies with building regulations Part P - design and installations of electrical installations. A certificate provided by an individual or firm that is certified by a government approved scheme must be obtained once every five years or less if otherwise stated on the certificate.

- ★ **Leased Service:** Sulets will arrange for the renewal of the certification to be carried out as part of the service.
- ★ **Managed Service:** Property owner arranges the work*

*If the Landlord has not provided Sulets with any required certificate, or if the copy provided is due to expire within 14 days, Sulets may arrange testing and certification at the Landlord's expense for a date up to 7 days before the certificate provided is due to expire, without seeking specific authority from the Landlord.

Energy Performance Certificate

UK law requires an energy performance certificate to be produced by a "suitably qualified or accredited expert" every time a home is marketed for sale or rent. As Sulets properties are student houses, the requirement is every 10 years. We can arrange this for you or you can find an accredited assessor online at

www.gov.uk/get-new-energy-certificate



Safety of the property

Before a property can be accepted onto Sulets it must be considered safe by the Sulets team and **comply with our code of standards**. Once the property has been taken onto Sulets we can arrange for the subsequent certification, either as part of our leased service, or chargeable in our fully managed service.

- a) Electrical circuits: the property must have a five year test certificate issued by a qualified certification body (NICEIC, NER, AIC). We can arrange this for you.
- b) Gas supply and equipment: the property must have an annual GAS SAFE gas safety inspection certificate.
- c) There must be a fire blanket provided in the kitchen, fixed to the wall in an appropriate place.
- d) There must be mains wired interlinked smoke alarms which cover the hall, stairs and landing as an escape route. As well as any high risk rooms such as living rooms and kitchens that open onto the escape route.

- e) There must be a secure banister rail and protection on the staircase at the recommended height of 900mm with gaps between spindles of no more than 100mm.
- f) Internal glass panelled doors must be replaced with solid wooden doors or modified to remove the glass as it constitutes a serious safety hazard to residents.
- g) All furniture must satisfy the requirements of the furniture and furnishings (fire safety) regulations 1988 relating to upholstery and filling materials and be in a clean condition. The requirements are that the furniture complies with ignitability and cigarette tests – BS 5852-1 and BS 5852-2. Mattresses and bed bases should conform to BS 6807.
- h) Toilet and bathroom doors must have locks that can be accessed from the outside in an emergency.
- i) The property must have a current:
 - › Gas safety certificate
 - › Energy performance certificate (EPC)

- › Electrical Installation report (5 year, not more than 3 years old)
- › Portable Appliance Test report
- › Carbon monoxide detector & expiry date
- › HMO licence – if applicable
- › Emergency lighting test certificate (if emergency lighting is installed)
- › Expiry dates for all smoke detectors
- › Fire alarm test certificate (if a fire alarm panel is installed)
- j) If the accommodation is above first-floor level (a flat above a shop for example) an independent Fire Risk Assessment from a registered assessor is required.
- k) Please be aware that if your property has a Fire Alarm panel and/ or Emergency Lighting installed, Sulets will have the Fire Alarm tested monthly during the tenancy and this cost will be charged to you when the Tenancy Agreement is signed. You will be informed of the current charge upon sign up (free on the leased service). A log book and fire proof box also need to be installed to keep documents.

Safety best practice

Safety requirements for all properties on Sulets:

- › A 30 minute fire door (FD30) will need to be fitted to the lounge/hallway or kitchen/hallway or as applicable to give protection to the escape route. (See Sulets Code of Standards for exact specification).
- › Bedrooms should enter directly onto the stairway enclosure or into lobbies – access through other rooms (including living room) is not allowed.
- › Under-stairs and meter cupboards should be lined with fire resisting material (2.5cm plasterboard), the staircase soffit and access door should be similarly underdrawn and be able to be fastened shut.
- › Study-bedrooms must not be less than 6.52m². A decision will be made on an individual basis on small rooms depending on layout and whether sufficient furniture can fit in
- › Windows that open should have a safety catch to prevent accidents (if the window is big enough to climb through). Each window should have trickle ventilation, either built into the frame, or as part of the opening mechanism
- › At least three double-switched electric sockets should be provided in each study-bedroom, situated in appropriate places, with no fewer than eight sockets in the kitchen and eight sockets in the lounge
- › Kitchen appliances such as washing machines should have their own sockets and not be plugged onto extension leads
- › Provision of a lockable bicycle shed or secure bike rack is required with enough space for each occupant to store a bicycle
- › Original fireplaces to be boxed in, and decorated to match the walls, to protect them and to prevent fires being lit within them

Most of these recommendations apply to houses of up to five persons and of a two storey construction. Additional safety regulations apply to houses for more than six persons or of three or more storeys. Under these circumstances the local council should be consulted directly.

Means of escape in case of fire

Adequate means of escape in case of fire shall be provided to the satisfaction of the local authority. Special requirements may be made by the local authority in respect to houses where the front door opens on to a bedroom, or on second floors and above, or on floors more than 20 feet above ground level.

What to do next

- 1 Please contact Sulets and our Sales Manager will arrange to meet you to discuss the property.
- 2 We will also arrange an inspection at your property.
- 3 The Sales Manager will send you a detailed report of any works to be carried out along with an action plan for you to sign to agree to carry out the works required. We will also need copies of all your current safety certificates at this stage.
- 4 You will also receive details of the maximum total amount payable to you for the property.
- 5 If you decide to join Sulets you will then sign Terms of Business with us that is subject to us finding suitable tenants to take the property. When we have found a suitable group, we will sign an agreement with the tenants.



**Rated
Excellent**



Call us on:

0116 467 0315

✕ @sulets f @sulets

enquiries@sulets.com

www.sulets.com