Getting Started with Landlord 5

This document is designed to help you get started using the software.

It covers a few of the basic processes of the software and how to use them.

This document is not a comprehensive guide to the software. Further details of the subjects mentioned here, and details of other functions of the software are covered in the User Guide, which can be downloaded from our website, and in the Help file that accompanies the software. To access the Help file, when running the software, select "Contents" from the Help menu or press function key <F1> on your keyboard.

Properties

Property records are probably the most important records on the system as almost everything else is connected to them. Properties are, after all, the reason why this software exists in the first place.

The Properties List

Property records are managed via the Properties list.

You can open the list by selecting the "Property records" option from the Properties menu or by clicking on the [Properties] button (shown left) on the main toolbar.

Adding a property

To add a new property, click on the [New] button on the Properties list screen to start the New Property wizard.

The New Property wizard takes you step-by-step through the process of creating a property and covers the basic information needed.

Enter the details required on each page of the wizard. Click on the [Next] button to go to the next page. If you need to go back to a previous page, click on the [Back] button.

Page 1 - Property address

Enter a unique *Property Code* for the new property. The code can be any combination of letters and numbers up to a maximum of 10 characters. Each code must be unique as it is used to identify the record throughout the system.

> Tip: use a code that tells you something about the property, such as "DONCAST129" and "CHURCH_27A", rather than just using numbers.

Enter the address details for the property.

Line 3 of the address should be used for the *area*, for example:

Address line 1	129 Doncaster Road
Line 2	
Line 3 - Area	Wath-upon-Dearne
Town	Rotherham
County	South Yorkshire
Postcode	S63 7DR

If you have already created area records on your system you can fill in the address quickly by clicking on the [Pick Area] button and selecting the area from the list.

Enter the date the property was acquired. This date will be used as the start date for the initial target rent record. It is important that the date used is earlier than, or the same as, the date of the first transaction that will be entered for the property.

Page 2 –Property type

Select the *Property type* using the button provided.

Enter the number of *bedrooms* the property has.

Select the *furnished type* using the dropdown.

Select the default *tenancy class* using the button provided. This is a means of categorising your properties by the type of tenancy they will usually have. The default tenancy class is 'RES' (Residential). You might also have properties classed as Commercial, Student and so on.

Page 3 – Property features

This page is used to record information about the features the property has. This information is used when creating advertising literature. Tick the features, or amenities, in the list that apply to this property.

Page 4 – Letting restrictions

Use the boxes to indicate any letting restrictions for the property and enter the minimum tenant age if different to the default suggested. This information is used when matching properties to enquirers in the waiting list.

Page 5 – Target rent

The *target rent* is the rent that will be used in advertising literature and as the default when creating a tenancy for this property.

Enter the amount of the rent in the *Net* field. VAT is not usually chargeable on residential lettings so a value for Tc (tax code) of 9 would normally be used. Certain commercial leases, where the business is VAT registered, are subject to VAT and for these you would use tax code 1.

Select the *frequency* of the rent.

Enter the amount of the *deposit* a tenant will have to pay.

If you want to create a reminder for a rent review, enter the date on which you want to be reminded.

Details complete

We have now finished entering the details we need to set up this property.

Click [Finish] to create the property. Confirm that you want to create the new record and the new property will be added to the Properties List.


Editing a property record

Once you have created your property, and it has been added to the Properties list, you can open the record for further editing by selecting it in the list and clicking the [Open] button. Alternatively you can double-click on the property in the list to open the property record.

The information contained in a property record is spread across several pages. Use the tabs, along the top of the screen, to bring a page to the front. When a property record is first opened the Main page is at the front.

Creating a Tenancy

A tenancy record is a link between a property and one or more tenants as shown in the diagram below.
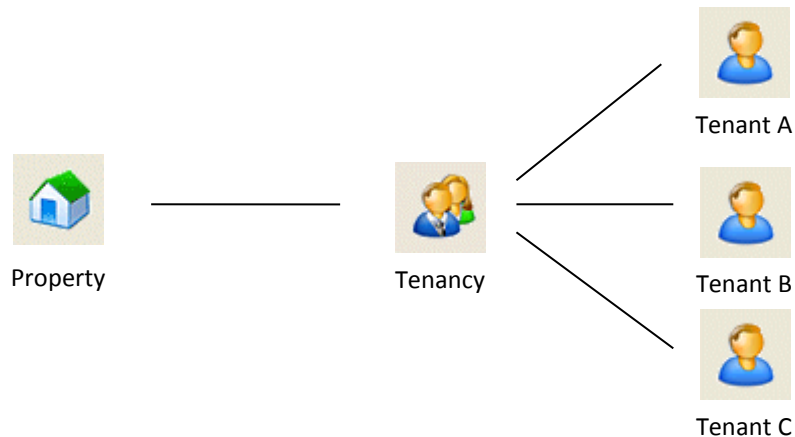
The tenancy record carries the *property code* for the property it relates to and is used to store the *tenancy dates*.

The amount of rent each tenant is to be charged is recorded using a *tenancy charging record*. The tenancy charging record also stores details of the frequency of the rent charge and who the charge is being made to, the tenant himself or another funding type such as housing benefit.

The Tenancies List

Tenancy records are managed via the Tenancies list. The list can be opened by selecting the "Tenancy records" option from the Tenancies menu or by clicking on the [Tenancies] button (shown left) on the main toolbar.

Current tenancies, at today's date, are shown in black text in the list whilst expired and future tenancies are shown in grey text.

Creating a new tenancy

Click on the [New] button, at the top of the Tenancies list, to start the New tenancy wizard.

The New tenancy wizard is used to create "simple" tenancies, that is to say a tenancy having one tenant on it where the tenant pays all the rent himself. This will suit the majority of tenancies but if it doesn't suit the one you want to create, use the Wizard to create the tenancy and then edit the tenancy to add other tenants and so on.

Enter the details required on each page of the wizard. Click on the [Next] button to go to the next page. If you need to go back to a previous page, click on the [Back] button.

Page 1 – Select a property

Select the property that the new tenancy is for.

The second dropdown list will be updated with the default *tenancy class* for the selected property. A different tenancy class for this tenancy can be selected if required.

Select the *Type of tenancy* from the third dropdown list.

Step 2 – Term and dates

Enter the date the tenancy will commence.

The Term of the tenancy will have been completed from the default values for the tenancy type selected on Page 1. The values can be edited if required.

If the *Start charging rent* date is to be different from the tenancy commences date, enter the date in the date box provided.

A change to the start charging rent date will usually be required when the system is first being set up for an existing business. When setting up the system the user defines the financial period to be used. It would be unacceptable, and incorrect, to record rent charges dated before the current financial period begins. In this case, the start charging rent date should be changed to the due date of the first rent charge that falls in the current financial period.

For example, consider a tenancy that commenced on 15/01/2007 on which the rent is due on the 15th of each calendar month. If we were setting up the software for the first time, for the financial period 06/04/2007 to 05/04/2008, we would create the tenancy with a commences date of 15/01/2007 but we would enter 15/04/2007 as the start charging rent date as this is the due date of the first rent charge that falls due on this tenancy after 06/04/2007.

Page 3 – Rent amount and frequency

If a target rent record (see above) exists for the selected property at the *Start charging rent* date, the values for the rent amount and frequency will have been completed. The due day/date will be based on the *Start charging rent* date entered.

Edit the details as required.

Page 4 – Select a tenant

Click on the [Select Tenant] button to open the "Add Tenant to Tenancy" window.

If the tenant you want to add has not already been created, click on the [New] button to add the tenant to the list.

Select the required tenant from the list and click [OK].

Page 5 – Tenancy deposit

Select the Tenancy Deposit Scheme to be used for the tenancy deposit and select the scheme *Operator* as applicable.

As well as creating the tenancy you can also record details of the *tenancy deposit* by ticking the box and completing the details.

The amount of the deposit will have been filled in from the details held in the property record.

Enter the *date* the deposit was received.

If the deposit is to be held by you, select the appropriate *bank account* and the Tenant Deposits Held *nominal* account.

Page 6 – TDS charge

If a charge has been made by the tenancy deposit scheme operator for handling the deposit, tick the box and enter the details as appropriate.

Click on the [Finish] button to create the new tenancy. The tenancy deposit will also be posted if you entered details.

Processing Rent Charges

Having created our tenancy, rent charge records will have been created using the *tenancy charging record* for the tenancy.

The tenancy charging record (TCR) holds details of how much rent to charge and how often, and to which tenant on a tenancy the charge is to be made. A tenancy will have at least one TCR for each tenant on the tenancy. More TCRs can be added where multiple charges are to be made to a tenant. This could be for things like water rates or security charges, where you want these to appear separately from the rent charge.

If you open up a tenancy record, you can see the TCRs listed at the bottom of the "Tenants/TCRs" page.

The rent charge records created from the TCRs are shown on the "Rent Charges" page of the tenancy record.

It is not until a rent charge is *posted*, the term used for creating a transaction, that the rent charge will show up as a transaction on the tenant's ledger.

Rent charges are posted using the "Post rent charges" option on the Tenancies menu. If you have the Tenancies list open you can run the same option from the Tasks menu. If the Tenancies list is open and filtered, only those rent charges relating to the tenancies in the filtered list will appear on the "Post Rent Charges" screen.

When the "Post Rent Charges" screen opens, rent charges with a due date on or before the date shown will be displayed in the list.

Posting the rent charges in the list will create the transactions that appear on the tenant ledgers. If you do not want to post all the entries in the list, just tick those entries that you do want to post.

When posting rent charges you have the choice of whether you want to create the transaction and/or the rent demand. A rent demand is a printable invoice addressed to the tenant. Once created a rent demand can be printed from the tenant invoices list. Most residential lettings will not require rent demands to be sent.

When a rent charge is posted to create a transaction, the corresponding entry on the "Rent Charges" page of the tenancy record will have a red tick placed in the *Posted* column.

When a rent demand is created, the corresponding entry on the "Rent Charges" page of the tenancy record will have a red tick placed in the *Demand* column.

The Tenants List

Any tenant records you added when creating your tenancy can be viewed in the Tenants list.

You can open the Tenants list by selecting the "Tenant records" option from the Tenants menu or by clicking on the [Tenants] button (shown left) on the main toolbar.

The *Balance* column of the Tenants list shows the balance owing on the tenant's account based on all the transactions entered on the system. As rent charges, and other invoices, are posted the tenant balances will increase. When tenant receipts are entered, the tenant balances will reduce showing that the tenant owes less. Where a tenant balance shows in red, because it is negative, the tenant account is in credit.

To view the tenant's details, select the tenant in the list and click on the [Open] button. Alternatively you can double-click on the tenant in the list.

The information in a tenant record is split over several pages. Click on a tab to bring that page to the front. When the tenant record first opens the Main page is at the front.

The Ledger page shows details of the transactions that have been created for the tenant.

Rent charges, and other items charged to the tenant, appear in the "Charges" column whilst monies received from the tenant appear in the "Receipts" column. The "Balance" column shows the cumulative effect of the transactions.

Entering Tenant Receipts

When rent charges are initially posted they appear as unpaid transactions on a tenant's ledger.

When a tenant pays his/her rent it must be entered on the system as a *tenant receipt* and allocated against the rent charges being paid by it.

Open the Tenant Receipt screen by selecting the option on the Tenants menu or by using the Tasks menu on the Tenants list.

Bank section

Select the bank account, that the money is being paid into, using the *Bank* dropdown and enter the *Date* the money was received or paid in. Enter a *Reference* as required; this could be a paying-in slip reference for example.

Account section

Select the tenant account using the dropdown lists provided. The left-hand dropdown has tenants listed in order of account code; the right-hand one is in name order.

Any unpaid items for the selected tenant will be displayed in the grid. Unpaid items are those transactions that have not been fully allocated or paid. This will include any unpaid invoices, unallocated credit notes and any receipts that were previously entered but not allocated. The amount owed by this tenant is shown as the *Balance*.

Amount section

Enter the amount received from the tenant in the *Amount* field. Press <Tab> on your keyboard to move to the first row of the grid, in the *Allocate* column.

Notice that both the *Balance* and *Left to apply* fields have been updated. The *Balance* now includes the amount you just entered. The *Left to apply* amount shows how much we have available to allocate against rent charges.

Enter the amount received here

Entering a Tenant Receipt

Allocate against transactions to be paid using this column

We now need to tell the program which items are being paid by this amount by allocating the amount against them. We do this by entering the amount in the cell in the *Allocate* column.

You can either type in the amount to be allocated, in the Allocate column, or use the [Pay this] button. As each amount is allocated the *Left to apply* amount will decrease.

Continue in this way for each charge being paid by this receipt. This process of allocating is important as it marks the amount received with the property code.

Click on [Post] to save the tenant receipt. In the "Transaction details" window that appears, you can edit the default transaction details if you wish.

You can print a Proof of Payment for the receipt, to give to the tenant, if required.

The window will then clear ready for you to enter the next tenant receipt on this date.

Each receipt you post will appear on the tenant's ledger.

Further Reading

For details of how to use the other features in the software, please consult the User Guide or Help file.

To open the Help file, select "Contents" from the Help menu or press function key <F1> on your keyboard.

Several screens in the software also provide context sensitive help.

 Wherever you see a button with a question mark on it, you can click on that button to be taken directly to the relevant page in the help file.