Crombie Wilkinson
SOLICITORS

Before You Sign a Commercial Lease: Your Essential Checklist

Understand the key terms, costs and risks before committing your business.

1. Rent and payments

- How often is rent paid (monthly vs quarterly)?
- When is it due?
- Is interest charged on late payments?

2. Rent increases and additional costs

- How is rent reviewed (fixed increase, market rate, index-linked)?
- Are there service charges? (and can they increase?)
- Are you responsible for repairs or maintenance?

3. Term length and flexibility

- How long is the lease?
- Can you exit early (break clause)?
- What happens if your business needs change?

4. Responsibilities and restrictions

- What are you responsible for fixing or maintaining?
- Are there restrictions on how you use the premises?
- Are you tied to specific conditions in the lease?

Important because restrictive terms can impact business use and operations.

5. Guarantees and liabilities

- Are you personally guaranteeing the lease?
- Could someone else chase you for unpaid rent?
- What happens if you assign the lease?

Potential liability risks can continue if not properly structured.

6. Exit strategy

- What happens if the business struggles?
- Can you surrender the lease?
- Do you need landlord or lender consent?

Missing approvals can invalidate agreements or create serious issues.

"Prevent problems early"
"Avoid unexpected costs"
"Clear, practical advice"

Pause before you sign

Before signing, ask yourself:

- ✓ Do I fully understand the financial commitment?
- ✓ Am I clear on my responsibilities?
- ✓ Do I know what happens if things change?

A commercial lease is a commitment. Getting the right advice before you sign can help you avoid unexpected liabilities later.

Contact a Legal Adviser in our Commercial Property team:

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