

Technical Award in

# Residential Letting and Property Management



MOL Sample Workbook



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QUALIFICATIONS



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SAMPLE WORKBOOK**

This sample workbook is a guide to the learning materials for the Technical Award in Residential Property Letting and Management, written and provided by MOL on behalf of the National Federation of Property Professionals Awarding Body (NFOPP AB).

The full range of property qualifications available from MOL/NFOPP AB is as follows.

### **Award in Introduction to Residential Property Management Practice (Level 2)**

This is an introductory qualification offering basic knowledge in the most important subject areas related to residential letting and property management.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Residential Letting and Property Management (Level 3)
- Unit 2 Customer Service within the Property Sector
- Unit 3 Introduction to Residential Property Letting Practice
- Unit 4 Introduction to Residential Property Management Practice

### **Award in Introduction to the Sale of Residential Property (Level 2)**

This is an introductory qualification offering basic knowledge in the most important subject areas related to the sale of residential property.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to the Sale of Residential Property
- Unit 2 Customer Service within the Property Sector
- Unit 3 Regulations Relating to the Sale of Residential Property
- Unit 4 Practice Relating to the Sale of Residential Property

### **Technical Award in Residential Letting and Property Management (Level 3)**

This programme is designed as an introduction to the knowledge and understanding required by those working, or aspiring to work, in residential letting agency.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Residential Letting and Property Management
- Unit 2 Legal Aspects of Letting and Management
- Unit 3 Residential Property Letting Practice
- Unit 4 Residential Property Management Practice

### **Technical Award in the Sale of Residential Property (Level 3)**

The Technical Award in the Sale of Residential Property is designed as an introduction to the knowledge and understanding required by those working, or aspiring to work, in residential estate agency or new homes sales.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to the Sale of Residential Property
- Unit 2 Law Relating to Residential Property Sales
- Unit 3 Practice Relating to Residential Property Sales
- Unit 4 Property Appraisal and Basic Building Construction/Defects

### **Technical Award in Commercial Property Agency (Level 3)**

The Technical Award in Commercial Property Agency is designed as an introduction to the knowledge and understanding required by those working, or aspiring to work, in commercial property agency.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Commercial Property Agency
- Unit 2 Practice and Law Relating to Commercial Property Agency
- Unit 3 Law Relating to Commercial Property
- Unit 4 Commercial Property and Business Appraisal and Basic Building Construction

### **Technical Award in Real Property Auctioneering (Level 3)**

This programme is designed as an introduction to the knowledge and understanding required by those working, or aspiring to work, in estate agency where auctioneering is an important part of the work of the agency.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Real Property Auctioneering
- Unit 2 Law Relating to Real Property Auctions
- Unit 3 Real Property Auctioneering Practice and Procedures
- Unit 4 Property Appraisal and the Auction Process

### **Technical Award in Chattels Auctioneering (Level 3)**

This programme is designed as an introduction to the knowledge and understanding required by those working, or aspiring to work, in chattels auctioneering.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Chattels Auctioneering
- Unit 2 Law Relating to Chattels Auctions
- Unit 3 Chattels Auctioneering Practice and Procedures
- Unit 4 Chattels Appraisal and the Auctioneer's Duties and Liabilities

### **Technical Award in Residential Inventory Management and Practice (Level 3)**

This programme covers the law and practice of letting agency and inventory management in England and Wales.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Residential Inventory Management and Practice
- Unit 2 Legal Aspects of Residential Inventory Management and Practice
- Unit 3 Residential Letting and Property Management
- Unit 4 Residential Inventory Management and Practice

### **Technical Award in Residential Tenancy Deposit Protection and Management (Level 3)**

This programme is designed as an introduction to the knowledge and understanding required by those working, or aspiring to work, in residential letting agency and who will be dealing with tenancy deposits.

- Unit 1 General Law, Health, Safety and Security in Relation to Residential Letting and Property Management
- Unit 2 Legal Aspects of Letting and Management
- Unit 3 Handling, Protecting and Processing Residential Tenancy Deposits
- Unit 4 Returning Residential Tenancy Deposits and Dispute Resolution Procedures

### **Certificate (Level 4)**

The Level 4 Certificate programmes are designed for more experienced people working within agency such as senior negotiators, managers and principles. The full certificate has 8 units, but the first two are carried forward from the relevant technical award. There are four additional technical units specific to each pathway, and two common office/people management units.

The common management units are

- Unit 7 Introduction to Office Management
- Unit 8 Advanced Office Management (Level 5)

The two pathways and their technical units are as follows.

#### **Certificate in Residential Letting and Property Management**

- Unit 3 Legal Aspects Relating to Residential Letting and Management
- Unit 4 Practice Relating to Residential Property Management
- Unit 5 Appraisal and Residential Property Letting Practice
- Unit 6 Applied Law Relating to Residential Letting and Management (Level 5)

#### **Certificate in the Sale of Residential Property**

- Unit 3 Legal Aspects Relating to Residential Estate Agency
- Unit 4 Practice Relating to Residential Estate Agency
- Unit 5 Market Appraisal, Value and Inspection Relating to Residential Estate Agency
- Unit 6 Building Design and Defects for Residential Estate Agency (Level 5)



Technical Award in

**RESIDENTIAL LETTING AND  
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

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**Unit 1**

**General Law, Health, Safety and Security in  
Relation to Residential Letting and Property  
Management**

Produced for



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## INTRODUCTION

This unit acts as a basic introduction to the Technical Award in Residential Letting and Property Management. It covers issues of health and safety and security issues, both within your workplace and also outside your office, for example when you are showing potential tenants around properties.

It then moves on to consider some basic aspects of general law which impact on the provision of letting agency services, and finishes with some basic facts about land and property law which are useful within a letting agency context.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Having completed this unit you will know and understand

- basic concepts about the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and other security issues
- how this relates to yourself and others, both within the workplace and outside when dealing with rental appraisals and viewings
- safety and security issues relating to properties, including dealing with keys and property information
- basic facts about the legal system in England and Wales
- basic land and property law
- basic contract law dealing with offer, acceptance and consideration
- basic facts about the law of torts, particularly concerning negligence, occupiers' liability and vicarious liability
- the law on discrimination covering sexual, racial, disability and age discrimination
- how the Data Protection Act 1998 relates to your work
- how to comply with the regulations concerning money laundering
- the common law duties of the letting agent and concepts of agent's authority



## SECTION 3

# Basic Land Law

Land law is a wide-ranging subject area. We will be looking at specific aspects of land law and will concentrate on areas that letting agents will come into contact with, if disputes arise between their tenants and neighbours.

The areas you need to understand are

- the legal definition of land
- the meaning of tenure
- the two legal estates in land

You should also have some understanding of legal and equitable interests in land.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Having completed this section you will know and understand how to

- explain the structure and application of land law
- explain the meaning of tenure
- describe legal estates and legal and equitable interests

## 3.1 THE MEANING OF TENURE

The law of tenure deals with the way in which land is held.



### SELF CHECK QUESTION 1

*Write down what you think is meant in law by the word 'land'?*

*Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this section.*

---

The Law of Property Act 1925 gives a definition of 'land' as

*...including...buildings or parts of buildings...and other corporeal hereditaments; also a rent, and other incorporeal hereditaments, and an easement right, privilege, or benefit in, over, or derived from land...*

What this means in plain English is that land involves not just the surface of the earth, but anything which is built on the land, and any right attaching to the land, such as a right of way. It also includes anything below ground level and anything above the ground.

In theory, as figure 3.1 shows, ownership of land in the law of England and Wales involves everything from the centre of the earth to the outer reaches of the atmosphere.

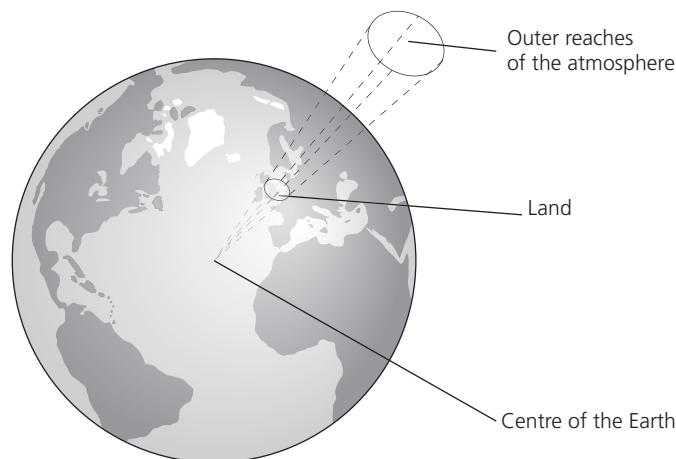


fig 3.1

As already stated, the definition in the Act gives the theory. In practice Parliament has modified this so, for example, minerals below ground such as coal and oil, and gold and silver, belong to the State or the Crown. Aircraft are, further, allowed to fly through the airspace above land.

### 3.2 THE TWO LEGAL ESTATES

Technically all land is held by the Crown. Everyone else enjoys rights of ownership and possession by virtue of the Crown.



#### SELF CHECK QUESTION 2

*Land can be held in two ways. Which two words are used to describe the two legal estates in land?*

*Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this section.*



Since the Law of Property Act 1925 there have been two legal estates which may be held in land

- **freehold** (also known as fee simple absolute in possession)
- **leasehold** (also known as a term of years absolute)

Under the concept of freehold, there is a further way of holding land known as commonhold, brought in by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

## Freehold

At common law, freeholders can in theory do anything they like with their land. In practice this right is limited.



### SELF CHECK QUESTION 3

*Who or what do you think can restrict the freeholder's right to use the land as they wish? Write down any restrictions you can think of.*

*Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this section.*

---

The freehold has no time limit but will go on indefinitely.

## Leasehold

A leasehold is derived from a freehold interest (or another leasehold interest) and has two key elements, which are

- a fixed duration
- exclusive possession

## Duration

The duration of the lease can be for whatever term is agreed between the freeholder and the leaseholder.



#### SELF CHECK QUESTION 4

*You may have come across leases for different lengths of time. Write down the length of the leases you have come across.*

*Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this section.*

---

The term or length of the lease is infinitely flexible and, as stated earlier, can be for any period agreed between the freeholder and the leaseholder. Both short term and long term leases exist. The first group might include Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs). These have a typical minimum length of six months. Long leases on residential property, however, could be placed in the second category, as they might be 99, 125 or 999 years in length. Leases between these time periods exist, such as leases of 5, 10 or 15 years on your business premises.

#### **Exclusive Possession**

The exclusive possession given under the lease allows the leaseholder to exclude all others from the premises, including the freeholder, for the duration of the lease (as long as they comply with the terms of the lease). The lease is a contract (legal agreement) between the freeholder and the leaseholder.

## Head Lease and Sub-Lease

As mentioned earlier, a leasehold is created from an existing freehold interest. It is also possible to create a lease from an existing leasehold interest.

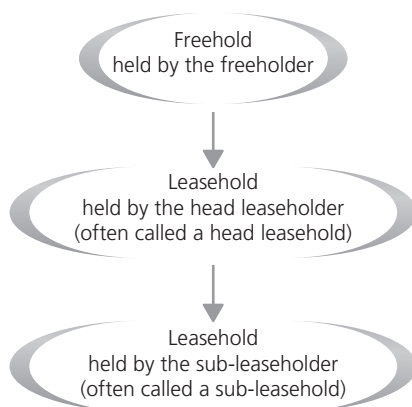


fig 3.2

As you can see from figure 3.2, the original leaseholder would have the head lease, and the newly created lease would be a sub-lease. Any other leases that are created would also become sub-leases.

Two important elements here are that

- each newly created sub-lease will be for a shorter period than the previous one
- during the period of tenancy, the tenant occupier will have the same powers as an owner would, subject to the terms of the lease, ie during the lease term they have exclusive possession and can exclude all others. So, in the case of a sub-leaseholder they can exclude the head leaseholder and the freeholder

## Commonhold

This is a system which allows a number of units to share a **freehold**, for example a development of flats or a mixed development of commercial and residential uses. Until recently such developments needed to have leasehold units. Each unit holder has exclusive possession of their unit which is held freehold, and also shares the freehold of all common areas.

## 3.3 LEGAL AND EQUITABLE INTERESTS IN LAND

It is possible, while owning a property, that others may have certain rights over it. These are called 'interests', and can be legal or equitable (as derived from common law or equity).

Legal interests are listed in the Law of Property Act 1925, but we are particularly interested in one of the legal interests listed – **easements**.

Of the equitable interests that can exist, we are particularly interested in **freehold covenants**.

These two are of particular importance to letting agents, should disputes arise between tenants and neighbours.

## Easements

An easement is a right over land. The person who has the benefit of the easement may have the right to use the land of another, which as a consequence may restrict the use of the land of another in some way.

Common examples of easements include

- rights of way – ie a right to have access over adjacent land
- rights of light – ie a right that a property will not obstruct the natural passage of light to a neighbour's home
- rights of support – ie the right, for example, for a first floor flat to expect support from the flat beneath
- rights of water – ie the right for a property to have access to a water supply running through neighbouring land or extract modest amounts of water from a stream

There must be two pieces of land in different ownership for an easement to arise. They are

- land which enjoys the right over another person's land (this is called the **dominant tenement**)
- land over which the easement is exercised (this is called the **servient tenement**)

Easements can be expressly granted as easements, in which case the written document will refer to an easement. Alternatively an easement may arise because someone has used the land of another

- uninterrupted
- without force
- without secrecy
- without permission

for an extended period of time. As a minimum this needs to be 20 years, but it will need to be 40 years if it is claimed an oral permission was given. (Note that if, at any time, written permission was ever given to occupy land or use it in some way, no right to an easement can be established, unless the written document refers to the permission being an easement.)

Figure 3.3 should help to explain what an easement is.

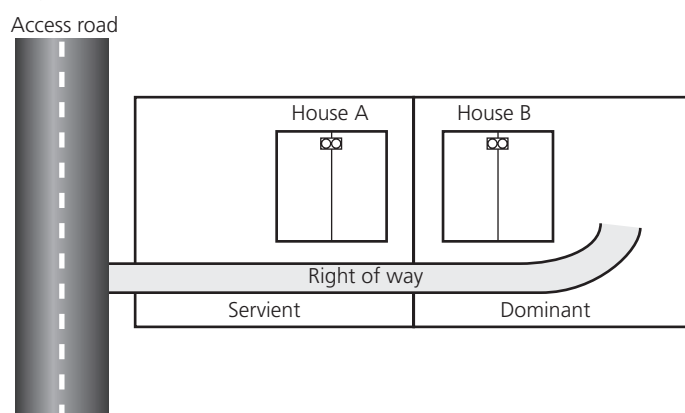


fig 3.3

House B benefits from an easement, in this case a right of way from the access road across the land of house A. So house B enjoys the benefit of the easement and is the dominant tenement, whereas house A suffers the burden of the easement and is the servient tenement.



### SELF CHECK QUESTION 5

Study figure 3.4. Which section of the drain needs an easement? Explain why.

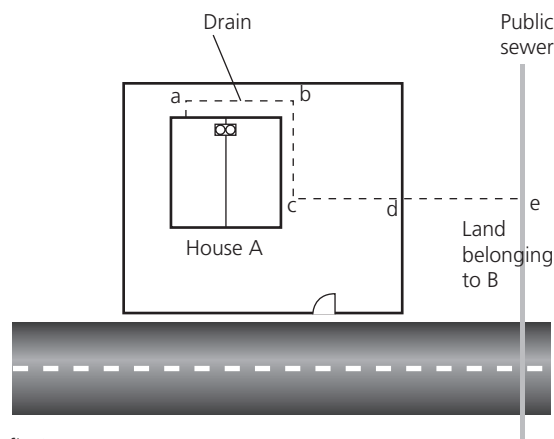


fig 3.4

Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this section.

Because easements are legal interests attaching to the land, they are passed from one owner to the other. The existence of an easement may have valuation consequences for the land benefitted or affected by the easement. For example, the existence of a right of way across the garden of a house may be undesirable and reduce the value of the property suffering the burden of the right of way, but may enhance the value of the property benefitting from the right of way.

### Freehold Covenants

We said earlier that an easement is a legal interest and gives the owner of the land benefiting from the easement the right to **do something** on or over the land of someone else.

A freehold covenant is an equitable interest because, unlike an easement, it owes its origins to equity. A freehold covenant can be restrictive (or negative) or can be positive. It allows someone with the benefit of the freehold which is restrictive to **stop** the owner of other land from using that land in some way.



### SELF CHECK QUESTION 6

*Can you think of a common freehold restrictive covenant that could apply to residential property?*

*Compare your answer with the following text.*

A common freehold restrictive covenant in residential property is a restriction not allowing business use of the property. Another would be not to build on land but to keep it open and use only as, say, a garden.

You may also find freehold positive covenants which commit the owner of land to actually do something, such as a positive covenant to fence boundaries. Positive covenants do not automatically pass with the land when a property is sold. However, restrictive covenants will pass from one owner to the next in the same way that easements pass from one owner to the next.

Freehold covenants may have a bearing on market appraisals undertaken by estate agents. For example they could be asked to appraise a house with a large plot of land and the existing building to one side of the land, as shown in figure 3.5.

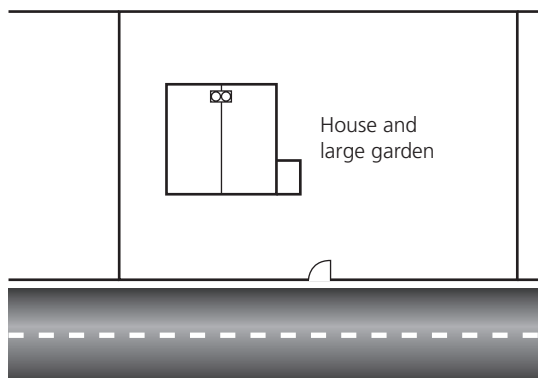


fig 3.5

The agent might well think there was a possibility of developing the side garden by building another property. This is likely to increase the value of the house. However, if there was a freehold restrictive covenant saying the plot could only have one detached dwelling you would not be able to build another property and the value would not increase.

For letting agents, a freehold covenant may become important when dealing with a potential tenant who wishes to run a business from home. A freehold restrictive covenant may stop the tenant from doing this.



### SELF CHECK QUESTION 7

Which of the following are **restrictive** covenants and which are not?

- a) A covenant not to park a caravan or truck/lorry on the site of the property
- b) A covenant to paint the house every two years
- c) A covenant not to build more than one house on a plot
- d) A covenant not to build more than ten houses on a development site
- e) A covenant to build a boundary wall and then maintain it
- f) A covenant not to build higher than eight metres above ground level

Compare your answers with those given at the end of this section.

---



## **Summary**

Having completed this section you should now know that

- tenure is the way land is held legally
- land includes buildings and anything in, on or over the land
- certain things are excluded, such as some minerals including coal, oil, gold and silver
- land can be held as freehold or leasehold estates
- leasehold can be for any term or length of lease by agreement
- legal and equitable interests can be held in addition to the two legal estates
- an easement is a legal interest, eg right of way, right of light or right of support, which is passed on when land/property is sold
- a freehold restrictive covenant is an equitable interest stopping someone from doing something to land or property, and is passed on when land/property is sold
- easements and freehold covenants may affect value

If you are unsure about any of these areas, go back and re-read the relevant part(s) of the text.





## REVIEW EXERCISE

Look at figure 3.6 then answer the following questions. The access road is used by cottage A but belongs to the owner of Dingle Hall. The septic tank is owned by cottage A but is located on the land of farmer B. Cottage A takes water from the spring and along the pipeline to the house. Cottage owner A wants to build a double garage at location X next to the greenhouse of house C. The greenhouse has been there for around 60 years.

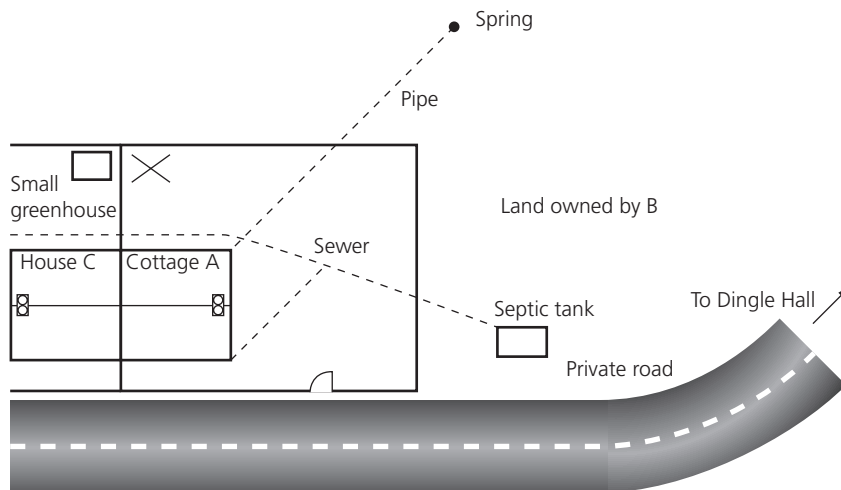


fig 3.6

- 1 Mark on figure 3.6 all the easements likely to be enjoyed by cottage A.
- 2 If A wants to build the garage, could C object? If C could object, what reason could C give for objecting?

Suggested answers to the review exercises are given at the end of this unit.



## ANSWERS TO SELF CHECKS

### QUESTION 1

You might have said the surface of the earth where plants, trees and grass grow. You might also have said the buildings built on the land. Both of these are correct, but in law 'land' is even more than this.

### QUESTION 2

You should have said freehold and leasehold. These are the two common names for the legal estates that exist.

### QUESTION 3

Parliament has restricted a freeholder's right to do what they want with their land. Parliament, through various Acts, has imposed legal controls on the use of land. These include such things as planning controls and laws of nuisance. For example, making too much noise at a property is a nuisance. Neighbours could complain and action could be taken to reduce or eliminate noise levels.

### QUESTION 4

You may have said almost anything, but the common leasehold terms (or lengths) are

- weekly (eg council tenants)
- monthly (eg residential tenants of private landlords or housing associations)
- six months (eg the typical minimum length for an AST of privately rented residential accommodation)
- one year (eg many agricultural tenancies)
- 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 years (eg many leases on commercial premises such as your own offices)
- 99 or 125 years (eg common on long leases of residential property)
- 999 years (eg common on long leases of residential property in the north west and south of England)

### QUESTION 5

House A will need an easement for section d-e of the drain as it then passes through the land belonging to B to connect to the public sewer.

### QUESTION 7

a) c) d) and f) are restrictive freehold covenants preventing the owners of land or property from doing something.

b) and e) are positive freehold covenants requiring the owner of land or property to do something.

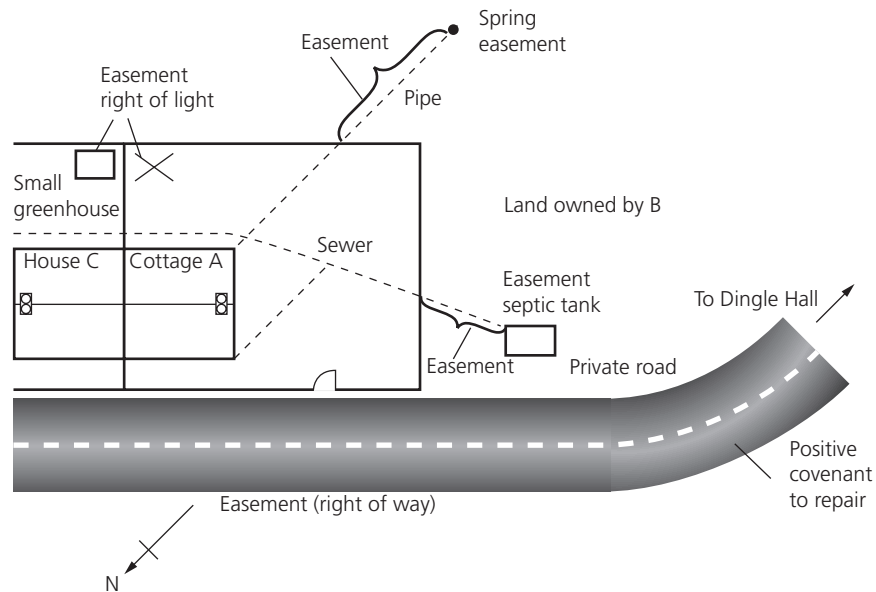
# Suggested Answer



## TO REVIEW EXERCISE

### SECTION 3

- 1 You should have marked the easements attached to the pipeline, spring, drain, septic tank and access road, as shown in figure 9.1.



- 2 C could object. They would most likely claim an easement, a right of light for the greenhouse. The garage would be on the south side of the greenhouse and block the sunlight.

# Glossary

**civil law**

law covering non-criminal activities between individuals and organisations

**common law**

law developed from custom, ie all law not enacted by Parliament

**consideration**

the legal term for the element of exchange (one of the essential elements of a legally binding contract). The consideration does not necessarily have to be money – it can be goods or property, for example. Also, the consideration does not have to reflect fair value

**contract**

an agreement recognised in law that can be enforced by the courts. It may be written, spoken, a mixture of written and spoken, or implied by the conduct of the parties involved. Contracts for the sale of property must be in writing and signed by all parties. They set out the agreed terms by which both the seller and the buyer are committed to proceed to completion

**corporeal hereditaments**

an old term meaning visible, tangible property, eg buildings, houses, land and goods

**covenant**

a promise or obligation, usually contained in a deed, made by one party to another (see also **positive covenant** and **freehold covenant**)

**criminal law**

law covering activities thought to be detrimental to the State or society

**damages**

a remedy under common law. The party awarded damages will be put in the same position as if the contract had been performed. Damages claimed have to be reasonable

**direct discrimination**

treating an individual or one group of people less favourably than another individual or group

**DSE**

display screen equipment (ie computer screens)

**easement**

a right which someone may enjoy over another's property, eg a right of way or right of light, or drainage rights. They are often expressly created for particular purposes, such as having access to a neighbour's land in order to carry out repairs to your own property, but may be created after long usage. Easements are passed on when land is sold

**equitable**

a matter derived from equity

**equity**

a system that fills the gaps in common law on the basis of what is fair. It has two main remedies – specific performance and injunctions

**freehold**

the highest legal estate that can be held in land, where the owner has permanent and absolute tenure and can dispose of the land as they wish. The owner can do anything they wish to with their land, subject only to the rights of others, such as leaseholders' interests, rights of neighbours and statutory obligations, eg complying with Town and Country Planning Acts (see also **leasehold**)

**freehold covenant**

a promise or an obligation restricting the use of land or property, which is binding on subsequent owners, eg not using residential property for business use (see also **positive covenant**)

**HASAWA**

the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

**incorporeal hereditaments**

an old term for rights that exist over land, eg easements (rights of way, etc) and sporting rights, eg the right to hunt, shoot and fish

**indirect discrimination**

where one group of people, or an individual, cannot comply with a certain condition which is applied to all groups, or where only very few of that group, or very few individuals, can comply because of race or sex

**injunction**

a remedy under equity, where the court orders a party **not** to do a certain act

**invitation to treat**

an invitation by a landlord to a tenant to negotiate over the rental price of a property

**judicial precedent**

a method of deciding a new case by referring back to decisions in old cases

**leasehold**

where a tenant is granted exclusive possession of land by the freeholder for a fixed period. One of the two legal estates that can be held in land (see also **freehold**)

**legal**

a matter based in law

**legislation**

laws contained in Acts of Parliament. Also known as **statute law**

**negligence**

a common tort, where an act breaches a duty of care and this causes damage, harm or loss

## Reading List

For those of you who want to study further any sections of this unit, the following reading and reference list is suggested. This is not an exhaustive list and you will find other books, articles and references on the same topics.

When looking through books, articles and references, and when searching on the web, take care to check the date the material was created. This is particularly important for legal references where the law may change from time to time, but also applies to other areas.

If you are working in letting agency, you should always be aware of changes that take place in law or practice as these will affect the way in which you do your job. If you or your company belong to one of the professional bodies, they will usually keep their members up-to-date with changes that will affect their working practices.

*Dictionary of Property and Construction Law*, Jack Rostron (ed), Spon, London 2001

*Landlord and Tenant Law*, Margaret Wilkie, Peter Luxton, Jill Morgan and Godfrey Cole, Palgrave Macmillan 2006

*Law of Estate Agency and Auctions*, John R Murdoch, Estates Gazette, London 2003

*RICS UK Residential Property Standards*, RICS, Coventry 2011 (constantly updated)

You may also find it useful to check the following publications regularly for relevant articles on letting and management

*Estate Agency News*

*Estates Gazette*

*Negotiator Magazine* (now part of Property Drum)

*Property Professional*

### Useful Websites

[arla.co.uk](http://arla.co.uk) – Association of Residential Letting Agents

[cskills.org](http://cskills.org) – Construction Industry Training Board website

[equalityhumanrights.com](http://equalityhumanrights.com) – Commission for Equality and Human Rights

[hmrc.gov.uk](http://hmrc.gov.uk) – HM Revenue and Customs (includes information on stamp duty land tax)

[hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk) – Health and Safety Executive

[ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk) – Information Commissioner's Office

[jmlsg.org.uk](http://jmlsg.org.uk) – Joint Money Laundering Steering Group

[legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk) – government legislation website

[naea.co.uk](http://naea.co.uk) – National Association of Estate Agents

[nca.gov.uk](http://nca.gov.uk) – National Crime Agency

[rics.org](http://rics.org) – Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors



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