



In-depth Guide to Property Management Services

Our Services Include:

1. Visiting you at your property, and providing a rental valuation and any professional advice on letting your property.
2. Advising you on compliance with the various safety regulations.
3. Locating suitable tenants. Your property will be advertised if necessary, however we have excellent contacts with various company and other establishment personnel departments, and furthermore usually have tenants waiting.
4. Accompanying tenant applicants to view the property.
5. Obtaining and evaluating references and credit checks.
6. Preparing a suitable tenancy agreement and arranging signature by the tenant.
7. Collecting and holding a deposit (bond) from the tenant in accordance with Tenancy Deposit Scheme Rules.
8. Preparing a detailed inventory and schedule of condition. Contact us regarding this specialist service
9. Checking the tenant into the property and reviewing the inventory.
10. Supervising the transfer of gas, electricity and council tax accounts into the tenant's name.
11. Receiving rental payments monthly in advance, and paying you promptly, together with a detailed statement from our computerized management systems.
12. Conducting quarterly property inspections and reporting any problems to you.
13. Arranging any necessary repairs or maintenance, first liaising with you in the case of larger works.
14. Keeping in touch with the tenant on a routine basis, and arranging renewals of the agreement as required.

15. Checking tenants out as required, reletting and continuing the process with the minimum of vacant periods to ensure that you receive the optimum return from your property.

We maintain a flexible attitude, and are generally able to adapt our service to meet our client's individual circumstances and needs, for example by providing a part only service, or alternatively by taking on additional tasks and duties.

Guide for Landlords

Before a property can be let, there are several matters which the owner will need to deal with to ensure that the tenancy runs smoothly, and that he/she complies with the law. For If you require further advice or assistance with any matter, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Mortgage

If your property is mortgaged, you should obtain your mortgagee's written consent to the letting. They may require additional clauses in the tenancy agreement of which you must inform us.

Leaseholds

If you are a leaseholder, you should check the terms of your lease, and obtain the necessary written consent before letting.

Insurance

You should ensure that you are suitably covered for letting under both your buildings and contents insurance. Failure to inform your insurers may invalidate your policies. We can advise on Landlord's Legal Protection, and Landlord's Contents insurance if required.

Bills and regular outgoings

We recommend that you arrange for regular outgoings e.g. mortgage, service charges, maintenance contracts etc. to be paid by standing order or direct debit. However, where we are managing the property, by prior written agreement we may make payment of certain bills on your behalf, provided such bills are received in your name at our office, and that sufficient funds are held to your credit.

Council tax

Council tax is the responsibility of the occupier. You should inform your local collection office that you are leaving the property. During vacant periods the charge reverts to the owner. When unoccupied but furnished, the charge is 50% of the normal rate. When unoccupied and 'substantially' unfurnished, there is no charge for the first six months, and thereafter a charge of 50% of the normal rate.

The inventory

It is most important that an inventory of contents and schedule of condition be prepared, in order to avoid misunderstanding or dispute at the end of a tenancy. Without such safeguards, it will be impossible for the landlord to prove any loss,

damage, or significant deterioration of the property or contents. In order to provide a complete service to the landlord, we will if requested arrange for a member of staff to prepare an inventory and schedule of condition, at a cost to be quoted.

Income tax

When the landlord is resident in the UK, it is entirely his responsibility to inform the Inland Revenue of rental income received, and to pay any tax due. However, where the landlord is resident outside the UK during a tenancy, under new rules effective from 6 April 1996, unless an exemption certificate is held, we as landlord's agents are obliged to retain and forward to the Inland Revenue on a quarterly basis, an amount equal to the basic rate of income tax from rental received, less certain expenses. An application form for exemption from such deductions is available from this Agency, and further information may be obtained from the Inland Revenue.

Important safety regulations

The following safety requirements are the responsibility of the owner (the landlord), and where we are to manage the property, they are also ours as agents. Therefore to protect all interests we ensure full compliance with the appropriate regulations, at the owner's expense.

Gas Appliances & Equipment

Annual safety check: Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 all gas appliances and flues in rented accommodation must be checked for safety within 12 months of being installed, and thereafter at least every 12 months by a competent engineer (e.g. a CORGI registered gas installer). Maintenance: There is a duty to ensure that all gas appliances, flues and associated pipe work are maintained in a safe condition at all times. Records: Full records must be kept for at least 2 years of the inspections of each appliance and flue, of any defects found and of any remedial action taken. Copies to tenants: A copy of the safety certificate issued by the engineer must be given to each new tenant before their tenancy commences, or to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being carried out.

Electrical Appliances & Equipment

There are several regulations relating to electrical installations, equipment and appliance safety, and these affect landlords and their agents in that they are 'supplying in the course of business'. They include the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, the Plugs and Sockets Regulations 1994, the 2005 Building Regulation - 'Part P', and British Standard BS1363 relating to plugs and sockets. Although with tenanted property there is currently no specific legal requirement for a qualified electrician to carry out an inspection and issue a safety certificate (as exists in the case of gas appliances), it is now widely accepted in the letting industry that the only safe way to ensure safety, and to avoid the risk of being accused of neglecting your 'duty of care', or even of manslaughter is to arrange such an inspection and certificate.

Furniture & Furnishings

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989, 1993 & 1996) provide that specified items supplied in the course of letting property must meet minimum fire resistant standards. The regulations apply to all upholstered furniture, and beds, headboards and mattresses, sofa-beds, futons and other convertibles, nursery furniture, garden furniture suitable for use in a dwelling, scatter cushions, pillows, and non-original covers for furniture. They do not apply to antique furniture or furniture made before 1950, bed clothes including duvets, loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains, carpets or sleeping bags. Therefore all relevant items as above must be checked for compliance, and non-compliant items removed from the premises. In practice, most (but not all) items which comply must have a suitable permanent label attached. Items purchased since 1.3.90 from a reputable supplier are also likely to comply.

Preparing the property for letting

We have found from experience that a good relationship with tenants is the key to a smooth-running tenancy. As Property Managers the relationship part is our job, but it is important that the tenants should feel comfortable in their home. Our policy of offering a service of quality and care therefore extends to our tenant applicants too, and we are pleased to recommend properties to rent which conform to certain minimum standards. Quality properties attract quality tenants.

General condition

Electrical, gas, plumbing, waste, central heating and hot water systems must be safe, sound and in good working order. Repairs and maintenance are at the landlord's expense unless misuse can be established.

Appliances

Similarly, appliances such as washing machine, fridge freezer, cooker, dishwasher etc. should be in usable condition. Repairs and maintenance are at the landlord's expense unless misuse can be established.

Decorations

Interior decorations should be in good condition, and preferably plain, light and neutral.

Personal items, ornaments etc

Personal possessions, ornaments, pictures, books etc. should be removed from the premises, especially those of real or sentimental value. Some items may be boxed, sealed and stored in the loft at the owner's risk. All cupboards and shelf space should be left clear for the tenant's own use.

Gardens

Gardens should be left neat, tidy and rubbish-free, with any lawns cut. Tenants are required to maintain the gardens to a reasonable standard.

Cleaning

At the commencement of a tenancy the property must be in a clean and tidy condition, and at the end of each tenancy it is the tenant's responsibility to leave the property in the same condition. Where they fail to do so, cleaning will be arranged at their expense.

Mail forwarding

We recommend that you make use of the Post Office redirection service. Application forms are available at their counters, and the cost is minimal. It is not the tenant's responsibility to forward mail, and from experience we understand why tenants get annoyed when they receive mail that is not for them.

Information for the tenant

It is helpful if you leave information for the tenant on operating the central heating and hot water system, washing machine and alarm system, and the day refuse is collected etc. – we recommend that you keep the originals, and place photocopies in a nice folder for the tenant's reference during their stay in the property.

Keys

You should provide one full set of keys for the property. When we are managing the property, two full sets will be required.