



LANDLORDS GUIDE

RENTING A PROPERTY HAS MANY LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS, BUT, WITH RENTAL PRICES ALSO GROWING STEADILY IT CAN BE A GOOD SOURCE OF INCOME AND A WAY TO PROTECT YOUR ASSETS

GETTING STARTED

Firstly, consider your home's state of repair as it may need some renovation work to bring it up to standard as well as acquiring the appropriate certifications such as Gas, Electrical and Energy certificates. Also determine if there's any rental demand in your area so have a look at rental listings on websites such as Rightmove and Zoopla to get an idea of local demand. We can also help you with this by providing a free, no obligation quote. Consider questions such as will your rental be furnished or unfurnished, will you allow pets property, and will you let your tenants decorate should they wish.

UNDERSTANDING THE COSTS

Letting a property can potentially yield two potential income streams, rent and the capital growth of the property value going up, but it is not without its costs

Repairs - If something goes wrong or if something breaks in the property, in many cases it's up to you to pay for the repairs. This could be costs for a plumber to fix a leak, or to replace a broken appliance. Remember to keep all receipts for repairs you've paid for, as these could be tax deductible.

Mortgage repayments - If you don't own your property outright, you'll still need to pay your mortgage, and changes in legislation mean you can no longer offset these costs for tax purposes.

Insurance - While tenants usually take on the responsibility for most monthly bills like gas and electricity, you'll still be responsible for sorting out (and paying for) buildings insurance. You also may want to consider rental insurance in case a tenant struggles to meet their financial commitments to you.

Furniture - If you've decided to rent out your property as 'furnished', you need to ensure your sofas are fire resistant (they should have the fire safety label attached). You'll also need to budget to replace furniture that becomes damaged or unsafe.

Estate Agency fees - These are usually a percentage of the rental income, and the amount depends on the service you require. Please see below for our services and costs that can be adapted to your needs. If you decide not to use an agent, we advise instructing a solicitor to review your tenancy contract, and joining a landlord association to advise you on the most up to date legislation

Certification - As a landlord you will require an Energy Performance Certificate, Gas Safety Inspection and Certificate, and an Electrical assessment and report.

DO YOU NEED AN AGENT

Using an agency may be an expense, but they can manage a lot on your behalf, which may be beneficial in the long run. The charges you are offered may range dramatically, so make sure you know exactly what services you are receiving for their commission. For example, many online agents may advertise your property for you but expect you to do the viewings. It is also important to understand their accreditation to professional bodies and which legal aspects they will handle on your behalf.

Most traditional agents will offer either a tenant find service (they find the applicants and you do the rest), a rent collection service (they manage the tenants and collect rent on your behalf) or a fully managed service (they manage every aspect of the property, including the tenant and property maintenance). At Match we offer all three of these services but are also prepared to be flexible with our package's dependent on your needs and are fully transparent with our fees.

YOUR OBLIGATIONS

There are many legal responsibilities you must fulfil as a landlord, including

Meeting Safety Standards – smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, gas safety inspections, portable appliance testing, fire standards, and Legionella tests.

Energy Performance Certificate – Every tenanted property requires an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) unless there is a registered exemption. EPCs must be rated E or above

Right to Rent – The law requires all landlords in England to carry out Right to Rent checks for new tenancy agreements to determine whether occupiers have the right to live in the UK legally. Penalties of unlimited fines and up to 5 years in prison can be imposed for failure to comply with the requirements of the Immigration Act.

Information for your tenant – Your tenant must be provided with the landlord's full name and address, or details of their letting agent. Your tenant must also receive a copy of the Government's How to Rent guide which gives practical advice about what to do before and during a let.

Protecting a tenant's deposit – Most tenancies are assured shorthold tenancies (AST) and the tenancy deposit must be lodged with a UK government-approved deposit protection scheme. A landlord of an AST who doesn't protect the deposit can be fined and it can make it much more difficult to end the tenancy. Deposits must be returned in full at the end of the tenancy, unless there is a dispute about damage caused to the property or unpaid rent.

Repairs – Landlords are responsible for most repairs. This means that any problems with the roof, chimneys, walls, guttering and drains are the responsibility of the landlord. These could include a cracked window, a faulty boiler, leaks amongst others.

HMOs (Houses of Multiple occupants) – When a house is let to sharing occupants who are not a family unit, landlords must ensure that the property complies with rules around HMOs, as well as potentially paying a license fee to the local council. Match a Property are fully versed in HMOs and Ealing and Brent Council's different obligations.