



Factsheet 1

Letting your house or flat—top tips if you are thinking of letting your property

Being a landlord is a huge responsibility and getting expert advice will help you ensure you are meeting all your responsibilities.

The following information provides some useful tips on becoming a landlord. It provides a snapshot of some of the things you need to consider when letting a property.

Tenancy Agreement

Once you take rent in exchange for providing accommodation, this is a tenancy agreement. It is not a legal requirement to have a written tenancy agreement, however having a signed tenancy agreement will make it easier to deal with any disputes, should they arise. Assured shorthold tenancies are the most common type. You can get tenancy agreements from most stationary suppliers.

Check your mortgage agreement

It is essential that you tell your mortgage company if you decide to let your property. Mortgage companies often need to give consent so if you haven't informed them you could be in breach of your agreement. It may also be worth looking around for specific buy-to-let mortgages.

Deposits

Any deposits you take from a tenant must be protected through one of the three government approved tenancy deposit schemes:

My deposits

www.mydeposits.co.uk

The deposit protection service

www.depositprotection.com

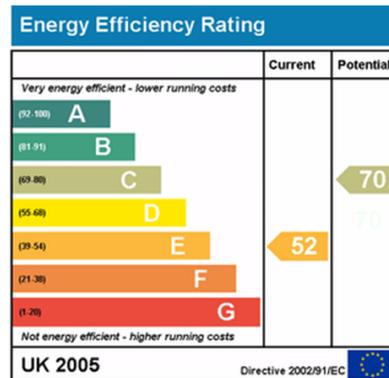
The dispute service

www.thedisputeservice.co.uk

The implications if you don't can result in compensation having to be paid to tenants, sometimes 3 times the value of the deposit.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

You are legally required to get an energy performance certificate (EPC) and after 1st April 2018, any new tenancy cannot be let if an EPC is below band E. A copy of the certificate should be given to the tenants when they take up their tenancy. EPCs usually cost about £100, but can be cheaper.



Gas and Electrical Safety

All gas appliances must be checked annually by a registered gas engineer. You must give your tenants a copy of the landlord gas safety certificate before they move into the property and each annual certificate throughout their tenancy. From 1st April 2009, all gas engineers must be registered with the Gas Safe Register (www.gassaferegister.co.uk).

You must ensure that the electrical installation and any electrical appliances you provide are safe, to reduce the risk of electrocution or fire. Electrical installations should be inspected and tested at least every five years and appliances more frequently dependant on their type. For details on how to find and electrician visit: www.esc.org.uk.





Room-sealed appliances

A gas fire, other gas space heater or a gas water heater of 14 kilowatt heat output or less in a room used or intended to be used as sleeping accommodation must either be:

- A room-sealed appliance or:
- It must incorporate a safety control designed to shut down the appliance before there is build-up of a dangerous quantity of the products of combustion in the room concerned.

Property Condition and Safety

The property must be in good repair, well-maintained, and capable of being effectively heated. It is essential to deal with any safety hazards promptly. You can find more information at www.gov.uk.

From the 1st October 2015 regulations require smoke alarms to be installed in rented residential accommodation and carbon monoxide alarms in rooms with a solid fuel appliance. You must ensure that there is a safe means of escape from the property in the event of a fire and that a suitable fire alarm system has been fitted. To get further information, please contact the Council. LACORS national guidance on fire safety in residential accommodation can also be downloaded free of charge at www.gov.uk.

Different ways to let your house or flat

There are various options for letting your property:

Private renting- you as self managing landlord

This option is for landlords who are confident that they know their responsibilities and best practice in managing properties. This option saves you the cost of an agent, but can require a considerable investment in time. If problems arise, you may require advice from a professional such as a lawyer or accountant, which may come at a cost. Landlord associations are a good source of advice and assistance and can provide most of the information that a self-managing landlord would require.

Renting through a lettings/management agent

If you want to let your property but don't have the time to do it yourself and would like someone else to deal with the details of letting and managing the property, then you will want a reliable agent.

Organisations such as the Association of Residential Letting Agents www.arla.co.uk, the National Approved Letting Scheme

www.nalscheme.co.uk and the UK Association of Letting Agents www.ukala.org.uk will help you choose an agent you can depend on.



Deposit Bond Scheme

Stroud District Council run a deposit guarantee scheme which sets out to assist those on Housing Benefit to access good quality affordable housing in the private rented sector. This is a non-cash guarantee made with the landlord instead of the normal cash deposit, equivalent to one months rent. In order to be eligible, the landlord must have a current 'Fit to Rent' award for the property or be willing to obtain one, whereby the Council has certified that it meets certain basic criteria.

Fit to Rent

A free voluntary scheme for landlords which aims to promote the provision of good, quality, private rented accommodation. For more information, please see www.stroud.gov.uk



Useful sources & information

A comprehensive Landlords handbook can be found on the Cotswold District Council website.

National Landlord Association
www.landlords.org.uk

Find out more at www.stroud.gov.uk or contact environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk