

Information for Landlords

About Ellenbrook Estates Ltd

Specialists

We are a local, family-run specialising in Residential Lettings and Property Management.

As specialists, we are fully focused on the priorities and needs of the landlord and, unlike estate agents, our loyalties are not divided by dealing with property sales and mortgages.

We understand that letting your property, especially for the first time, can be a worrying experience and with this in mind our most important consideration is providing you, the landlord, with the best possible service and the right tenant for your property. We never forget that the property is your most important asset and we can confidently assure you that by instructing us to act as your Letting and Management Agents your asset will be in professional and caring hands.

Competitive Rates

Our fees are competitive and may be open to negotiation dependent on the level of service required. We are particularly committed to investment Landlords and savings can be made on the substantial portfolios.

A Personal Service

We pride ourselves in offering a personal and friendly service, whilst at the same time maintaining a high standard of competence and professionalism.

Carefully Selected Quality Tenants

All prospective tenants are thoroughly vetted by telephone before even seeing the property to ensure they are right for the property and vice versa. Once an application is submitted, they will be referenced and credit checked and in some cases, we will also require a guarantor.

Out of Hours Service

For our initial meetings with you we will if necessary be pleased to visit your property outside normal office hours, at a time that is convenient to you, and thus fit in with your busy schedule.

Insurance for Landlords

We offer a range of competitively priced insurance products designed specially for Landlords, providing extra security and peace of mind. These include:

- * RENTAL GUARANTEE COVER
- * LEGAL EXPENSES COVER
- * CONTENTS INSURANCE
- * BUILDINGS INSURANCE
- * EMERGENCY REPAIR SERVICE

Levels of Service offered

A Tailored Service

Outlined below are the two basic elements of our Service. However, 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 occasionally by taking on additional tasks and duties.

Full Management

This is our inclusive Service, which provides for the marketing of the property and carrying out viewings, leading to the introduction and vetting of a prospective tenant. This proving satisfactory, we will then go ahead and prepare the tenancy agreement, and an inventory. The tenant will then be checked in against the inventory.

During the tenancy, we carry out periodic inspection visits. Should these bring to light any maintenance issues, we will (within the confines of our Management Agreement) recommend, oversee and account for any necessary repairs.

Collecting and processing of rental payments is also part of the Service. These will be credited automatically to the landlord's nominated bank account.

Towards the end of the tenancy, we will liaise with the tenant, and renew the tenancy agreement or arrange to check them out as applicable.

This service is suitable for those Landlords who are not residing locally, or would rather not deal with the tenants directly, preferring all aspects to be handled by an agent.

The cost for this service is 50% of the first month's rent plus 10% of the monthly rental income (prices are subject to VAT).

Let Only

Our Let Only Services includes marketing of the property and carrying out viewings, leading to the introduction and vetting of a prospective tenant. This proving satisfactory, we will then go ahead and prepare the tenancy agreement, and if required an inventory.

Following this, the first month's rent and a security deposit will be collected. These will be credited to the landlord less our agreed fee. Protecting the deposit and managing the tenancy, including the maintenance and rent collection, will then be the responsibility of the Landlord.

The cost for this service is 75% of the first month's (price is subject to VAT).

Preparing the Property

We have found that a good relationship with tenants is the key to a smooth-running tenancy. As Property Managers' this relationship is our job. It is important that the tenants should feel comfortable in their current home, and that they are receiving value for their money. It follows therefore that a well-maintained property in a good decorative order will go towards this, whilst also achieving a higher rental figure. Tenants are also more inclined to treat such a property with greater respect.

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

Furnishings

It is recommended that you leave only minimum furnishings, and these should be of reasonable quality. It is preferable that items to be left are in the property during viewings. A list of recommended items is detailed over. If you are still unsure about certain items we will be able to advise.

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, provided they are left the necessary tools. However, few Tenants are experienced gardeners, and if you value your garden, or if it is particularly large, you may wish us to arrange visits by our regular gardener.

Cleaning

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

Keys

You should provide one set of keys for each Tenant. Where we will be managing, we will arrange to have duplicates cut as required.

Suggested contents for furnished lettings

Lounge

Sofa
Coffee table

Dining room

Dining table & chairs

Kitchen

Cooker
Fridge-freezer
Washing machine

Bedrooms

Bed
Wardrobe
Chest of drawers

General

Vacuum cleaner
Dustpan and brush
Lampshades in all rooms
Curtains at all windows
Appropriate floor coverings

Garden

Lawnmower
Gardening tools

General Advice for Landlords

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 Landlords Legal Protection, Rent Guarantee Cover and Landlords Contents and Buildings Insurance if required.

Bills and regular outgoings

We recommend that you arrange for regular outgoings e.g. 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 which will then be shown as a disbursement from the rental income.

Council tax and utility accounts

We will arrange for the transfer of council tax and utility accounts to the tenant. Meter readings will be taken, allowing your closing gas and electricity accounts to be drawn up. All these matters we will handle for you, however British Telecom will require instructions directly from both the landlord and the tenant.

Income tax

When resident in the UK, it is entirely the **landlord's** responsibility to inform the Inland Revenue of rental income received, and to pay any tax due. Where the Landlord is resident outside the UK during a tenancy, under rules effective from 6 April 1996, unless an exemption certificate is held, we as Landlord's Agent 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.

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. We will prepare an inventory **FREE** with every tenancy if we are managing the property.

Important Safety Requirements

The following requirements are the responsibility of the owner (Landlord). Where you have signed our Full Management Agency Agreement, they are also our responsibility. Therefore, where we are managing we will need to ensure compliance.

Health and Safety - Gas

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 (i.e. a Gas Safe registered gas installer).

Maintenance

There is a duty to ensure that all gas appliances, flues and associated pipework 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.

Health and Safety - Electrical

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, and certain other regulations, electrical appliances and equipment provided in tenanted premises must be safe. It is therefore necessary to make a visual check to ensure that all electrical items, plugs and leads appear completely safe and undamaged, and remove or replace any faulty items.

Consumer Protection - Fire

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989 & 1993) provide that specified items supplied in the course of letting property must meet minimum fire resistance standards. The regulations apply to all upholstered furniture, 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, bedcovers including duvets, loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains, carpets or sleeping bags. Items which comply will have a suitable permanent label attached. Non-compliant items must be removed before a tenancy commences.

Smoke Alarms

All properties built since June 1992 must have been fitted with mains powered smoke detector alarms from new. It is a legal obligation to ensure smoke alarms are fitted on every habitable floor of the property

We hope that the general points covered in this guide will be of some assistance to you. If there are any aspects of which you are unsure, please telephone our office. Alternatively, we can visit you at your home to discuss your individual requirements, at your convenience.