



[www.leturway.com](http://www.leturway.com)

# Information for Landlords

## About Ourselves

### **Specialists**

We are a local, independent firm specialising in Residential Lettings, Property Management and Estate Agency Services. As specialists we are fully focused on the priorities and needs of the Landlord.

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.

### **A Personal Service**

We are able to offer a personal and friendly Service, whilst at the same time maintaining a high standard of competence and professionalism.

### **Carefully Selected Quality Tenants**

Drawn from a continually updated register, all prospective Tenants are thoroughly referenced and credit checked. In some cases we will also require a guarantor.

### **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:

- \* Guaranteed Rental Insurance
- \* Legal Expenses Cover
- \* Contents Insurance
- \* Buildings Insurance

### **UK-Wide Network**

In addition to our local Services, we are part of a UK-Wide Network of independent but associated Letting and Managing Agents, thus enabling us to offer an efficient national relocation service, and are often able to assist both individual and corporate clients, from within the UK and abroad.

## 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 if required 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.

### **Letting Only**

Our Letting 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 at a cost.

Following this, the first month's rent will be collected and credited to the Landlord less our agreed fee. Managing the tenancy, including the maintenance, gas & electrical safety checks and rent collection, will then be the responsibility of the Landlord.

Let UrWay will advertise your property on a number of rental portals including , [www.s1homes.com](http://www.s1homes.com) , [www.lettingweb.com](http://www.lettingweb.com), [www.gspc.co.uk](http://www.gspc.co.uk), [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk) and [www.propertyfinder.com](http://www.propertyfinder.com). We also promote the property direct with a sign or poster and this along with our tenant enquiries to our offices means shorter times seeking qualified tenants.

## General Practical and Legal Issues

### **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, but it is important that the Tenants should feel comfortable in their temporary home, and that they are receiving value for their money. It follows therefore that a well presented and 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 Landlords expense unless misuse can be established. Interior decorations should be in good condition and preferably plain, light and neutral.

### **Furnishings**

Your property can be let fully furnished, part furnished or unfurnished. Which of these is appropriate will depend on the type of property and local market conditions. We will be pleased to give you advice on whether to furnish or not and to what level. As a minimum you will need to provide decent quality carpets, curtains and light fittings. Remember that there will be wear and tear on the property and any items provided. If letting furnished, you'll find a list of recommended items on page 4.

**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. We can arrange for our cleaners to do a deep clean of your property at your expense, if you so wish prior to commencement of tenancy.

**Information for the Tenant**

It is helpful if you leave information for the Tenant, e.g. on operating the central heating and hot water system, washing machine and alarm system, and the day refuse is collected etc.

**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 at a cost to you.

**Repairs**

As time goes on general wear and tear of property occurs and therefore repairs are inevitable. We make arrangements with local contractors or ones you have nominated to carry out any repairs necessary. Generally we will agree that work up to the value of £150 will be arranged by ourselves without further reference to you. Over this figure we will automatically refer to you. We can obtain quotes for you and arrange to ensure the work is carried out to a high standard, at cost to you. However, you may have friends or family who can carry out certain repairs and again we can agree this prior to commencement of tenancy.

## **Other Considerations**

**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 any 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, and that sufficient funds are held to your credit.

**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 Landlords responsibility to inform the Revenue & Customs of rental income received, and to pay any tax due. Where the Landlord is resident outside the UK during a tenancy, he will require an exemption certificate from the Revenue & Customs before he can receive rental balances without deduction of tax. More details at [http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cnr/nr\\_landlords.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cnr/nr_landlords.htm)

### **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, we will if required arrange for a member of staff to prepare an inventory and schedule of condition, at the cost quoted in our Agency Agreement.

### **What is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy?**

Most tenancies will automatically be Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs), provided the rent is under £25,000 a year and the property is let to private individuals. Tenancies are usually granted for an initial fixed term of either 6 to 12 months. When the fixed term has expired the landlord is able to regain possession of the property provided he gives two months written notice to the tenant. In addition, if the tenant owes at least 2 months or 8 weeks rent on the property he can apply through the court to seek a possession order.

## **Health and Safety and other Legal 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.

### **NEW**

#### **Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)**

As from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009 you will need to make an EPC available to prospective tenants the first time you let a home after 4 January 2009. An EPC is only required for a property which is self-contained, and is valid for 10 years. EPCs can only be produced as a result of a survey by an 'accredited' Domestic Energy Assessor.

[Let UrWay Letting have accredited staff to carry out domestic EPC's and are available to ALL Landlords even if you are not a customer of ours already](#)

#### **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 (e.g. a CORGI 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.

**[LET URWAY CAN ARRANGE TO HAVE THIS CARRIED OUT FOR YOU](#)**

#### **Electrical**

There are several regulations relating to electrical installations, equipment and appliance safety which 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 legal requirement for electrical safety certificates (except in the case of all HMOs) 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 electrical inspections and the issue of safety certificates. There are 2 types of electrical inspection, one of the actual installation, and another of any portable electrical appliances (PAT test). We do advise our landlords to attain an electrical safety certificate, as explained above.

#### **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. Although there is no legislation requiring smoke alarms to be fitted in other ordinary tenanted properties, it is generally considered that the common law 'duty of care' means that Landlords and their Agents could be liable should a fire cause injury or damage in a tenanted property where smoke alarms are not fitted. We therefore strongly recommend that the Landlord fit at least one alarm on each floor (in the hall and landing areas).

### **Is your property a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)?**

If your property is on 3 or more levels and let to 5 or more tenants comprising 2 or more households (i.e. not all of the same family) it will be subject to mandatory licensing by your local authority. Whether mandatory licensing as above applies or not, if there are 3 or more tenants not all related in any property, it is still likely to be an HMO, and special Management rules apply. Ask your Letting Agent or local authority for details.

Learn more here: <http://www.propertylicence.gov.uk>

### **The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

The HHSRS provides an analysis of how hazardous a property is through assessment of 29 potential hazards found in housing. Landlords have to maintain their properties to provide a safe and healthy environment. The HHSRS is enforced by local authorities.

For further information visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs>

### **The Disability Discrimination Act 2005**

The DDA 2005 addresses the limitations of current legislation by extending disabled people's rights in respect of premises that are let or to be let, and commonhold premises. Landlords and managers of let premises and premises that are to let will be required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. Under the new duties, provided certain conditions are met (for example, that a request has been made), landlords and managers of premises which are to let, or of premises which have already been let, must make reasonable adjustments, and a failure to do so will be unlawful unless it can be justified under the Act. Landlords will only have to make reasonable adjustments. And they will not have to remove or alter physical features of the premises.

Learn more here: [http://www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/dda\\_factsheet4-premises.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/dda_factsheet4-premises.pdf)

### **Scottish Landlord Registration**

All private landlords in Scotland have a legal responsibility to register with the Local Council Authority where the rented property is. Further details at [www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk) or your local housing department.

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We hope that the information covered in this guide will be of assistance to you. If there are any aspects of which you are unsure, please ask us. We look forward to being of assistance to you in the letting, or the letting and ongoing management of your property.