



## GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS

***“Our commitment is to provide a Lettings Service second to none, giving you the peace of mind and the comfort of knowing that the care of your property will always be our priority”***

At The Real Estate Bureau we take very seriously the duty of care and responsibility we have to our Landlords who, let's face it, entrust to us one of their most valuable assets. We are committed to offering Landlords a professional, personal, efficient and enthusiastic service. We can offer the benefit of the very latest in technology, providing you with marketing of the highest quality, whilst maintaining the traditional core values we believe are essential in providing a personal and responsive service.

The Real Estate Bureau is a licensed member of the Association of Residential Lettings Agents (ARLA Propertymark) <http://www.arla.co.uk/>. As an ARLA Propertymark Protected Member, we are required to meet higher standards than the law demands and, through this, we offer greater protection to our customers including:

- The security of the Propertymark Client Money Protection scheme
- Offering experienced and trained professionals required to undertake regular training
- Keeping up to date with complex legislative changes and best practice
- Adhering to a nationally recognised Code of Practice – The Property Ombudsman
- Membership of an independent redress scheme – The Property Ombudsman <https://www.tpos.co.uk/>
- Submitting independently audited accounts to Propertymark annually
- Professional indemnity insurance

Our residential lettings service is designed to meet the needs of Landlords and Tenants alike. We combine our established local presence and independence with years of experience, to provide you with a personal, professional and effective service.

### FREE LETTINGS APPRAISAL

In the first instance, we offer a free, no obligation, lettings appraisal. During the appraisal, we will give you advice and information and details of all the services we offer, including:

- Rental advice
- Advice on property condition and presentation
- Advice on Safety Regulations
- Arranging for Energy Performance Certificates
- How we market the property and find a suitable Tenant, including explaining referencing of applicants
- Advice on Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreements
- Deposit holding advice
- The importance of an inventory and schedule of condition
- Property inspections and Landlord feedback
- Property maintenance and repairs
- Rent collection
- Tenancy Renewal or re-marketing
- End of Tenancy advice



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## **FINDING A TENANT**

It is vital that the property is marketed effectively and The Real Estate Bureau has the necessary experience and tools to ensure that all avenues are covered. As soon as your formal instructions have been received, we will:

- Prepare details of the property
- Identify and inform suitable potential Tenants already registered with us
- Include rental details on our web site and other national property portals, including Rightmove and Zoopla.
- With your permission, erect a distinctive "To Let" board

At The Real Estate Bureau, we are committed to finding the very best Tenants to occupy your property. Applicants must meet stringent financial criteria and their ability to meet the rental commitment is assessed on our behalf by an independent specialist referencing agency. Suitability is assessed on the basis of:

- An exhaustive credit check
- Employment reference(s)
- Previous Landlord(s) reference (where applicable)
- Search of public records/electoral roll for proof of address over previous 5 years
- Right to Rent Immigration check

There are occasions when we will request the Tenant provides a Guarantor before proceeding. The Guarantor will undergo the same rigorous checks applied to the Tenant and will legally become party to the tenancy.

In the case of a company, a full company search would be taken.

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

As housing legislation is constantly evolving and changing, our comprehensive tenancy agreements are updated regularly, in order to meet and comply with the current legislation, ensuring that your legal rights and obligations are always met.

## **ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE**

Landlords/agents offering property to let are required, by law, to provide prospective Tenants with an EPC for that property. EPCs must be provided free to any prospective Tenant before they have viewed the property. We can arrange for this an EPC be carried out on the Landlord's behalf.

## **SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

The letting of property is now closely regulated with respect to consumer safety. The law makes particular demands regarding the safety, servicing and inspection of the gas and electric appliances and installations within a property, and with respect to the safety of furniture and soft furnishings provided. The following regulations apply:

- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988 as amended in 1993
- General Product Safety Regulations 1994
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Gas Cooking (Safety) regulations 1980
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Plugs and Sockets (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Section 149: The Housing Act 2004
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) regulations 2015

At all times, both you, the Landlord, and we, as your agent, have a duty of care to the Tenant. Safety plays a major part and there are a number of statutory requirements which must be adhered to. The penalties for non-compliance are significant fines and possible imprisonment. The main areas are:

- **Gas Safety.** It is a statutory requirement that all properties supplied with gas are checked annually and appliances tested. Tests must be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer who will issue a 'Landlord Gas Safety Certificate' for the property, a copy of which should be given to the Tenant. Copies of certificates issued must be kept for at least 2 years.
- **Electrical Safety.** The law states that all electrical equipment within a rental property must comply with the current UK requirements for safety of domestic appliances. The Electrical Safety Council recommends regular basic visual inspections of the electrical installation and all electrical appliances provided in the Property. We recommend that an inspection/test is carried out by a qualified electrician before the start of the tenancy and, thereafter, every five years.
- **Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors.** The regulations require Landlords to have at least one smoke alarm installed on every storey of their rental property which is used as living accommodation, and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation where solid fuel is used. The Landlord must make sure the alarms are in working order at the start of each new tenancy.
- **Furniture and Furnishings.** All items (excluding authenticated antique furniture) which are upholstered or have a filling material must comply with Fire Safety Regulations. Any furniture manufactured after 1st March 1989 must comply with this legislation and should be labeled accordingly. Any item, regardless of its age, which is not labeled will be deemed non-compliant and must be removed from the property.
- **Other Statutory Safety Regulations.** Generally, any item left in the property for the Tenant's use – including all electrical items, white goods, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors must be in good working order. Landlords must also provide relevant operational information for items which have any risk associated with their use i.e. electric lawnmowers.

## **CONSENT TO LET**

If you have a mortgage on your property, other than a Buy to Let mortgage, there is every likelihood that you will need consent to let from your lender. Leasehold properties may require consent from the freeholder or, more usually, the managing agents.

## **INSURANCE**

You must advise your insurance company (buildings and contents) of your intention to let the property and comply with any conditions they may impose. This is very important as insurance providers stick rigidly to the terms of their policies and not informing them will invalidate your policy. Tenants are responsible for insuring their own possessions.

We can arrange suitable insurance policies for both Landlords and Tenants.

## **INCOME TAX**

Income tax is payable on all rental income arising from let property in the UK, regardless of the residential status of the Landlord. In the case of a Non-Resident Landlord (whose usual place of abode is outside of the UK), the letting agent is required to withhold tax from rent received on behalf of the Inland Revenue, unless written approval for exemption has been obtained from them. Approval will be granted once an NRL1 Form (which can be supplied by us) has been submitted. Approval of the application does not make the rent exempt from UK tax and must be declared as income.

## **OUR SERVICES**

With three levels of service available, you choose how little or how much involvement you want in running your tenancy. All three levels of service include:

- Initial market appraisal
- Advice on presentation
- Arranging safety checks if required
- Full Marketing
- Accompanied Viewings
- Submission and reporting of references
- Preparation of Tenancy Agreement and related documents
- Collection of security deposit
- Arrangements for your future rent payments

### **Tenant Find Service**

We recommend this service to experienced 'professional' Landlords who have the time, resources and experience to deal directly with Tenants on all issues that arise from letting, including emergency callouts, faulty appliances, lost keys etc.

### **Tenant Find and Rent Collection Service**

This service is designed for Landlords who would like some involvement in the letting of their property and who have the time, resources and trade contacts to manage the day to day maintenance themselves, but do not want to deal with the rent collection or accounting. In addition to the Tenant Find Service, our Tenant Find and Rent Collection Service includes:

- Ensuring that the security deposit is correctly placed with the Custodial Scheme or recognized Insured Scheme in line with the Tenant Deposit Protection Order
- Monthly rent payments by electronic transfer directly into your nominated account
- Itemised monthly Rent Account Statements

### **Full Management Service**

Our Full Management Service covers all aspects of the letting and management of your property and is tailored for Landlords who do not wish to have any direct involvement with their Tenants. In addition to the Tenant Find and Rent Collection Service, our Full Management Service includes:

- Arranging for the preparation of a professional Inventory/Schedule of Condition for the property at the commencement of each tenancy.
- Informing utility suppliers and council offices of incoming/outgoing Tenants
- A settling-in inspection six weeks after new Tenants move in, then regular quarterly inspections
- All queries, correspondence and calls from Tenants come directly to us
- Dealing with all maintenance issues (including supervising works and settlement of contractor invoices from rent collected)
- Payment of routine outgoings, other than insurance premiums
- A property inspection and inventory checkout at tenancy termination

At the Real Estate Bureau, we appreciate that some Landlords will also have different requirements and may need additional services and we would be happy to discuss these, as required.