



Brightwells
LETTINGS

Established 1846

Letting Handbook

All you'll ever need to know about letting your property



All you need to know about letting your property

For most of us property is the largest individual investment we will make so naturally before you embark on letting your property you want to be sure that you have the right agent to handle your affairs.

Customer service is paramount to us, as is attention to detail, and we feel that this is borne out by the recommendation of our existing customers and enviable reputation as the quality property specialist.

Our dedicated team have a broad base of experience in handling rental properties and we pride ourselves in the quality of service we provide. Equally we never rest on our laurels and strive to keep abreast of all the changes to the Housing Law, continually improving our service by investing in our employees and the latest technology.

We are committed to ensuring that the whole process runs smoothly and for those little hiccups we have the experience and resources to resolve matters swiftly.



We are committed to ensuring that the whole process runs smoothly and for those little hiccups we have the experience and resources to resolve matters swiftly.



Initial Property Visit & Assessment

With our customer focused service, we know that to provide our clients with the best advise we need to look at their property and review their requirements on an individual basis. Therefore, we are happy to visit your property and discuss your needs with no commitment. We can then conduct a market appraisal including information and recommendations on the market rent, legal obligations, Tenant requirements, property appeal, mortgage requirements and safety regulations.

Marketing Your Property

By utilising a full marketing package, we seek to attract suitable Tenants within a short time frame. Full particulars will be drawn up including colour photographs and incorporating room measurements where suitable. These will then be swiftly forwarded to registered prospective Tenants, relocation companies and local businesses.

Given our superb location, we find that our window display attracts a high level of interest and where appropriate we will also arrange for your property details to be displayed in our other regional offices. Eye catching "To Let" boards can often play a strong role in generating interest as many Tenants commence their home search with a tour of their preferred area.

Regular local newspaper advertising ensures maximum regional exposure and national advertising can be arranged additionally if required.

A full range of website advertising is utilised in addition to our own website to provide worldwide coverage and this then generates a growing flow of interested Tenants.

We will arrange to accompany all viewings as required. This serves several purposes, as it provides you with security, whilst giving us the ability to obtain a view of the prospective Tenants character and circumstances. We can then ensure that any applicant meets with your expectations and are on hand to negotiate the best terms of tenancy for you.



A full range of website advertising is utilised in addition to our own website to provide worldwide coverage and this generates a growing flow of interested Tenants.

Tenant Referencing & Rental Guarantee

In order to provide a superior professional service, we personalise our vetting procedure. An independent reference checking company is often used to take up references and generally we will obtain a credit check, employers, accountants, Landlord and character references (as applicable), so that you can be sure of your Tenants background. (Subject to acceptable references being obtained).

To provide you with total peace of mind we include, for the initial 12 months of the tenancy **rent guarantee insurance free of charge.**

This insurance cover is designed to minimise the associated risk when letting your property and should your Tenant fail to pay the rent during the policy term, you are protected for up to six months rent (excluding the first month's lost rent). For any future renewal of tenancy, we would be pleased to put you in contact with an insurance company so that you can arrange for continuation of cover.

Preparing The Property & Inventories

Good quality Tenants are attracted to good quality properties. It may seem obvious but it is vitally important from the beginning to ensure that your property is viewed to the best advantage. In effect this means attending to any outstanding maintenance jobs prior to marketing, where possible, and presenting your property attractively.

At the start of the tenancy the benchmark is set for the standards required through- out the tenancy, and by presenting your property, including the grounds, in the best condition, you put yourself in the driving seat for ensuring its presentation at the end of the tenancy.

Through experience, we have found that both Landlords and Tenants enjoy the assurance that a comprehensive inventory provides. Just before the commencement of the tenancy, we will draw up a detailed document listing descriptions for each room, literally covering everything from ceilings to floors, including the condition of the décor, cleanliness, any defects etc. This is then supported with a full compliment of digital photographs, meter readings, a record of the keys supplied and our overall impressions of the property.

We pride ourselves on the comprehensive nature of our inventories and schedule of conditions, so should there be any disagreements at the end of the tenancy, you have an in depth document to prove how your property looked initially. Without this evidence you could find yourself in a position where it is your word against your Tenants, hence legally you would have little standing over a dispute settlement. Whilst this service is not included in our "Letting Only" package we do strongly suggest that an inventory is prepared on all properties and we would be happy to arrange this on your behalf.

*To provide you with total peace of mind we include, for the initial 12 months of the tenancy, **Rent Guarantee Insurance free of charge.***

Tenancy Agreements

With the changes to the Housing Act in both 1988 and 1996, the Government went a long way towards giving Landlords better rights, most importantly in regard to undisputed rights of repossession.

For the majority of our clients, an Assured Shorthold Tenancy will provide the most appropriate protection and we are justifiably proud of our individually prepared documents, which can be tailored to your needs and allow for any matters specific to your property to be incorporated.

Legislation continues to evolve in this area and so as to ensure we remain fully informed our staff attend regular training and industry gatherings. We are also members of the National Association of Estate Agents who provide us with weekly updates on all relevant legislation and best practice.

All Landlords should be aware that they are bound by the far reaching Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and one major effect means that no discrimination can be made against disabled clients, including those with guide dogs regardless of a Landlords views on pets.

Safety Regulations

There are legal obligations on all Landlords to ensure that they provide their property in the safest of conditions for their Tenants. All oil, gas, LPG and solid fuel heating systems and appliances must be checked for safety by a qualified engineer prior to the initial letting and annually thereafter.

Likewise, all electrical appliances must be checked annually and the electrical hard wiring needs checking on a five year cycle basis, again both initial checks should take place prior to your first Tenant taking up residence. We would be happy to arrange for these important checks to be undertaken on your behalf. Should you prefer to attend to these matters yourself, we will still legally need to hold copies of the safety certificates.

Should you choose to let your property with any soft furnishings included it is essential that these items comply with the Fire & Furnishing Regulations. We would be pleased to provide further advice regarding this matter.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)

“Energy Performance Certificates are now required by law for all new tenancies and have to be in place before any marketing can commence. Hence, we recommend that this is organised at the earliest opportunity”.

These certificates are broadly similar to the labels now provided with domestic appliances and record how energy efficient a property is as a building. The certificate will provide a rating of energy efficiency and carbon omissions on a scale of A-G, where A is very efficient and G very inefficient. Once obtained, a certificate remains valid for upto 10 years.

As with the safety regulations we would be happy to arrange a surveyor who can undertake this work on your behalf or of course you can choose to arrange for this certificate yourselves if you prefer.

“For most properties the cost involved is less than £100”.

Utilities

We generally advise that rentals are agreed exclusive of all outgoing. On rare occasions it may be deemed appropriate to include water charges where a property is an annexe or attachment to another dwelling. We would be pleased to give advice on an individual basis.

On leasehold properties, the landlord remains responsible for any ground rent, maintenance and service charges.

With all tenancies the owner continues to be obligated for any mortgage payments and buildings insurance.

For properties under our full management service, we will attend to notifying the gas, electric, water companies in addition to the local Council Tax department, with regard to the change of occupier and meter readings. Due to data protection regulations, we are unable to attend to telephone accounts as only the customer is permitted to make any alterations.

Repair, Upkeep and Gardening

It is in all parties interests to ensure that your property is well maintained and the key to achieving this is often via preventative maintenance and a periodic plan of works e.g. boiler servicing, external painting etc. Repair costs for the building, heating system, water system, appliances etc are the responsibility of the landlord.

Under our full management service, we will attend to emergency repairs on your behalf, subject to your requirements. We can also organise routine maintenance works, fair wear and tear repairs, and gas safety checks etc.

Being local we have a wealth of contacts in most relevant trades or you may prefer to use contractors you know, who are already familiar with your property. So that we conduct our service to your satisfaction, we ask that you set the parameters in regard to these concerns at the outset of the tenancy. It should be noted that under the new 'fair contract terms' legislation, it is deemed as unacceptable for a Tenant to be made responsible for such items as tree surgery, hedge cutting or where special machinery / or knowledge is needed.

We can make your Tenant attend to routine gardening, however, if your garden is particularly large, complex, or of high value to you we strongly advise including the services of a gardener in the rental. At the start of the letting, the grounds should be left in the tidy condition that you expect to receive them back in allowing of course for normal growth and waste.



For properties under our full management service, we will attend to notify the gas, electric, water companies and local Council Tax department.

Tax and non resident landlords

Rental income is classed as liable to tax. Should you require further help or guidance in this matter, we are pleased to recommend an individual specialist, Ian Knight, of Independent Solutions. We would be happy to arrange a no obligation appointment on your behalf, if this would help.

For landlords who reside outside of the UK, we are obliged under the Taxation of the Income From Land (Non Residents) Regulations 1995 to deduct tax at the basic rate from the rent unless advised to the contrary by the Inland Revenue.

Generally, Landlords applying for exemption will be issued with a certificate, provided that all their tax affairs are in good order and up to date. We would be pleased to provide you with the application forms to apply for exemption, however, these must be completed in person. We regret that we are unable to offer a tenancy finding only service to the non resident Landlord due to the above regulations.

Deposits

With the implementation of new legislation, all deposits taken after the 6th April 2007 for Assured Shorthold Tenancies must be placed under the protection of a Government approved Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme.

A landlord who does not do so, will be breaking the law, and could be made to pay the tenant the full deposit back, along with an amount equivalent to three times the deposit and they will not be entitled to gain possession of their property under the relatively straightforward procedure of a Section 21, under the Housing Act of 1988.

Due to Brightwells classification as an 'approved body', via membership to the National Association of Estate Agents, we are in a position to offer the facility of a Deposit Protection Scheme at reduced rates.

The new rules do mean that if there is a dispute at the end of the tenancy over the deposit, either the landlord or the Tenant can refer the situation to an independent case examiner (ICE) for free. ICE will then use the inventory and any additional details provided to decide if any deductions from the deposit are fair and reasonable. As you can see a comprehensive inventory becomes paramount in protecting your property.

Insurance

Landlords remain responsible for insuring their property and contents. Should your property be let unfurnished we would still strongly advise that limited contents insurance is taken out to cover items such as your carpets and kitchen fittings etc.

It is also important that you notify your insurance company that the property is to be let, as unfortunately some companies will not cover you under these circumstances. We are pleased to offer the services of Brightwells Insurance department if you would like further advice or a without obligation quotation. Tenants will be responsible for insuring their own belongings.



Brightwells Complimentary Services

Brightwells roots were originally established in 1846 and we continue to be an independent company proud to provide a service to the highest professional standards in all that we do.

The quality residential, agricultural, sales and lettings operation based from Cathedral Chambers, in Hereford, is supported by regional offices in Bulth Wells and Leominster. We also incorporate the fastest growing Bloodstock Department in the country, a leading provincial Fine Art Saleroom and the largest 4 x 4 vehicle auctions in Britain.



We also incorporate the fastest growing Bloodstock Department in the country, a leading provincial Fine Art Saleroom and the largest 4x4 vehicle auctions in Britain.

Summary of Services

Our Full Management Service is charged at 12.5% plus VAT on gross monthly rentals and £300 plus VAT for the tenancy set up. Our Tenant Finding Service is charged at a sum equal to one months rent plus VAT. (Minimum charge of £500 plus VAT)



Services

Full Management Services Tenant Finding Only

Services	Full Management Services	Tenant Finding Only
Full detailed particulars with colour photographs	Yes	Yes
Details mailed to registered prospective Tenants	Yes	Yes
Regular local newspaper advertising	Yes	Yes
Window displays in our superbly located offices	Yes	Yes
Full range of web site advertising	Yes	Yes
Eye catching "To Let" boards	Yes	Yes
Accompanied viewings	Yes	Yes
Advise on insurance, contents, and liabilities	Yes	Yes
Personalised tenant vetting with credit history checks	Yes	Yes
Tenancy negotiation between Landlord & Tenant	Yes	Yes
Collection of Deposit	Yes	Yes
Tenancy Agreement created specifically to your needs	Yes	
Comprehensive inventory or schedule of condition	Yes	Can be provided at an extra cost
Inventory check in and check out at the end of tenancy	Yes	No
Rental collection and bank transfer to Landlord	Yes	No
FREE Rental guarantee insurance for 12 months	Yes	No
Prompt accounting and monthly statements	Yes	No
Advising utility companies of occupancy changes	Yes	No
Periodic property checks and reports	Yes	No
Negotiating contract renewals and rent increases	Yes	No
Arranging running repairs and maintenance if required	Yes	No
Emergency contact point for Tenants	Yes	No
Legal safety test arranged on Landlords behalf	Yes	No
Fire & Safety regulation compliance advice`	Yes	No
Service of legal documents or notices as necessary	Yes	No
Deposit Retention & registration	£30 per tenancy per annum plus VAT	£60 per tenancy per annum plus VAT

Brightwells Property
Cathedral Chambers
Thorpe House
Broad Street
Hereford
HR4 9AS
lettings@brightwells.com

01432 360006
brightwells.com