

# Making the most of your property



# Preparing your property for letting

There are many aspects to consider when preparing your property for the rental market. We have prepared the following information as a guide:-

## Furnished or unfurnished?

One of the first decisions to be made is whether to let your property furnished or unfurnished.

Advantages of letting unfurnished are;

- Lower turnover of tenants
- No wear and tear on your furnishing
- Lower maintenance and repair costs

Unfurnished lettings include the following;

- Carpets or laminate flooring
- Light fittings
- Kitchen appliances (known as white goods), which should be in good working order, with instructions and preferably insurance for breakdown
- Small wall-mounted items such as mirrors, toilet roll holders and towel rails in the bathroom and cloakroom

If you choose to let your property furnished you need to be aware of the following;

- All soft furnishings (including beds, chairs and sofas etc) must comply with the Furniture and Furnishing (Fire) (Safety) Regulations Act 1993. Any furniture manufactured before March 1990 will generally not comply
- All bed linen, towels and anything of monetary or sentimental value should ideally be removed
- If an electrical appliance (such as a kettle, toaster or washing machine) breaks down it is the landlord's responsibility to repair or replace it

## Decoration and carpets

We recommend they should be fresh and neutral in terms of colour and style. Higher quality properties will always attract better quality tenants and it is therefore vital that the property is well presented to meet the expectations of the potential tenant.

## Domestic appliances

Domestic appliances should be of good quality and condition, and be subject to regular servicing. It is important that full instructions for use are left on the premises to avoid the need to call an engineer to demonstrate. Gas and electrical appliances must meet legal safety requirements and all appliances should be tested annually.

## Cleaning

It is essential that the property is handed over in a clean condition. We strongly recommend that the property be professionally cleaned throughout, including all carpets.

This creates a benchmark that will be recorded in the Inventory and Schedule of Condition and will encourage the tenants to maintain a high standard through subsequent tenancies. We can provide the names of reputable and economical cleaning contractors.

## Gardens

Gardens should be left in good seasonal order so that a benchmark is set for the tenants, whose responsibility it will be to maintain the same standard. We recommend that relevant tools are provided by the landlord. If the garden is particularly large, or complicated to maintain, it may be appropriate for the landlord to retain responsibility for maintenance, in which event this will be reflected in the rent. We will be happy to help find suitable gardeners, be it for a full maintenance programme, hedge/lawn cutting, pruning or occasional tidy.

## Mortgages

Where the property to be let is subject to a mortgage, permission must be granted from the lender in writing.

## Insurance

It is essential that the property and your contents are adequately insured, both while the property is empty and whilst it is let. Your insurers must be told that the property is to be let since failure to do so may invalidate cover. We can provide details of competitive insurance specifically for rented property, if required.



## Security

Security systems, locks on windows and external doors, lights and even full alarm systems, are often considered essential by prospective tenants and are taken into consideration by most lending insurance companies in calculating premiums.

## Services

We take away the hassle of contacting energy suppliers, local councils and water suppliers. Services should be left connected and we will arrange for the transfer into the tenants name. Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, tenants must be able to control and regulate heating systems.

## Council tax

We will notify the local council tax office of each change of occupier and of any void period between tenancies.

## Keys

When the property is let, you must provide us with at least one full set of keys for each occupant and where the property is managed by us, we will require two further full sets of keys for access during the tenancy. We will be obliged to charge for key cutting if insufficient keys are supplied at the outset.

## Telephone

If a telephone line is installed at the property you should instruct the provider to put a temporary stop on the line when you vacate and send you a closing account.

## Empty properties

It is important that you comply with any insurance requirements during vacant periods especially during winter months.

## Effective marketing

As soon as Eastbourne Lettings receive your instructions to proceed, our team will start the process of finding a suitable tenant. We produce marketing details that bring your property to life including professional photography, floor plans and words to inspire. A selection of properties will also be included in our backlit window displays. We will advertise proactively and will continue to do so until a suitable tenant has been secured.

## Attracting tenants

At Eastbourne Lettings, we fully understand that excellent presentation and maximum exposure of our clients' properties plays a key role in securing suitable tenants.

## Technology

Technology plays a vital role in Eastbourne Lettings' operations. This ensures that your property is presented properly online and enjoys the maximum possible exposure.

In addition to major property portals such as Rightmove, prospective tenants can also find our clients' property at eastbournelettings.com. If a property is of interest, they can learn more by viewing floor plans, the Energy Performance Certificate, high quality photographs and Google street view, along with information about the local area.

More than half of internet searches are now made through a mobile device. Eastbourne Lettings have invested in a fully responsive website to ensure that finding and learning more about our clients' properties on a tablet or smartphone is a straightforward and informative experience.

## Selecting the tenant

Eastbourne Lettings will discuss your particular requirements in detail and will find the most suitable tenant for you.

Different landlords make different stipulations regarding what they will and will not accept. Typically, Eastbourne Lettings will negotiate any special conditions that are required and ensure that those conditions are properly inserted into a Tenancy Agreement.

## Referencing and financial checks

We carry out strict referencing using a specialised independent referencing company who demand the highest of standards from incoming tenants.

This essential and detailed process gives us an understanding of tenants' personal and financial circumstances in addition to previous agent/landlord/accountant references.

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