

Letting your property could be sometimes very stressful and confusing, but once everything is on its place then you could reap in the benefits of your investment.

That's why Maxwell Properties has put this guide together to make Landlords journey much easier, but of course if you are not sure about certain aspects of the letting process, we are here to help, just dial 0203 667 4755.

Firstly...

A first impression of a prospective tenant walking through the door is key and if your property is presented well, clean, pleasant, and well-maintained then it most likely has a positive viewing reaction.

You could upgrade the spec of your kitchen or bathroom which will make it easier to achieve higher rentals for your property. However, a lick of paint and a thorough clean could be all your property needs.

Furnish or Unfurnished?

Most of Central London tenants will want a property that is fully furnished so they do not have to provide their own furniture, just move in with suitcase full of clothes and toothbrush and carry on with their busy life. Tenants would pay more for a ready property.

However, there will be others who will want to put their own stamp on a home. But in most cases, it is a larger property 3 bedroom or a house. And usually if the tenants are willing to provide their own furniture in most cases it will be a long tenancy.

Necessary Checks

There are some legal landlord requirements that you must meet to make sure your property rentals are safe for tenants and in line with regulations.

Gas Safety - All gas appliances and flues in property lettings - and all residential accommodation - must be checked once a year by a Gas Safe-registered engineer under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

The engineer will provide you with a certificate if your gas installations pass the test and this can be shown to reassure tenants.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) - To have an EPC for your property became mandatory from 1st of October 2008, and if you don't you could be liable to a penalty charge of £200 unless you have ordered the EPC at least 14 days previously and make all reasonable efforts and enquiries to obtain it in time. Once you have one it will only expire in 10 years. The certification is valid for 5 year or until change of tenancy.

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) - in the Private Rental Sector (England) Regulations 2020 and were introduced as a legal requirement for all new tenancies and fixed term renewals commencing from 1st July 2020. EICR identifies any damage, deterioration, defects and/or conditions which may give rise to danger along with observations for which improvement is recommended. Our engineers will try to rectify any issue on the spot to minimize the costs to our clients.

Electrical Equipment (PAT Test) - Landlords have a duty to make sure that all electrical appliances they supply for tenants' use are safe. Arranging for a portable appliance test to be carried out once a year and before a tenant moves in.

Furniture Regulations - Furniture and Furnishing (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1998, any furniture you supply - including pillows, cushions, and mattresses - must meet this regulation.

Finding a Tenant & Referencing

We will use our marketing tool and established relationships to find the most appropriate tenants for your buy-to-let properties. All potential tenants go through our strict third-party referencing checks to find out if they are right for your property.

We will inform you once their references have successfully passed, if not we will discuss about an alternative solution, being it to pay 6 months up-front or providing a suitable guarantor.

Once we mutually happy with the tenants we will email them a tenancy agreement for the signing and collect damage deposit and rent in advance prior to commencement of the tenancy.

Inventory Check In with Report

We would strongly advise to arrange for an inventory to be conducted so the exact condition and contents of your property is in clear writing. The tenant will receive a copy which he/she will need to address within 7 working days otherwise it would be deemed as true. This will assist you with any dilapidations at the end of your tenancy.

Damage deposit

Since 1st of June 2019 Landlord in England are limited to 5 weeks deposit for new or renewed tenancies. There are two types of schemes - insurance-based and custodial - as well as three companies appointed by the government to oversee this process.

- The Tenancy Deposit Scheme - this is insurance-based, meaning your agent or you can keep hold of the deposit.

- The Deposit Protection Service - this is custodial, meaning the company looks after the deposit.
- My Deposits - this is insurance-based, meaning your agent or you can keep hold of the deposit.

Once the deposit has been received it must be registered with one of the above within 30 days. By law, you must also inform your tenants of which option you selected.

End of Tenancy

We recommend for you to arrange a Check Out inspection to not any defects in your property or we can arrange on your behalf. The report will be sent to you, and you can decide whether you wish to make any claims.

Tenants must comply with deductions, but if they disagree with you over a deposit claim, the scheme with which you placed the money will make a final and binding decision.

Without a Check Out report it will be difficult to prove who is write.

Preparation for re-let

We will make sure that the property we let for you initially have been given back in the clean and good condition. As per our tenancy agreement we insist that all tenants must pay for a professional end of tenancy clean. This process must take place prior to check out. We will also assess if your property needs a bit of refurbishing to attract a new good tenant quickly.

Non-resident landlords

If you are planning to move or live abroad then you will not want us to deduct UK tax from your rental income.

To avoid this, please go to HM Revenue and Custom's website where you can apply for a Non-Resident Landlord Number. They will send us a letter with your number so we can avoid taxing you based on the UK's system.

Lastly...

Rent guarantee and legal expenses insurance

While we hope that you will never be in this situation, this type of cover can help shield you from the expense of having a tenant that misses rent payments and - in the worst-case scenario - needs to be evicted. If you would like to find out more please let us know.

Note - landlord's obligations

As part of your landlord responsibilities, you must maintain and cover the cost of looking after:

- The exterior and structure of a property
- All fixtures and fittings that form part of a property
- All heating and hot water installations
- All sinks, basins, baths, and other sanitary features
- All electrical and mechanical items in a property

We hope that this guide gave you a good understanding of a letting process but if you still have some questions then please ask us by completing below.