



## Property Preparation

This is where Pure Lettings can be really helpful. However there is no reason why you should not deal with this yourself, even if you are inexperienced in letting. Hopefully the following will help you if you are confident enough. Remember Pure Lettings are always there to help

**There are a number of things which you are legally responsible for:**

1. Gas Safety Record – to ensure all gas appliances and the gas supply are safe.
2. Electrical Equipment – ensure all appliances provided are safe and the electrical circuitry is sound and safe
3. The Landlord must provide space and water heating – if it is in disrepair it is the Landlords obligation by law to rectify
4. The property must be let in a safe condition. If there is anything you are aware of as a danger prior to letting you must rectify it. In the worst case, and if an incident occurs the court will use this in its reasonable determination of the penalty you will face.
5. Furniture – you must ensure that any furniture provided complies to the regulations. Pure Lettings will check this for you if required.

If you are letting to students and there are more than two you may want to check out the HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) regulations for the area. They differ from region to region. Pure Lettings are able to provide you with this relevant information as they let many HMO's out plus own many themselves. Each office understand the regulations and criteria required for a licenec and also have a specialist HMO coordinator within their employment. We can offer the rooms to rent via our specialised website and through links from the Pure Lettings site. Failure to adhere to the regulations can result in enforcement orders and fines. So far as décor is concerned, neutral colours are recommended, with good quality furniture and furnishings, suitable for the type of tenant you intend to let to. Pure Lettings have a specialised furniture package for students available to see in their showroom adjacent to the office.

## Tenant Finding

This is the most important part of letting. At least 9 out of 10 problems can be avoided if you have a decent tenant. You may decide therefore that the best solution is to use an agent simply to find the tenant, and to do the management yourself. This is a route taken by many landlords. Although Landlords beware, if you are not sure about the regulations and laws then read on and decide for yourself whether you want to take it on yourself or employ the services of a professional agent like Pure Lettings. If you decide to find your tenant yourself, it is very important that all the proper credit checks are carried out and references followed up. Pure Lettings can offer this service for a small fee, we can also bespoke manage exactly how much further you want us to go.

Do not under any circumstances allow a tenant into possession of the property before these checks have been carried out, or before the first months rent and the tenancy deposit has cleared into your bank account, it could prove very costly.

## Legal Documentation and Paperwork

There are many ways to acquire the legal paperwork required for a tenancy, from Tenancy agreements and notices to inventories and invoices.

Pure Lettings also have a suite of paperwork available to you for whichever service you require. Again our bespoke service can cater for anyone's requirements.

If you take a tenancy deposit, you will need to either send it off to the Deposit Protection Service (DPS) or register it with the non-custodial schemes which are insurance backed. Details can be acquired from Pure Lettings. Pure Lettings also offer a way to avoid any deposit and still insure you are covered at the termination of the tenancy for any damage.

Many Landlords keep paper copies of their records, and some use software which is readily available. Remember as a Landlord collecting rent you are liable to income tax. Please ask Pure Lettings for details on how to pay your tax and submit the returns. However, if you really dislike paperwork or are bad at it, then you should think carefully before letting without an agent. The landlord business is now heavily regulated and you may be called upon to prove that you have complied with the relevant legislation. This means keeping meticulous records. If you prefer not to do this, then you should use an agent to do it for you.

## Problems during the tenancy

The main problem feared by landlords (and the problem most frequently encountered by them) is non payment of rent by tenants. Pure Lettings are fairly unique in East Anglia offering a service beyond most agents when it comes to rent arrears. As we are very well qualified and experienced in dealing with rental arrears, we are able to advise on the best ways to recover or repossess. We can serve all the correct notices right upto the court possession orders that some agents are not keen to do. Your Pure Lettings advisor is well suited to advise you on what to do and how to do it. When a tenant falls into arrears it is imperative that you are on to it immediately. At Pure Lettings we contact both Landlord and Tenant every step of the way, including letters at 7, 14, 21 and 28 days, right up until the legal notices can be implemented and beyond.

You also have to be aware of repairing obligations and safety regulations. You must insure you adhere to your obligations and the regulations to avoid action by the tenant or authorities. Pure Lettings can advise you of these regulations.

# Self Manage or use an Agent?

## Do you live near to the property?

Many landlords do successfully manage properties which are not local to them, but it can be problematic. If you live abroad, renting without someone local to look after the property (this can be a friend or relative, it does not have to be a letting agent) is not recommended.

## Do you lead a busy life?

Often busy people are able to take on another commitment as they have the skills to deal with the extra work efficiently, however if your time is heavily committed you should think carefully before taking on something else.

## How are you with paperwork?

As mentioned earlier in this guide, the letting business is heavily regulated. Compliance need not be a problem, with the help of Pure Lettings, but if you hate paperwork or are very bad at it, maybe you should use an agent.

## Are you a people person?

Being a landlord means being involved with people. You need to be able to sum them up when selecting tenants, and deal with them when they are living in your property. It helps if (on the whole) you like dealing with people and get on with them.

### However, if you manage your properties yourself:

- You can be sure that all the proper checks have been carried out, because you will have done them! It is not unknown for agents to overlook essential checking (although good agents will do a proper job)
- You can make sure that regular property checks and inspections are done. Again it is not unknown for some agents to neglect this work
- You can often arrange for repairs to be done more cheaply – agents will generally use the same companies all the time (rather than getting several estimates), and some agents may receive commission. At Pure Lettings though we have an in house maintenance company to keep costs down and your property optimised. We add value to our service, not our bills!
- You can ensure that the tenancy deposit is dealt with properly – if this is not done by your agent, you will be held responsible even though it was not your fault (and you will have to pay the deposit back to your tenant yourself if your agent loses it). Again, most decent agents deal with this properly but there are a few who may not.

**Note** also that agents contracts often contain onerous clauses, for example committing the landlord to pay charges for renewals so long as the tenant is in the property, even if the landlord no longer wishes to use the agent! These types of clause are being challenged by the Office of Fair Trading but this will not help you if the money has been deducted by your agent from rent received by him! Don't worry Pure Lettings do not charge these unless we have to draw up a new tenancy agreement – even then the charge is very low compared to a legal professional doing something similar You should also be aware that the Inland Revenue will often require agents to provide them with details of landlords and letting agents on their books.

If you think that using an agent is the right choice for you then come and speak to the experts at Pure Lettings.

**More to Let, More to Like.**