



Letting your property with Allan Howard

A guide to the letting process

Introduction

Letting your home needn't be a big headache, especially when you have some useful advice to give you some ideas and a friendly company to call on for assistance.

At Allan Howard, we pride ourselves in the level of service we provide to people who wish to let their property through us. Our rates are reasonable and if you ever have any questions, we're just a phone-call or email away.

This quick document will guide you through the most common challenges associated with letting your home and provide you with a print-out-and-keep reference

So you've decided to let your property

First of all, you're already off to a good start by considering a locally based, knowledgeable and well-established firm of estate agents like Allan Howard. We've been established in your area since 1992 and, in fact, there are very few streets around in which we *haven't* rented or sold a house!

What ever the reason you are letting out your property we're here to help – and so is this document. Read on now to discover a few quick rules that will help make your property rental as smooth as possible. These aren't necessarily rules – just adapt the different pieces of advice to suit your own situation.

And, of course, if you need any assistance, just call us on 020 8907 2525.

Preparing your home for renting

Do first impressions count?

Yes, emphatically, yes. To increase your chances of a quick take up, you need to make the potential tenant think “this is the property for me” even before they walk through the door.

The following might sound like pretty stern advice. And some of it might sound downright obvious. But bear with us. What we say here is as a result of letting thousands of properties.

There has been lots of talk about feng shui (pronounced *fung sh-way*), the Japanese art of decorating and placing objects in pre-set positions in relation to each other for balance and health. But unless you really know what you're doing, it's probably best to just stick to the basics.

Equally, with the number of television programmes and magazines about “how to do up your home” being broadcast and published, it's easy to do, shall we say, just a little more than is actually necessary. Remember, décor is fundamentally down to taste. It's subjective and a matter of choice, it's emotional and less is quite often very definitely more.

Your property...

Use the following as a checklist. Quite simply, the more times you can answer 'yes', the more likely it is that you'll let your property quickly and for what it's worth (or possibly more). Obviously this list isn't exhaustive. If you can see that something needs attending to, fixing or decorating, just have it done soon as you can!

Outside

- Is the front of the property in good decorative order, free from peeling paint and clean around the window and door frames?
- Are the windows clean?
- Is the front garden well-tended and tidy?
- Is the front gate easy to open and well maintained?
- Is the path free from weeds?
- Does all the front door furniture work properly including the handle, bell and door-knocker?
- If your neighbour is running a car-breaking and scrap metal business from their front garden, have you politely asked them to desist (before phoning the council)?

Inside

- Kill the clutter! There are few things more off-putting to a potential tenant than an untidy place. So please ask the current tenants (nicely) to make the property presentable.

- Interior décor obviously comes into question. What you saw on Changing Rooms in 1994, when rag-rolling a mixture of yellow, orange and blue gloss across your sitting room walls was fashionable, stands a chance of not being to everyone's taste today. Whilst it might not always be practical to redecorate the whole house, some of the more prominent decorating faux pas can be often be cured with a couple of coats of magnolia. The less intrusive the style of décor, the better.
- Do you know what you're including with the property such as carpets, curtains and appliances?
- A blast of air freshener half an hour before the potential purchaser arrives rarely does any harm.

Tips for greeting prospective tenants and showing them round

Wherever possible one of our qualified estate agents will accompany potential viewers to your property. However, when this isn't feasible, here are some tips which you might find useful.

- Try to be happy and cheerful – even if you find yourself letting your home for reasons that are not entirely desirable. Your demeanour will affect the emotions of the people visiting.
- Are you ready to answer technical questions honestly and with confidence? Do you know where, physically, the boundaries are? Are there shared drains? What do utility bills amount to per month or quarter? How much is the council tax? The more information you can give the better, so be ready to answer questions.
- Baking bread and brewing coffee have become clichés. Don't offer your purchasers a drink immediately. But, if they're showing serious signs of interest, offer a tea or coffee while you're discussing the nitty gritty. Remember, unless you're letting to a friend, the prospective tenant probably isn't about to become one.

A quick note for flat landlords

There's one extra point to note about communal areas. Even if you're not directly responsible for the entrance hallway or gardens, these still need to be tidy. For example, a prospective tenant coming to view your flat is immediately going to think twice if they have to climb over a big pile of bikes before they can ascend the stairs. If at all possible, a bit of diplomacy with your nearest neighbours can go a long way.

Good luck!

We hope to help you let your property swiftly and painlessly.

If you need any further advice, please contact us on **020 8907 2525** or **020 8908 3131** or email us on **info@allanhoward.co.uk**

Allan Howard MNAEA