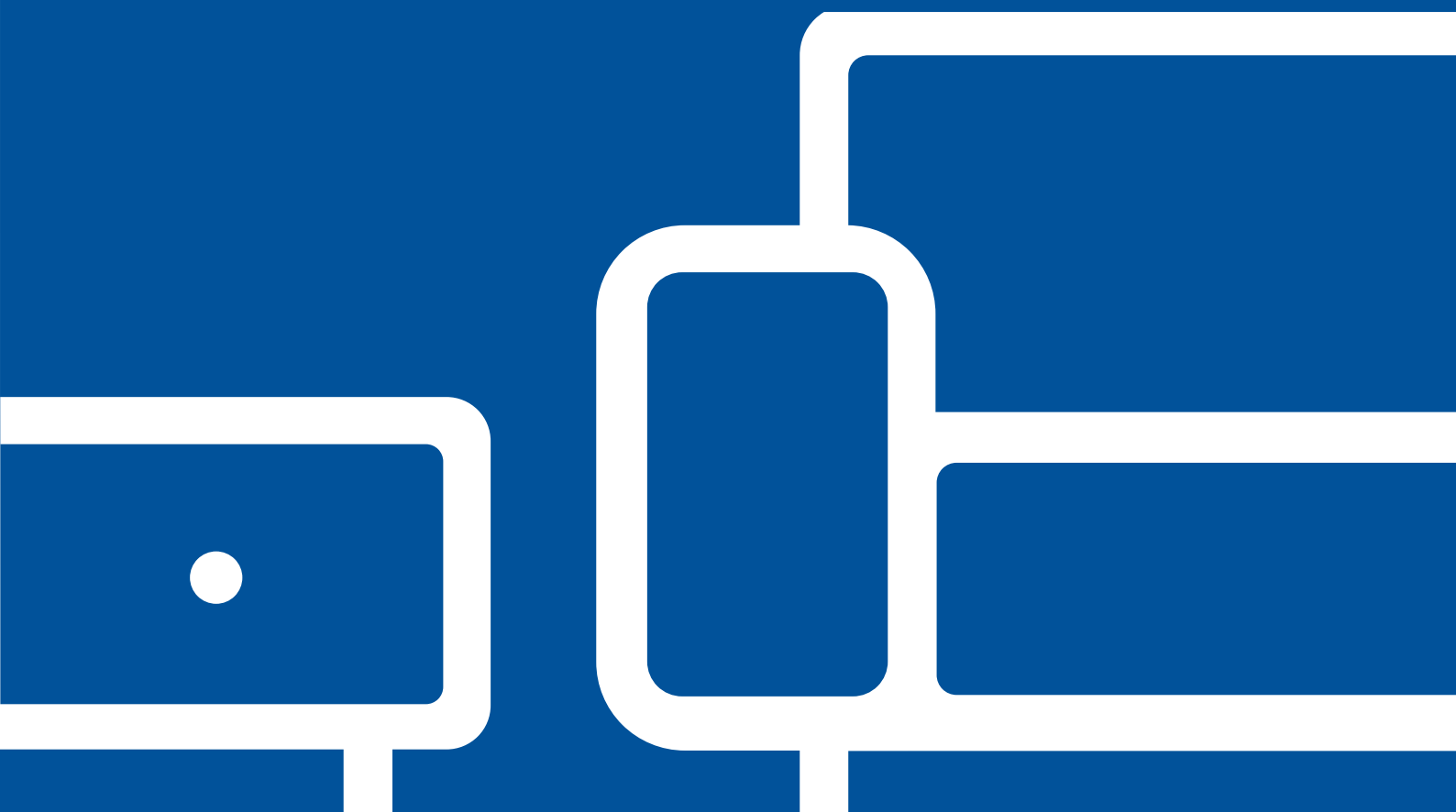


A landlord's guide to letting

LINLEY &
SIMPSON



Through extensive experience we have been able to clearly identify the needs of landlords and develop our services to meet their needs

1 About Us

We are specialists in the Letting and Management of residential property, taking pride in our reputation for providing a professional yet personal service to landlords.

The directors and principal staff have been working together for many years and continually aim to reinforce their position as the regions leading agent in this highly specialised and increasingly complex market.

Through extensive experience we have been able to clearly identify the needs of landlords and develop our services to meet their needs.

By ensuring that all our staff are experienced and dedicated, we can provide you with a quality service with the peace of mind that your property is in safe hands.

We are members of the ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTIAL LETTING AGENTS (ARLA) and the NATIONAL APPROVED LETTING SCHEME (NALS) Which means that our practices and client accounting systems are fully regulated.

This in turn means that we are accountable and your money is protected and insured.

2 Why Let?

There are many practical and financial reasons why people choose to let.

Purchasing residential property to let can be a secure and worthwhile form of investment- with returns rivalling many other kinds of investment. More and more people continue to invest in property as a way of providing for their retirement.

Moving abroad, whether it's temporary or permanent has become increasingly popular and letting your home offers you the opportunity to maintain an income from your property with the option to return at a later date.

Changes in the job market mean more than ever, mobility and flexibility are important career issues - letting offers a swift solution.

Many homeowners who can't sell, find that letting out their current property enables them to relocate or buy another. Lenders now offer "Let to Buy" mortgages which enable you to achieve this.

3 Buy To Let

Buy to Let properties have become hugely popular in recent years because mortgage providers have developed numerous products to suit landlords' needs. Provided you have an adequate deposit to put down, or alternatively enough equity in your main home, Buy to Let remains an excellent long-term investment providing both income and capital growth despite occasional fluctuations in the housing market. Buy to Let should always be viewed as a medium to long term investment.

There are also some tax advantages in buying to let: you can claim tax relief against items such as the interest on your mortgage, letting agency fees, insurance premiums and upkeep on the property.

Choosing a property

The key to success with buy-to-let is choosing the right property. If you are buying a property to let, choose one that will appeal to the type of people who live in that area.

For example, the main tenant market could be made up of busy professionals, single people or couples who may be looking for:

- a two or three-bedroom flat or house
- good transport links
- small or no garden

Our staff can tell you about what gaps there are in the rental market.

Before you buy, check that the house or flat you are interested in conforms to health and safety regulations. Otherwise you could find yourself needing to replace boilers, gas fires and appliances.

For more information on any part of this guide visit our website at: www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk

4 Preparing To Let

When people view your property, they will compare it to others available, so its condition and appearance will affect both the rental value and the speed at which it is let. Remember that first impressions count:

- wherever possible decorations should be light modern and neutral - be prepared to re-decorate as necessary
- carpets need to be clean and neutral
- kitchens and bathrooms should be modern and well presented with white bathroom suites ideally
- in general the property should be thoroughly cleaned and the rooms left neat and uncluttered
- any gardens should be tidy and easily maintained
- ensure that any obvious day to day maintenance is dealt with prior to letting

5 Letting Your Property

The right tenant is the essential ingredient for successful letting and Linley and Simpson have the experience to find the right tenant for your property.

Not only do we have a constant supply of tenants actively seeking a property but we have established contacts with major local companies and relocation agencies, who have a regular requirement for good quality accommodation.

We also operate the latest in computer software which automatically matches potential tenants to your property and emails the particulars to them immediately.

By specialising in professional letting we attract good calibre, low risk tenants.

Our internet coverage is second to none using all the major property portals.

Visit our website at www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk

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6 Managing Your Property

As part of our managed service we will prepare an inventory and schedule of condition. This forms the key element of our checking-in procedure. The list will contain all the items in the property including furniture, carpets, curtains and decoration - it will also have remarks as to their condition.

The inventory allows us to monitor whether a tenant is looking after your property and to assess whether any of the security deposit should be retained for repairs or dilapidations.

Our full management service obviously includes formally checking the property during the tenancy for which written reports will be supplied, ensuring your peace of mind.

The checks also help us highlight whether any maintenance work is required to keep your property in good order. We will deal with calls from your tenant and organise repairs as necessary, subject to your instructions.

We will negotiate tenancy renewals or extensions with your tenant and actively market the property for re-letting once your tenant serves notice.

When a tenant is set to leave your property a rigorous check out procedure is followed.

The full inventory and schedule of condition are checked to assess whether the tenant has maintained your property in a satisfactory condition. If it is found that there are items that are not up to standard then these areas will be costed and deducted from the tenant's security deposit - subject to statutory deposit regulations.

We will collect the rent from your tenant and a simple regular statement will be sent to you on the same day that the funds are transferred, giving details of all transactions undertaken in connection with your property.

For more information on any part of this guide visit our website at: www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk

The majority of our clients choose the 'Letting and Management' option, as this provides a complete service from start to finish

7 A Landlord's Guide to Safety & Environmental Regulations

THE FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS (FIRE) (SAFETY) REGULATIONS 1988 (AS AMENDED)

All upholstered furniture made after 1950 is included within these Regulations. The furniture covered by the Regulations includes sofas, settees, seat pads, beds, head boards, pillows, arm chairs, scatter cushions, futons, mattresses and bean bags, but not curtains, carpets, bedclothes (including duvets) and mattress covers. To comply with the Regulations these types of furniture must be fire resistant and in most cases carry a permanent label to this effect. To be 'Fire Resistant' most furniture and upholstery must have passed an 'ignitability test' specified in the Regulations.

If you ask us to let or manage your property, you must remove any furniture which does not comply with these Regulations before the tenancy begins. Any replacement furniture you place in the property must comply with the Regulations.

There are heavy penalties imposed by these regulations on landlords who do not comply with them. The penalties for non-compliance include a maximum of six months imprisonment and/or up to a £5000 fine.

You can obtain further guidance on these regulations from your local Trading Standards office.

THE GAS SAFETY (INSTALLATION AND USE) REGULATIONS 1998

These regulations came into effect on the 31st October 1994 to ensure that gas appliances are properly installed and maintained in a safe condition so as to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. It is the responsibility of the landlords of domestic properties that ALL 'Gas Appliances' and Gas Installation Pipe work owned by him are checked for safety at least once a year by a member of the Gas Safe Register and that accurate records are kept of those safety inspections and any work carried out. These records must be provided to the tenant. These regulations also apply to new properties.

'Gas Appliances' - includes any fitted gas appliance, for example:-

- Central heating system
- Gas heaters
- Gas fires
- Gas cookers

'Gas Installation Pipe work' includes gas pipe work, valves, regulators and meters.

Faulty equipment can lead to death and a conviction of unlawful killing on a landlord. Under the Regulations any appliance that does not conform to the regulations can be disconnected.

Failure to comply with these regulations may jeopardise the life of your tenant and lead to prosecution with penalties of imprisonment or fines up to £5000.

THE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT (SAFETY) REGULATIONS 1994

The above regulations impose an obligation on the Landlord to ensure that all electrical appliances and installations left as part of a let property are safe.

We recommend that all electrical appliances in let properties are regularly checked and serviced.

Failure to comply with these regulations may jeopardise the life of your tenant and lead to prosecution with penalties of imprisonment or fines up to £5000.

As part of our service we can arrange gas and electrical safety inspections if requested.

There are particular requirements for houses in multiple occupancy (HMO's).

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES (EPCS)

From 1st October 2008 any residential property offered to let must have an EPC. This is prepared by a qualified Domestic Energy Assessor who visits the property and prepares a detailed report which covers such elements as glazing, insulation and heating. The property is then given a rating similar in format to those seen on refrigerators and washing machines. The certificate is designed to give prospective tenants information on the energy efficiency and carbon emissions of the building so that they may compare it to others on the market. We can arrange the EPC and ensure your compliance with the new regulations using a reputable organisation.

8 FAQs

Why do I need an agent?

Of course there is nothing to stop a Landlord acting without an agent. However, there are many legal requirements that a Landlord has to fulfill, failure to comply with these may result in criminal prosecution. Our staff are trained to understand these requirements and have systems in place to ensure they are complied with.

We have facilities to properly vet a potential Tenant, allowing you to make the right choice.

What services do you offer?

We provide a 'Letting Service' or a 'Letting and Management' service. The 'Letting Service' is geared towards experienced Landlords who's day to day business is the management of their portfolio. The majority of our clients choose the 'Letting and Management' option, as this provides a complete service from start to finish, offering you peace of mind and the satisfaction of knowing that your property is in capable hands.

Our comprehensive Tenancy Agreement will make sure that your interests are protected in line with current legislation.

So why indulge in DIY when there are experts who can do it for you. We will save you time and could even save you money.

How is the rent paid?

Typically a standing order is set up from the tenant's bank account and the rent will be paid in advance.

Our fully computerised systems mean that, once the monies have 'cleared' through the banking system, the rent is paid by BACS directly into the account of your choice. A detailed statement of account is naturally part of our service.

What sort of agreement is used?

There are a number of different types of agreement that should be used depending on the circumstances of the tenants, the Landlord and indeed the property. In the majority of cases it will be what is called an Assured Shorthold Tenancy for a fixed period of at least 6 months.

What happens if the tenant doesn't pay the rent?

As part of our service we endeavour to ensure that the rent is paid on time. Having carefully selected the tenant in the first place, there's unlikely to be a problem. However people's circumstances do sometimes change during a tenancy and if the rent is not paid, we'll advise you on the appropriate course of action.

What about a deposit?

We ask tenants for a deposit which is usually equal to 1.25 x the monthly rent. It will only be returned when the tenant has given vacant possession of the property and left it in a satisfactory condition, allowing for wear and tear, and complied with his or her responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement. Tenant's deposits are now protected and must be registered with a government approved scheme.

What happens when my property is empty?

You must advise your insurance company in accordance with their requirements regarding empty property. Please check your insurance policy for the relevant details.

What are my outgoings?

These will usually include:

- Mortgage
- Insurance- Buildings & Contents (as a minimum)
- Repairs to the property and contents- unless it is caused by the tenants
- If leasehold- ground rent and service charges
- Managing agents fees
- When the property is empty, utilities and services

What about tax?

You will be liable to pay tax on any profit generated from letting your property- the amount of tax you pay will depend on your circumstances.

If you are overseas for more than six months in any tax year, you will be regarded as a non-resident Landlord. The current legislation requires us to deduct and pay over to the Revenue tax at the basic rate unless we are in receipt of an exemption letter from the Inland Revenue. Once we are notified by the Revenue that you are exempt, we will no longer need to deduct tax.

Please note that where there are joint Landlords (including married couples) an exemption is required for each Landlord. Our staff will be happy to discuss these arrangements with you.

Do I need to tell my insurance company?

Most certainly, yes- otherwise you may find your insurance is invalid. Should you need it, we are able to offer competitive alternative Buildings and Contents insurance cover. Please ask our staff for further details.

What do I do if my property is leasehold?

The managing agents or freeholders must be advised as a change in the type of occupancy may affect the buildings insurance. You should obtain the freeholders or managing agents consent prior to letting and advise us of any restrictions within the head lease which your tenant should be aware of.

Who looks after the garden?

The maintenance and upkeep of the garden is usually the responsibility of the Tenant. However, should you have a particularly large garden or any precious plants then it may be advisable to arrange for a gardener- the cost of which should be incorporated in the rental value. It is advisable to provide the materials for maintaining your garden even if the property is unfurnished.

Do I have to provide furniture?

No. Interestingly enough, in most cases we have found that there is very little difference in rental values between furnished and unfurnished lettings. Our staff will advise you on the most appropriate option for your property. An unfurnished property would require carpets, curtains and usually white goods. The requirements for a furnished property can vary depending upon the style and location of your property.

Are smoke alarms required?

Smoke alarms have to be installed in any new building or conversion. We would strongly recommend that you install at least one alarm per floor of your property, regardless of age.

What am I responsible for repairing?

As a Landlord you have a legal obligation under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to maintain the structure of the building, the sanitation and the supply of services. In addition, should an item in the property require replacing or repairing through fair wear and tear then you would be expected within the terms of the Tenancy Agreement to deal with this.

9 Landlord's Checklist

- Visit the Landlord's section of our website
- Make an appointment to see Linley & Simpson
- Get permission to let from your Mortgage Lender and/or Lessor
- Review Buildings and Contents Insurance
- Ensure all appliances are working and leave appropriate instruction manuals at the property.
- Make sure your Gas Safety check is organised prior to letting
- Check any furniture to be left in the property complies with the Furnishings regulations
- Redirect mail with the post office
- Leave the property in good order for the incoming tenant
- Provide Linley & Simpson with 3 full sets of keys

We hope this guide has been useful and informative. If you require any further information or wish to make an appointment, please do not hesitate to contact us.



For more information on any part of this guide visit our website at: www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk

Roundhay	Horsforth	Harrogate	Wetherby	City Branch	York	Wakefield	Ilkley
54 Street Lane	12 Station Road	6 Albert Street	34-36 Westgate	16 Swinegate	23 Micklegate	68 Northgate	30 Brook Street
Roundhay	Horsforth	Harrogate	Wetherby	Leeds	York	Wakefield	Ilkley
LS8 2ET	LS18 5NR	HG1 1JG	LS22 6NJ	LS1 4AG	YO1 6JH	WF1 3AP	LS29 8DE
0113 237 0281	0113 239 0663	01423 540054	01937 586060	0113 246 9295	01904 611722	01924 375245	01943 816888