

# Lettings Review

News and views for clients of Linley & Simpson

# LINLEY & SIMPSON

## It's official: we're best in business

LINLEY & Simpson has been crowned "Best Small Letting Agent Chain" in the UK – following the glowing feedback given by their customers.

Phil Spencer, star of TV's *Location, Location, Location*, handed over the coveted title at the ESTAs', the Estate Agent and Letting Agent awards, which are the largest and longest-running accolades in the property industry – using 60,000 questionnaires to determine the UK's finest.

They are unique because there is no panel of industry experts involved in selecting the winners.

Agents are judged by their clients, who score on the level of customer service they receive during the successful letting and

management of their property.

Director Will Linley said: "The most powerful marketing tool for agents is word of mouth so having customer satisfaction and confidence is important.

"Winning agents have the satisfaction of knowing they have been voted 'the best' by the people who count the most – our customers.

"We pride ourselves on providing the very highest levels of service to our clients and this award is a great reflection on our 80 staff, and the training schemes we have in place to ensure their market knowledge and customer services is second to none."

Phil Spencer added: "The great thing about the ESTAs is

in the areas under scrutiny. This has led to some extremely positive and encouraging feedback. Linley & Simpson will also use these scores to identify areas for improvement.

*Here is a snapshot of the results taken from the Client Feedback Reports 2010....*

- 92% of clients rated our trustworthiness as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 97% of landlords rated the



Simply the best: from left, Harrogate branch manager Tara Cuddy; Will Linley; Location, Location, Location's Phil Spencer; and Roundhay branch manager Nick Barrow

that they are not about how well you write your submission, or how well you answer questions in a telephone interview, but about the important things agents do every day.

"These awards help agencies to focus on customer service levels ensuring that staff follow standards of efficiency, good communication and transparency that differentiate the exceptional agent from the ordinary one."

## You couldn't make it up...

WITH so many tenants and landlords on the books, it is no wonder that from time to time Linley & Simpson staff hear some quite strange requests. Here are a few... whether you believe them or not!

**Tenant:** "I need to have a bath at my house or they won't let me in the hospital when I go into labour!"

**Landlord:** "Why not?"

**Tenant:** "They just won't"

*"Tenants have asked the landlord for new carpets to be fitted in a couple of rooms at the property. The carpets have been fitted, the tenant has phoned to say he is allergic to them, he has panic attacks when he thinks about walking on them and they've had to have the doctor out!"*

A tenant informed us that it was too dark on the street and requested that more street lights were installed.

*And one tenant said to his/her landlord: 'I didn't use the gas for a long time as I'm allergic to central heating!'*

## Thanks for voting for us

LINLEY & Simpson would like to say a special thank you to all of its landlords who took the time to complete the ESTAs' surveys.

They are not only a fantastic boost for the company and its industry status, but act as a very important method of client service evaluation.

Following the win, Linley & Simpson received a comprehensive performance pack reporting all customer feedback

Search over 450 properties at the relaunched [www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk](http://www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk)



Roundhay

0113 237 0281

Horsforth

0113 239 0663

Harrogate

01423 540054

Wetherby

01937 586060

Leeds City

0113 246 9295

York

01904 611722

Wakefield

01924 375245

Ilkley

01943 816888

# Linley & Simpson puts weight behind Leeds rental market

THE thriving residential lettings market in Leeds city centre has been handed a new vote of confidence – as the Linley & Simpson Swinegate office has been given a major makeover.

The facelift comes as demand for quality properties in and around the city centre continues to soar – ahead of what is traditionally the busiest time of the year for lettings.

Branch manager Gaynor Barratt said the improvements heralded the start of an exciting new era for the office.

“We have given the branch a modern and striking new look – but the same high levels of customer service remain,” she said.

“Since launching in the city centre five years ago, we have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of lets achieved.

“The market remains very strong and the investment we have made in revamping the



Investing in future: Linley & Simpson's new-look city centre office signals strength of the lettings market

office, harnessing the latest technology, and taking on extra staff members is a clear signal of our confidence in its future.

“The appeal of letting over buying continues to gather pace, and the attraction of living in Leeds – which tops so many

polls for being the UK's best city – shows no signs of abating. It's a winning formula for so many.”

The lure of ‘the Leeds experience’ is shared by many tenants – including the regular influx of graduates

taking their first step on the career ladder, and other young professionals and relocating businessmen and women.

Fewer empty properties are coming to market in the city centre as some tenants are staying longer. However, Linley & Simpson holds the biggest market share of available properties in the city centre, ensuring a choice of homes for tenants.

However, as the peak summer time approaches, this is likely to change as demand threatens to outstrip supply in some key developments – especially with continuing difficulties in obtaining a mortgage.

The office adds an extra dimension for both clients and landlords by linking in to a shared database across the Linley & Simpson network. Currently, it hosts a record 2,800 potential tenants awaiting properties.

## Room with a choo choo

WAKEFIELD'S newest city centre living complex forms a ‘des res’ with a difference – perched above its own ‘personal’ railway platform.

As well as all the very latest mod cons, including a first-floor ‘street in the sky’ outdoor courtyard piazza, the multi-million pound, 24-flat Westgate Central complex boasts a unique attraction – a mainline railway station right on its doorstep.

“It's a trainspotters’ dream, but more importantly, it promises to be the destination of choice for Yorkshire's growing band of commuters, sitting as it does at the very heart of the UK railway network,” said Ross Harding, manager of the Wakefield branch which was appointed as exclusive letting agents for the entire scheme.



All aboard: Linley & Simpson's Wakefield branch manager Ross Harding gets a bird's eye view of Westgate railway station from the new apartments

## Joining forces to regulate lettings industry

TENANTS often worry about exactly what has happened to their deposit once they have handed it over to their landlord or letting agent, just as landlords worry about what they will do if a tenant simply stops paying the rent.

To help ease these concerns and instil faith in the lettings market, a number of letting agents from Leeds and York

have joined forces to form a new regional group to help regulate the industry, as at present this is not mandatory.

Linley & Simpson has started this group with Local York and Leeds ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents), and will meet regularly to ensure that new legislation from the government is speedily implemented within their own

companies and that standards of best practice are constantly updated and enforced.

All companies involved agree that regulation is the way forward, to ensure that tenants and landlords can have full confidence in their letting agent.

Director Will Linley said: “As local agents we are all in competition with each other

for business but we are all in agreement that when it comes to protecting landlords and tenants it's our duty to put that above everything else.

“Some principles are far more important than profit and ensuring that the letting industry is well regulated by a professional body is fundamental to protecting landlords from the risk of possible court action.”

# Service for property investors takes off

IT'S a time for celebrations as a new venture that takes the headache – and risk – out of searching, buying and renting out a home has seen its first success!

Linley & Simpson Property Acquisitions Ltd was launched to help landlords and property investors take full advantage of the rising strength of the rental property market.

Within six weeks of briefing the company, retired Leeds teacher Ann Lea was the owner of two riverside flats on Wakefield's burgeoning waterfront – complete with established tenants and an income that beats the savings rates of any bank or building society.

She was the first to take ownership of a rental property as a result of the new venture, which guides and advises clients every step of the way to maximise returns.

Victoria Cribb, from Linley & Simpson Property Acquisitions, worked closely with Ann to identify the right properties at the right price in the right location – from a landlord's perspective. After viewing a number of potential properties, Ann settled on buying two modern apartments at one of Wakefield's most attractive new developments.

Ann said: "The true value of the service was the partnership that was set up, where I still felt that I was in control and able to ultimately make the key decisions.

"It was an imaginative approach which suited my situation as a relative newcomer to the buy-to-let 'world'. Victoria quickly came to understand my requirements, to manage my expectations and to guide my deliberations, and finally to



Toasting the first success of the new venture are, from left, Will Linley, Ann Lea and Victoria Cribb

nurture my confidence into being able to believe in my ability to make an informed choice."

Victoria said: "This is both a time and cost effective way of augmenting property portfolios, with a clear focus on making every Pound of investment go as far as possible.

"As well as drawing upon our extensive market knowledge and insight, clients can be reassured they are working with specialists who are among the most trusted and successful names in residential letting here in Yorkshire, achieving more than 30,000 lets since launching 13 years ago."

She added: "Integrity and impartiality are the key themes of our approach. We have to be successful for our clients as the litmus test at the end of the process is to let the property – we are judged very much on the results we achieve.

"Interest in the venture is growing, as is our buy to let property database, and, following in Ann's initial footsteps, we now have a number of other investors who are poised to take ownership of new properties across our Yorkshire network. This is another clear signal of the buoyancy of the rental market in the county's sought-after areas."

## Minis set to make their mark

Driving the Linley & Simpson name across the region: a dazzling new fleet of Minis will be taking to the roads of Yorkshire as part of a campaign to recruit more landlords and house new tenants.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**Name**  
Jenny Renick



**Branch and job title**  
Horsforth,  
Lettings Negotiator

**What is Linley & Simpson's biggest asset?**  
Its experienced, hard working and dedicated staff.

**How would you describe yourself using just three words?**  
Happy, enthusiastic, motivated

**What would your dream home feature?**  
A games room with state of the art music system and fully stocked bar

**If you could live anywhere in the world where would it be?**  
Australia



**What is your favourite holiday spot?**  
New York and The Lake District

**Four dinner guests of your choice?**  
Keith Lemon, Russell Brand, Simon Cowell and Gary Barlow



**First thing you would buy if you won the lottery?**  
Luxury all-inclusive holiday for me and all my friends and family

**Tell us one fascinating fact about yourself that will surprise us**  
It's not the most fascinating fact, but I can speak Polish!

# Crouchy signs for Linley & Simpson – well, sort of...

ENGLAND football star signs for Linley & Simpson! Unfortunately it wasn't the usual signature the company requires, as during his stay at the Leeds city centre

Malmaison hotel with his Tottenham Hotspur team, Peter Crouch (pictured) strolled past, stopped for a look in the window and signed a to-let board, not a contract!



## Call to be vigilant as property scam foiled

PEOPLE living in, or searching for, rented property are being urged to stay vigilant after commenters tried to strike twice in Yorkshire.

Linley & Simpson is issuing the warning as two incidents have been reported to the Micklegate, York branch and have since been reported to the police.

On one occasion – involving a so-called ‘phantom let’ – one of the company’s properties for rent was copied onto an online classified advertising site at a much reduced rent. When callers

inquired about the bogus ad, they were asked to send a money transfer to secure the property.

The second scam involved a tenant being called by someone pretending to be from another letting agent, who claimed the management of the property was being switched and the monthly rent was to be paid to a new bank account.

“Fortunately, on both occasions people were able to see through the scam and the commenters were foiled in their bid

to extract money from them,” said director Will Linley.

“Although incidents like this are rare, it again underlines the importance of dealing with reputable letting agents, and reputable websites, when searching for rented property.”

Whilst recent legislation has been designed to eliminate cowboy agents and landlords, tenants are still potentially vulnerable – as these cases highlight.

The following checklist has been devised for tenants

looking for property to rent:

- Ensure the letting agent is a member of a recognised professional body – such as ARLA; NALS or RICS.
- Do not pay anything over until after viewing the property and having proof of its existence
- Seek proof that the deposit has been registered with an approved scheme
- Never release financial information over the web or phone to someone whose existence you haven't verified.

## Radio DJ provides an on-air endorsement



JK, left, and Joel – real names Jason King and Joel Ross – presenting their Virgin Radio weekend show

LINLEY & Simpson really does seem to be the talk of the town, as Radio Aire DJ, JK – better known as one half of the JK and Joel Virgin Radio weekend show – described his recent encounter with the company as “brilliant” and “fantastic” live on air to thousands of listeners!

JK, who is also a former Radio 1 DJ, spoke of the service he and his wife received when looking for a new home to rent.

After visiting a number of letting agents, they named Linley & Simpson as by far the best, and spoke very highly of their agent, Cheryl, who “knew exactly what they were looking for” and “took away all of the stress” a property hunt can bring.

Not only did Linley & Simpson receive a glowing reference, but also a new tenant, as JK closed the topic by saying that he was planning to rent one of the two properties he viewed!