

Lettings Review

News and views for clients of Linley & Simpson

LINLEY & SIMPSON

Renting at forefront of the property market

LINLEY & Simpson is predicting that the rental market will face unprecedented challenges in 2011 – unless more properties become available.

New figures reveal that the most-sought after homes on our database are attracting an average of nine applicants, which is a record. We predict that this gap between supply and demand will widen as more and more people turn to the benefits of renting.

One of our branches has already witnessed a 300 per cent rise in viewings in January compared to December as a record number of people make it a New Year's resolution to seek a home which they can let.

We are now calling on banks to free up more funds to enable investors to develop their buy-to-let portfolios, and Government to launch initiatives to encourage more investment into the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

The PRS has an increasingly important part to play in the future of housing in the UK. With more and more people excluded for home ownership and a reduction in availability of social housing, the PRS is predicted to increase from 14 per cent to 17 per cent of overall housing within the next five years. At a time when there is very little supply of new properties into the PRS, the rental market is going to come under ever increasing pressure.

"The British love affair with home ownership seems to be over – buyers can't buy and sellers



There has never been a better time to be a landlord: Nick Simpson, left and Will Linley

can't sell – and renting has come to the forefront of the property market," said director Will Linley.

"The situation is a ticking timebomb that is unprecedented in our 13-year history. Unless there is an influx of extra properties to satisfy this demand, it's inevitable that the market will find itself stretched towards crisis point later this year."

He added: "Overcoming the current shortage of properties is the biggest challenge that the market has faced – but it is not something that it can solve on its own. The Government and the banks need to recognise and work with the PRS to help find solutions.

"There has never been a better time to be a landlord, or thinking about becoming one – tenant demand is at an all-time high,

void periods are at an all-time low, and monthly rents are rising. There is no shortage of incentives for landlords to invest."

What's coming up...

- The number of tenants will continue to rise month-by-month – on the back of tighter mortgage lending, falling house prices and rising job insecurity. Rising divorce rates will also see a rise in lets among single people.
- Monthly rents for properties in sought-after areas will continue to rise. Increases of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent are likely to be more commonplace.
- More people will follow the Continental trend and rent for longer. Although UK home ownership has fallen to its lowest level in 20 years, it is still around 50 per cent higher than countries such as Germany, where renting is the norm rather than the exception.
- The natural 'churn' of properties becoming vacant each month will fall. Out of a portfolio of several hundred properties, one branch reported just one changeover of tenancy last month.

HOME TWEET HOME

IT'S never been easier to go from mouse to house – just start following Linley & Simpson, and our exclusive offers, on both Facebook and Twitter.

You'll be the first to hear about new instructions and rental discounts on a range of selected properties across our eight-branch network; find out about the latest career opportunities to join our award-winning team; enter exclusive competitions and prize draws; and get the inside track on real-time company and industry news.

"Residential lettings is a fast-moving world and the growing popularity of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, gives us an ideal platform to share all our latest news and offers with landlords and clients alike," said director Nick Simpson.

"It's particularly useful in spotlighting the best in new instructions – sometimes even before they are launched on the open market.

"Landlords can be online in an instant with hundreds of property-hungry people following the next hot property."

Search over 450 properties at 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

Promotions strengthen our team at Linley & Simpson

WE have strengthened our senior management team by promoting three of its longest-serving managers to the newly-created posts of Associate Directors.

Nick Barrow, manager of our Roundhay office in Leeds; Lynne Taylor, our accounts manager; and Gemma Thornton, our systems, training and compliance manager share more than 30 years' experience working for us.

The promotions come at a time when demand for properties to let has reached its highest level in the company's history.

"Staff are our greatest asset and these promotions recognise the significant contributions that Nick, Lynne and Gemma have made to the company's success," said director Nick Simpson.

"As well as maintaining their important day-to-day roles, all three will play a greater part in shaping the future direction of the company at a strategic level."

Fellow founding director Will Linley said: "They bring to the new posts a wealth of expertise from their own specialist areas of the business – the letting of properties; the management of client accounts; and the continuing development of our staff.

"We want to draw upon this sector knowledge to ensure we stay at the forefront of residential lettings in Yorkshire, and build on recent national awards such as being crowned 'Best Small Chain' in the whole of the UK – an honour



in which we take great pride as it was based totally on independent client feedback."

New appointments: from left, Nick Simpson, Gemma Thornton, Nick Barrow, Lynne Taylor and Will Linley

Discount deal to cure condensation

LANDLORDS can take advantage of an exclusive money-saving deal to solve one of the most common problems they face – condensation and mould in their tenanted properties.

We have linked up with EnviroVent to provide landlords with a cost-effective, energy-efficient solution which is guaranteed to cure condensation and mould for the lifetime of the property.

As a client of Linley & Simpson, landlords are being offered a survey on any of their properties free of charge (saving £75).

EnviroVent consultants will find out the best solution to correctly ventilating the property and ensuring that condensation and mould are never to return again.

In addition to offering a free survey, landlords will receive a full 25 per cent discount, meaning in that many cases a guaranteed lifetime cure to this problem will cost less than one month's rent. Every installation comes with a robust rolling five-year warranty.

EnviroVent fresh air consultant Stuart Wright said: "We have seen many landlords who have spent money time and time again, only to witness the problem return within a matter of months."

Landlords with any properties which may require our attention can call EnviroVent on 01423 876345 to arrange a free survey.



Panoramic vista: Emma Knight, lettings negotiator at Linley & Simpson's city centre office, and senior lettings negotiator Mike Moon enjoy the view from one of the new Leeds Waterside flats the company has been appointed to let

Leeds waterfront apartments to let

LINLEY & Simpson has been appointed to handle the letting of up to 50 new apartments by the Leeds waterfront.

The flats are at Waterside – a new development situated between the Leeds-Liverpool canal and the River Aire – and the first batch of them have just been successfully let by the company's city centre office in Swinegate.

Branch manager Gaynor Barrett said: "We are delighted to have been given this opportunity

to let so many apartments.

"They are near to the City Island development, which is perfect for access to the financial area of the city, only a 10 minute walk to the train station or along the canal tow path into the centre. There is excellent access to all the motorway links.

"In the other direction, you have all the benefits of the Cardigan Field leisure area with the large cinema, ten pin bowling and fitness centre."

There is a selection of

furnished one bed apartments starting from £525 per month; unfurnished two bed apartments from £650 per month; and furnished two bed apartments from £675 per month. Parking spaces can be reserved for an additional £85 per month.

Our recently-upgraded Swinegate office can be found opposite the Malmaison Hotel and can be contacted on 0113 246 9295. The Waterside development is showcased on our website www.linleyandsimpson.co.uk.

Investment advice you can count on

By Victoria Cribb

AFTER a solid year of trading, L&S's Property Acquisitions Department has evolved into an all-embracing property investment advisory for the buy-to-let investor, satisfying the broad ranging criteria of clients, local and global!

The recent economic climate has certainly shaken things up within the residential property sector, creating one of the most buoyant rental markets the country has experienced.

Negotiable purchase prices and rental incomes at a peak are encouraging healthy returns for the property investor.

The alternative, as one mortgage advisor recently pointed out, is to have your money "burning in the bank" – the obvious result of high inflation and low interest rates.

"The amount sitting in the bank now will actually be worth less in six months' time if the current trend continues," according to Richard Purnell of ME Smarter Mortgages.

Sources within the industry inform us that over the last 80 years the average increase in property prices has been 7.9 per cent per annum, and, in the ten years leading to 2007's downturn, national property values have trebled.

Thus, as a medium to long term option, this type of investment is tangible and has historical data to prove its stability and success.

Increasingly favourable mortgage lending criteria is gradually emerging. Whilst buy-to-let lending specialists such as Paragon are re-launching themselves for business, new

entrants are making themselves prominent; the Bank of China, Precise, and Aldermore.

The decision to build or develop a BTL portfolio should not be taken lightly. Whilst it can provide a great investment vehicle, especially for those taking the long-term view, it is critical that you invest prudently.

I would always maintain that "there is no such thing as the perfect property investment!"

The knowledge and understanding that we have of the lettings market through our branches is one aspect which makes us unique. From a sales

which will allow us to meet the bespoke requirements of each individual investor.

One source is through liaising with developers who approach us when they are reducing prices, offering a promotion or selling a limited stock below market value.

Another option is presented through an associate agent who is able to address the needs of investors seeking a longer term investment strategy which will cover its costs in the immediate term and in the longer term provide a steady source of income (in the region of £40,000 per annum) and a secure asset base.

Through credible contacts within the industry we now also offer opportunities through an agent specialising in "secure" overseas investments developed by UK based builders.

Aspiring property investors with smaller cash deposits should not be deterred!

As a result of the broader range of properties available we can cater to a wider range of budgets. However, the ability to move quickly, whatever level of finance, will place you in a strong position.

Through access to an exclusive opportunity a client recently purchased a fantastic, two double

bedroom, furnished show apartment within 24 hours of becoming available... with a 30 per cent discount and a yield in excess of 8.5 per cent arguably £77,000 better spent than saved!!

■ If you've been contemplating property investment and want to register, receive the free property alerts, or arrange a free consultation please contact me on 0113 2370160 or at victoria@linleyandsimpson.co.uk

"It is the knowledge and understanding of the local lettings market which makes us unique."



perspective our position is consolidated through constant communication with those in the industry, developers and fellow agents to name but a few.

What has become apparent is the appetite that a large proportion of our clients have for purchases below market value and/or producing a high yield.

In response to this we can adjust our model to utilise several property sources

Great training helps turn leads into lets

LINLEY & Simpson prides itself on turning leads into lets. And it is aiming to improve its success rate even further after all 40 of its frontline lettings staff completed an intensive two-day training course.

The bespoke training course, run

by specialists Positive Approach, examined ways in which staff could further improve the way they make the most of the leads they get – and drive up their conversion rate for clients.

Director Will Linley said: "Training is an important dimension to our

business as it enables our staff to fulfil their potential and gives us a competitive business edge.

"This course was developed especially for us by specialists in the field of property and we are already seeing the benefits."

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Name
Michael Moon

Branch and job title
Senior Lettings Negotiator, Leeds city centre



What is Linley & Simpson's biggest asset?

Its fantastic reputation which has been built through hard working, loyal and motivated staff and its ability to grow, adapt and always stay one step ahead of the competition.

How would you describe yourself using just three words?

Kind, considerate and enthusiastic

What would your dream home feature?

There would have to be a 5-a-side pitch somewhere in the grounds to fuel my passion for the game with a well stocked clubhouse bar built on to it

What character in a film would you most like to play?

Mick Dundee from Crocodile Dundee

What is your favourite holiday spot?

Goa, it's beautiful over there

Four dinner guests of your choice?

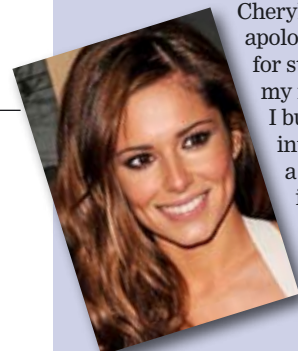
Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, Pele and Una Healy (from The Saturdays) :-)

Your New Year resolution for 2011?

I want to get away more this year and have more sun and also keep working very hard!

Tell us one fascinating fact about yourself that will surprise us

Cheryl Cole once apologised to me for standing on my foot when I bumped into her on a night out in Leeds many moons ago!



Surge in demand due to the eX factor...

OUR staff have dubbed it the 'Ex-Factor' – the latest reason for a surge in demand for homes to rent.

We have found that a rising number of relationship breakdowns is a major reason for this situation – alongside the continuing difficulties in buying a property and securing a mortgage in the current economic climate.

Director Nick Simpson said: "It's a noticeable trend and one which, sadly, our staff are dealing with more and more often as they do their best to find a solution for the parties concerned.

"We call it the 'Ex-Factor' and it seems to peak at this time of year. Many couples in relationship difficulties have tended to stay together for the sake of their children over Christmas, and start of the new school term.

"But with those pressures now behind them, they are deciding that now is the time to split up and try to move on – which ultimately leads to one of them moving out.

"In most cases it is about trying to help one of them find a new home to rent, but in some

cases it can also involve letting out the property they shared."

However, the company's network of offices also pinpoint a number of more positive factors for the record rise in rental demand.

A surge in the number of overseas students sponsored by their Government – notably from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar – choosing Leeds in particular as a place to study and live has also buoyed the market.

So too has the number of new graduates taking the first step

on the career ladder after leaving university in the summer.

Mr Simpson added: "We should also not lose sight of the fact that the number of new couples looking to move in together also forms a large element of our client base, so our staff are well versed in dealing with both ends of the relationship spectrum.

"The key issue now facing the market is trying to meet this demand and we are constantly working with landlords to increase our stock levels and explore ways in which they can expand their portfolio."

Staff survive hat-trick of charity challenges

STAFF from across all our branches have completed a range of fund-raising challenges for charity.

Six colleagues raised £750 after taking part in Cancer Research UK's 'Race for Life', completing a 5k run around Leeds Road playing fields in Huddersfield. They were prompted to take part after their lives were touched by family or friends being diagnosed with the disease.

The team included Associate Director **Lynne Taylor**; **Tara Cuddy**, Harrogate branch manager; **Arianna Deola**,

lettings negotiator Roundhay branch; **Tricia Seery**, assistant accounts manager based at Horsforth branch; **Katy Arnott**, accounts assistant Horsforth; and **Clare Ellis**, accounts assistant Horsforth.

Jon Graham, Ilkley branch manager, abseiled down the landmark Cow and Calf rocks on Ilkley Moor to help a nine-year-old local boy with cerebral palsy walk independently for the first time. The money he is still collecting will help to send Ben Smithson to America for life-changing surgery



Stepping out for charity: top picture, six of the best, from left, Linley & Simpson's Tara Cuddy, Arianna Deola, Tricia Seery, Lynne Taylor, Katy Arnott and Clare Ellis
Right: Jon Graham



LINLEY & Simpson has swapped lets for nets by sponsoring Beckwithshaw Under 9s football squad. Its support for the team – pictured here before a 9-1 thrashing of Lawnswood – is the latest in a number of community initiatives that it is planning to build on in 2011.

as part of the town's *Ben's Wish To Walk* campaign.

And **Victoria Cribb**, who heads up Linley & Simpson Acquisitions, raised more than £250 for homeless charity Simon in the Street after swopping her office in Street Lane for a cardboard box as she spent a night sleeping 'rough' on the streets of Leeds.

■ Victoria is pictured, right, in her cardboard box.

