

Locate
The Property Experts



**A GUIDE TO LETTING
YOUR PROPERTY**



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✦ Introduction

Selling your property involves some important decisions about a hugely valuable asset. It also requires a great deal of hard work and organisation, so it really pays to talk to the right people from the outset.

As one of Bradford's leading estate agents, **we understand how a landlord can maximise the value of their property** and how careful preparation can make the whole process run more smoothly. As members of The Property Ombudsman, and a licensed NALS agent we adhere to the industry codes of practice to ensure that your property transaction follows the latest regulations.

This guide contains our 'Property Expert' tips for a successful letting process, wherever you are in Bradford and the surrounding districts. We hope you find them useful.



★ Valuing your Property

Our property valuations are always carried out by a senior member of the letting team. They hold a wealth of knowledge about the market, and will be able to show you recent rental prices for comparable properties in your area.





✦ Preparing to let

There are 12 key areas to be addressed before placing your property on the market.

1. CONDITION OF PROPERTY

The decoration and furnishings of a property make a bigger difference than you might think. Properties that have been recently decorated in neutral colours, with modern kitchens and bathrooms, wooden floors in reception areas and good storage really do rent faster and for higher prices. To help you maximise your property's potential, ask us about our professional Refurbishment & Interior Services – we have successfully let every property they have improved within two weeks.

2. APPLIANCES AND MANUALS

All appliances and machinery, including the boiler, must be in good working order and serviced as appropriate. Manufacturers' operating and instruction manuals for all appliances and electrical equipment should be left in the property. Details of any maintenance contracts should also be supplied.

3. EPC

All rental properties are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which rates the energy efficiency and environmental impact of your property on a scale from A to G. You must order an EPC for potential tenants before you market your property to rent. We use a number of accredited EPC providers and can organise the certificate on your behalf.

4. SAFETY REGULATIONS

As a landlord you must adhere to a number of legal requirements regarding the safety of your property. For more information please refer to the Appendix at the back of this guide.

5. FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED?

There is often no difference between the level of rent achieved for a property whether it is furnished or unfurnished. An 'unfurnished' property will include curtains or blinds, carpets or other flooring and white goods in the kitchen. A 'furnished' property usually means a property ready for someone to move into. We can advise you on what should be left and what should be removed.

6. MANAGEMENT

It is important to identify early on who will be looking after the property whilst it is let. We can provide a comprehensive property management service. Please ask us for more details.

7. TERM OF LETTING

Most tenancies are for an initial term of 6 months or one years. Tenants' options to renew and early termination clauses can be negotiated.

8. CONSENTS

You need to check the requirements of your lease in connection with sub-letting and obtain the necessary consent if required. If you have a mortgage on your property, consent may also be required.



9. INSURANCE

Landlords are required to make sure both the property and its contents are fully insured. You must inform your insurance company that the property is to be let and adjust your policy as required. We can recommend Towergate Insurance for those in need of landlord cover. For more information, please refer to:
towergateinsurance.co.uk/landlords

10. UTILITIES AND COUNCIL TAX

The tenant is normally responsible for paying all gas, electricity, telephone, water, council tax and television licence bills during the tenancy. The landlord is responsible for any ground rent and service charges payable.

11. TAX IMPLICATIONS

All income generated from letting property in the UK is liable to UK tax, whether the landlord lives in the UK or not. Non-resident landlords will need to apply to HMRC to pay tax on their rental income through Self-Assessment in order to receive UK rental income without deduction of tax. You must pay tax on the profit you make from renting out the property, after deductions for 'allowable expenses'. The tax liabilities associated with letting a property will vary from person to person, we therefore recommend you seek the advice of a property tax specialist in order to minimise your liabilities.

12. LEGAL OWNERSHIP

If your property is jointly owned, co-owners must be named on our terms and conditions and on the tenancy agreement.





★ Presenting your property for viewing

We suggest you consider the following when showing your property to prospective buyers.

1. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A clean front door and a litter- free entrance gives an excellent first impression. Any communal areas within the property should also be cleared of junk mail and vacuumed regularly. Depersonalising the property and removing unnecessary clutter will help attract potential tenants

2. LIGHTING

Clean windows and drawn back curtains are essential in maximising natural light. In the winter months, good lighting is equally important - consider using lamps to add extra warmth to a room. If the property is empty, ensure that the mains power is on and all light bulbs are working.

3. TEMPERATURE

Appropriate temperature for the season helps prospective tenants imagine themselves in the home. Open windows in the summer and use a working fireplace or regular bursts of central heating in the winter.

4. FRESHNESS

The damp smell that is often prevalent in cellars can be kept to a minimum by good ventilation or a dehumidifier. Beds should be made up with fresh linen in preparation for photographs and viewings.

5. CLEANING

Regular cleaning is essential. It takes a very short time for dust and dirt to collect on shelves and window sills, which could easily put off potential tenants.

6. GARDEN

Gardens, front and back, should be kept tidy and attractive, with well-mown lawns, hedges cut and colour emphasised where possible.hedges cut and colour emphasised where possible.



★ Marketing to generate demand

At Locate Properties, we have a dedicated marketing team who work closely with our letting office. We recognise that properties often require different marketing strategies, so we use cutting edge marketing techniques, alongside more traditional methods, to help your property achieve its potential.

1. PHOTOGRAPHY AND FLOOR PLANS

When letting a property, it is important that it is presented in the best possible light. We have a team of professional photographers who are experts at capturing the correct property features. We also use experts to construct accurate and detailed floor plans.

2. BROCHURES

We combine well-written property descriptions with photography and technical information to ensure potential tenants have everything they need in one place.

3. ONLINE

We know that 90% of potential tenants start their property search online. We use a number of digital marketing techniques to ensure your property is being targeted at the right audience. All of our properties are listed on our website as well as leading property search sites; Rightmove and Zoopla.

4. OFFLINE ADVERTISING AND PR

Research shows that tenants do not actively look for property to rent in local glossy magazines. We understand that it is important to feature properties in 'stand-out' places in off-line communications, not alongside the bulk of other agents' properties.

We work closely with our social media department to try to get your property wider exposure, if needed.





1. OUR TENANT NETWORK

We maintain a central database of potential tenants, so we can instantly call and email matches for your property.

2. CORPORATE SERVICES

This specialist department is dedicated to creating and maintaining long lasting relationships with major blue chip companies, relocation and property search agents, who regularly consult us on briefs. Our professionalism and responsiveness as well as our honest approach to property means we are frequently their first port of call during a search. Our experience in corporate lettings enables us to advise you on the best way to present your property in order to secure this type of tenant.

3. 'TO LET' BOARDS

'To Let' boards are a very effective marketing tool for landlords. A large number of applicants register as a direct result of seeing one of our boards. We would therefore always recommend one where possible.

4. OFFICE WINDOWS

Many of our enquiries come from applicants walking into our offices. We therefore regularly update our window displays with the latest listings.

5. LOCATE PROPERTIES BRAND ADVERTISING

In addition to these property- specific marketing techniques, we invest heavily in the Locate Properties brand. Our brand presence across the Bradford district is designed to put Locate Properties top of mind for anyone looking to rent property.

✦ Viewing

The most successful vendors ensure their property is looking its best throughout the viewing process. **Finishing touches such as fresh flowers and good lighting can make a real difference.**

It is important that restrictions on viewing are avoided wherever possible. A potential tenant may have many properties to look at and if they cannot access yours at a time that suits them, you may miss out.

We will always provide you with details and feedback from each viewing.





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★ The offer process

Receiving an offer for your property is an exciting moment. At this point the help and support of your Locate Properties agent will be critical. With some properties in Bradford attracting multiple offers, it is important that this stage is handled carefully, fairly and ethically.

AGREEING THE TENANCY

Your Locate properties agent will be experienced in negotiating confidently with prospective tenants on your behalf. They will work hard to protect your interests and will obtain the best possible terms for the tenancy. We will provide advice and support during negotiations. Close communication and teamwork will be key for a successful outcome.

ACCEPTING AN OFFER

Once you have accepted an offer, the let is agreed in principle and you will receive an agreed offer letter. This confirms in writing to you and your tenant the terms of the tenancy which have been agreed, including any special conditions, the proposed start date of the tenancy, etc. Check this carefully; although it is not legally binding, it forms the basis of the Tenancy Agreement. At this stage it is normal for the tenant to pay an administration deposit, usually the equivalent of one or two weeks rent. We will then commence the tenant referencing process and keep you regularly updated.



✦ Tenancy administration

We will draw up an appropriate Tenancy Agreement; this is a legally binding contract between you and your tenant. It will set out clearly the contractual obligations both parties will be bound by, including any special conditions which may apply.

SIGNING THE TENANCY AGREEMENT

There are two types of tenancy which can be created when letting residential property:

- Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)
- Contractual Tenancy

There are different criteria which apply for each type of tenancy, depending on whether the tenant is an individual or a company and how much the annual rent is etc. We will advise you accordingly. In order to protect your position, it is extremely important that the Tenancy Agreement is professionally drawn up, includes all the necessary provisions and is up-to-date in terms of the latest legislation.

INVENTORY

In order to minimise the risk of any dispute over the deposit at the end of the tenancy, it is essential to have a detailed Inventory and Schedule of Condition prepared by a professional inventory clerk; this is something we normally arrange on your behalf as an ancillary service (fees apply). This will accurately record the state and condition of the property and its contents before the tenant moves in. The property must be professionally deep-cleaned to include carpets and soft furnishings, if necessary, before the start of the tenancy. The tenant is contracted to return the property and all contents at the end of the tenancy in the same state and condition as recorded on the inventory at the start, with the exception of 'fair wear and tear'.

TENANCY DEPOSIT PROTECTION

From 6th April 2007, legislation came into effect requiring that any landlord or agent who takes a deposit from a tenant for an Assured Shorthold Tenancy must safeguard it in an approved tenancy deposit scheme. We are members of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme which is administered by Tenancy deposit solutions LTD. For all Assured Shorthold Tenancies where we hold the deposit, it will be protected by this scheme. For more information about 'My Deposits' please visit www.mydeposits.co.uk



✦ Commencement of tenancy

The initial monies payable by the tenant, including the first instalment of rent and deposit, are collected by us before the tenancy starts. Following receipt of cleared funds and an exchange of signed Tenancy Agreements, the keys can be handed over to the tenant at the inventory check-in. **It is important that an appropriate number of key sets are made available**, bearing in mind security keys will need to be copied in advance. Congratulations your property is now successfully let.







✦ Appendix

FIRE

As a landlord, you must ensure that all upholstered furniture; soft furnishings, beds, mattresses, pillows, cushions, headboards, loose and stretch covers for furniture and seat pads comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 and the subsequent amendments to that Act. Exempted items are: curtains, carpets, bed linen, duvets, period and antique furniture manufactured before 1950. All furniture purchased new, since 1st March 1990, should comply – if it does it will have a safety label attached to it. If in doubt, the items should be removed. For more information you can download a copy of the regulations by visiting www.legislation.gov.uk.

GAS

In accordance with the Gas Safety (installation and use) Regulations 1988, it is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances (boilers, cookers, gas fires, pipework and flues) are checked for safety by a Gas Safe registered engineer before a tenancy begins and then rechecked for safety at least every 12 months. The regulations also state that you must retain the gas safety record for a period of two years. For more information please visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 place a legal responsibility on landlords to make sure all electrical wiring, installations and appliances supplied as part of the property are safe. To comply with the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, all electrical installations and appliances in the property need to be regularly checked and serviced by an appropriately qualified engineer. We would recommend that landlords carry out regular checks of such equipment. Properties that are managed by us are required to have a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) on an annual basis.



✦ Appendix

SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

All tenanted properties must be equipped with a working smoke alarm on each storey that has living accommodation. They also need a working carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation and which contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance. The landlord (or representative) must ensure that the alarms are in proper working order on the day the tenancy starts. New homes built since June 1992 are required to have mains operated and interlinked smoke alarms fitted on every floor.

HMOs

Any property let to three or more unrelated people is deemed to be a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, require that all HMO's have every fixed electrical installation inspected and tested at least every five years and an Electrical Installation Condition report (EICR) prepared by a qualified electrician.

SAFETY CHECKS

We can arrange for gas and electrical safety checks to be carried out, by a qualified engineer, on your behalf.

✦ Our Office

29-31 North Parade, Bradford, BD1 3JL

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www.locatehomes.co.uk