



GUIDELINES FOR LETTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Member of **UKALA** - United Kingdom Association of Letting Agents



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INTRODUCTION

We have recently merged companies, at the end of 2021 incorporating two family business'. Angus Watson has accumulated a lot of experience having been in the letting industry for over 25 years. Personal service is something we pride ourselves on and we are very fussy with whom we let too.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

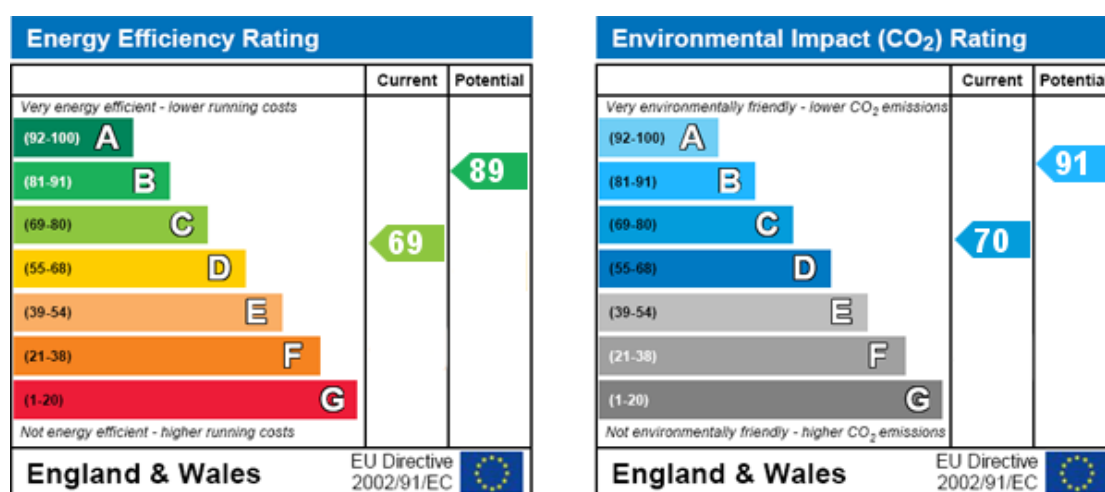
Proof of property ownership will need to be sighted by us in order to avoid any misunderstandings or potential identity theft. This proof can be either your mortgage documents, property deeds or a letter from your solicitor confirming this. We also require valid photo I.D: passport or driving licence.

MARKETING

The market for good quality rented property is high and over the past few years there has been a definite increase in demand. We offer a free valuation service, without obligation, and offer specific advice regarding the letting of your property. In general, the better the condition of the property the easier it will be to let, and the higher the likelihood of the property being well looked after. Upon receiving instruction from you, we will market your property on the internet, through our own website and well known property portals i.e. Zoopla, OntheMarket & Primelocation. Also advertising on Social Media, our window and circulating details of our property list to our register of applicants. We operate within a 15 mile radius of Cullompton.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Since October 2008, all buildings, whether residential, commercial or industrial are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate [EPC]. These are valid for 10 years and a property cannot be marketed without one. All rental properties must have a minimum rating of "E". This will however be changing to a minimum rating of "C" from 2025. We can arrange to have this carried out for £65.00. An example is shown below.



An accredited Energy Assessor visits the property to collect only the data required for assessing energy features and generates an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) using government-approved software. The assessment is based on the construction and type of dwelling and relevant fittings (heating systems, insulation or double glazing, for example).

It is not a structural or building survey, condition report or property valuation. An EPC should not be read as a comment on the overall condition of the property nor will it comment on the presence or otherwise of asbestos, high alumina cement concrete, additives including calcium chloride, or any building defects or hazardous materials.

MORTGAGE CONSENT

If your property has a mortgage, consent must be gained from your Mortgage Company, Building Society or Bank. They will then provide you with written permission and may also impose some conditions.

HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE

You must inform your household insurance company and discuss the necessary insurances required. We can offer a specialist Rental Insurance.

RENT GUARANTEE & LEGAL EXPENSES INSURANCE

There is an insurance policy available to cover loss of rent and legal expenses incurred when evicting tenants who do not pay their rent. With our thorough referencing procedure this situation arises very rarely. We can give you more details upon request.

INLAND REVENUE

You should contact your Tax Office to ascertain any tax liabilities. If you are travelling abroad you may be able to apply for exemption. Where the landlord resides abroad, the Commissioners for the Inland Revenue will hold us, as your Agents, responsible for the payment of any tax which arises on rents collected by us on your behalf, unless we have clearance by the authorities to pay gross (ie. without tax deduction). The net rental (rents less allowable expenses) is subject to tax under British law.

Thorne Carter and Aspen are registered with the Inland Revenue and are obliged to account quarterly and annually to the Inland Revenue, NRL [Non-Resident Landlords] Section showing all receipts and payments for our overseas clients. <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/international/nr-landlords.htm#2>

TENANT DEPOSIT SCHEME

In accordance with the Housing Act 2004, all landlords and agents are required to join a statutory deposit scheme if they take deposits from tenants

when letting their property. This became law in 2007 and affects all Assured Shorthold Tenancies commencing from then. A maximum of 5 weeks' rent is taken as deposit.

Tenants' deposits will be safeguarded and they will get all or part of their deposit back if they have kept the property in good condition and are entitled to it. The scheme offers alternative ways of resolving disputes which aims to be faster and cheaper than the current Court based system.

Aspen has chosen to adopt the "Custodial Scheme" which is run by Computershare Investors Services plc, and called The Deposit Protection Service [DPS]. This is a free service and available to all landlords and agents.

As a result of this legal requirement we feel that a detailed Inventory and Schedule of Condition taken at the start of the tenancy is vital, to provide a benchmark by which we can measure any unfair wear and tear on the property. Without adequate proof you may not be able to claim any of the tenant's deposit against damages caused during the tenancy.

Both tenant and landlord have to agree within 14 days of the end of the tenancy, for any deductions to be taken from the deposit, before the DPS returns the deposit to the tenant. If this cannot be agreed by both parties there is a free arbitration service that will automatically be implemented. This decision will be binding.

FURNISHING the PROPERTY

There is no difference to the amount of rent achieved if the property is furnished, part-furnished or unfurnished. However, there are Fire and Furnishing, Gas and Electrical Equipment Regulations which must be carefully followed. The Landlord is held responsible for any item left in the property to be safe and in good working order.

If the property is to be left unfurnished we would advise that a cooker, carpets, curtains and light fittings are provided. Items such as a fridge and a washing machine may be left as long as they are in good and safe working order and comply with the necessary regulations. Many tenants have their

own and therefore may not require them. Any electrical appliances left included in the tenancy, must have instruction booklets. They also require annual PAT safety checks.

If the property is to be left Part-furnished we would advise that carpets, curtains and light fittings are provided. Items of furniture may be left, but these items must comply with the regulations.

If the property is to be Furnished then we would advise a basic amount of furniture is left including enough beds for the amount of tenants entering the property. Basic equipment left in the kitchen including a cooker, fridge, and washing machine and sufficient china, glass and cutlery for the amount of occupants. Linen and bedding is not required, indeed many tenants prefer their own. ***Please note that all the furniture and fittings must comply with the regulations.***

GAS

Where the property has gas appliances an inspection and Certificate of Safety must be provided at the commencement of the tenancy unless the property is brand new and has not been occupied. It is also recommended that appropriate checks are carried out between tenancies.

ELECTRICAL EICR

All rented properties must have an electrical EICR confirming that the property is satisfactory. This is required every 5 years.

CONDITION of the PROPERTY

A thorough inspection of the property is recommended to ensure that the structure, roof, plumbing and wiring etc. is in good order. The property has to be safe for the tenant's occupation and if the landlord is aware of any aspects that might be hazardous e.g. pond in the garden, these need to be notified to us and the tenants. Due to the potential hazards of some equipment e.g.

garden strimmer we would recommend that these are not left in the property. If any appliances are left at the property, it is essential to leave the instruction leaflets. The landlord should attend to any internal or external decorations and ensure that the property is clean throughout, including windows both inside and outside. Carpets, curtains, blankets, duvets, pillows, bed covers and loose covers should be professionally cleaned. Where necessary, all works of repair should be completed prior to the commencement of the Tenancy. It is the Landlord's obligation to maintain the aforementioned throughout the term of the Tenancy subject to any term on the contrary in the Tenancy Agreement mutually agreed by the parties. Aspen Properties do not inspect attics or cellars.

TENANTS

The Landlord must instruct us as to the tenants' restrictions e.g: **Children
Pets Smokers**

You may need to check with your insurance and or mortgage company, as they sometimes impose restrictions as to the type of tenant that they will accept. The tenant will be fully vetted through our professional referencing company. The tenant must pay one month's full rent in advance and deposit before taking up residence. The deposit equivalent to 5 weeks' rent will be taken by Aspen Properties and forwarded on to the DPS within 30 days of receipt.

TENANT'S OBLIGATIONS

The tenants are subject to numerous requirements which are covered in the Tenancy Agreement. Some of them are:

- Pay the rent on time
- Keep the property clean, tidy and in good order
- Not decorate the property without permission
- Not disturb or be a nuisance to the neighbours
- Not keep pets without permission

- Notify us if they are going to be away for any length of time
- Notify us of any damage or repairs that are needed

TENANCIES

We draw up the appropriate tenancy agreement. Usually it is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, with an initial period agreed by both landlord and tenant. This is usually 6 months but can be varied. At any time after the initial fixed term period has expired and the tenant wishes to vacate the property he is required to give one month's notice in writing to leave. The landlord is required to give two months' notice in writing, should he seek possession of his property. Notices are subject to change

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY

Legislation requires all houses in multiple occupation i.e. a property on three floors and with five or more adults in residence, to have a licence from the Local Authority. We would be happy to discuss this in more depth if required.

RENT PAYMENT

The tenant pays the rent directly to us by standing order, then we pay you by automatic transfer. Any expenses incurred will usually be paid by us and deducted from your monthly rent statement.

SMOKE DETECTORS & CO ALARMS

A smoke detector must be fitted on every floor of the house. We will check these at the start of each tenancy and make it a condition that the tenant checks the smoke detectors on a regular basis, replace the batteries when necessary and inform us if they go wrong. A small dry powder Fire Extinguisher/Fire Blanket is advisable in the kitchen. Carbon Monoxide alarms became compulsory from October 2015 in any room where there is a gas appliance, oil appliance, woodburner or open fire.

CHIMNEYS

We also strongly recommend that any open chimneys and woodburners are swept on an annual basis and this may also be a condition of your house insurance. Between tenancies, the landlord is responsible for having the chimney swept.

LEGIONELLA

Legionella is a potentially fatal illness like pneumonia which can be caught by inhaling bacteria generated by hot and cold water heating systems including storage tanks which are not functioning properly or have been stagnant for some time. The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the control of Substances Hazardous to Health 1999 have recently changed and the Control of Legionella bacteria in Water Systems Approved Code of Practice ("ACOP L8"), now applies to domestic living. It is recommended that all landlords of residential rental properties have a Legionella Risk Assessment completed every year to comply with the law. We will arrange to have this done once the tenants have moved in.

MANAGEMENT of the PROPERTY

During the term of the tenancy we are responsible for the day to day running of the property, and are the first point of contact should any problems arise. The landlord is responsible for the upkeep of the structure of the property and general maintenance. Repairs to fixtures and fittings belonging to the Landlord are their responsibility unless there is obvious misuse of the above by the tenants.

PREFERRED CONTRACTORS

Landlords should inform Aspen of any preferred contractors for maintenance, making sure the names, addresses and telephone numbers are supplied. We

will need to see their Professional Indemnity Insurance, and they will need to sign a Data Processing Agreement to comply with GDPR.

EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Landlord is responsible for the property whilst there is no tenant. Sometimes your insurance company requires your property to be visited on a regular basis whilst empty, if you are unable and would like us to do this a charge will be made.

UTILITIES

The tenants are responsible for payment of Electricity, Water, Sewage, Gas, Oil, Telephone, and Council Tax. We will take all the relevant meter readings on the day tenants move in and inform the utilities and local authorities with this information. Final bills in your name might be sent to us which can be forwarded on or deducted from the rent.

KEYS

The Landlord must ensure sufficient keys are cut to provide Aspen Properties with one set, Landlord with one set and tenants with two sets.

The tenant will be held responsible for any lost keys, resulting in the locks being changed at the property, at the tenant's expense.

Before Leaving The Property Remember:

Inventory/Statement of condition (must be checked)

Advise your: Insurance Company, Mortgage Company, Post Office to redirect letters.

Check Oil level, if applicable.

Leave instruction manuals for: cooker, washing machine, tumble dryer, fridge/freezer, microwave, dishwasher, central heating.

Leave a note informing tenant of dustbin & recycling collection days.

MAKE SURE THE WATER STOPCOCK IS TURNED OFF. (Advise us of its location).

COURT & TRIBUNALS

An application for the assessment of a Fair Rent or the appearance before the Rent Officer, Rent Assessment Committee or any other court or tribunal will be by special arrangement only. An additional charge will be made for this which is payable by you at the rate of £40.00 per hour plus disbursements.

ON-LINE COMMUNICATIONS

For those landlords with internet connection facilities, it would be helpful to give Aspen your e-mail address, so that we can efficiently keep you informed about your rental portfolio and any updates or changes in the industry.