

## LETTING YOUR PROPERTY WITH COADY PHILLIPS

We have been successfully letting and managing property in the local area since 1990 and in that time have helped thousands of landlords with their property needs and in the following guide hope to highlight for you the essential information necessary for you to successfully let your property. The private residential letting market has evolved over many years and we constantly update the information you need to be aware of to avoid some of the of the pitfalls that can be associated with letting property and if you are considering letting a property with us rest assured we will be with you every step of the way.

### RELEASE THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR PROPERTY

There are many factors to consider when letting your property; some are more obvious than others, however this section should offer you a greater understanding of how to release the full potential of your property. The first points to consider are whether you prefer or are in a position to let furnished, unfurnished or part furnished. There is no predominant preference and demand for all types of accommodation will always exist.

*The following are, however, a minimum requirement:*

- Carpets • Curtains • Fitted kitchen and white goods

It is important to remain open minded when deciding to furnish a property to let. Your own tastes may often be different to tenants, making it necessary to rely upon the advice of our staff who have many years experience in this area. There are also regulations governing the type and quality of furniture left (see Landlords and the Law) which in many cases will help make the decisions for you. To ensure the widest range of quality tenants, our experience has taught us that simplicity is key. Certain colours do not work well together, and it has been proved time and time again that neutral, fresh, plain walls and carpets will always prove more attractive than loud, bright or patterned designs. A tenant will often make themselves feel more at home incorporating some of their own furniture, ornaments, pictures, and this can lead to a longer staying tenant.

*Below are a few helpful hints to consider that we have found increase the chance of letting to the widest range of quality tenants:*

- For ease of maintenance consider washable vinyl paints rather than a matt finish. This will look better for longer.
- The kitchen and bathroom will often be the main area of interest to a prospective tenant. Colour co-ordinated wall and base units with matching walls and clean, elegant tiling can make a remarkable difference to an otherwise plain room. The inclusion of a shower in bathrooms and extractor fans in both help attract tenants and the latter can also avert problems such as condensation, thus reducing maintenance costs..
- Cutlery, crockery and general cooking utensils are only an advantage to letting when it is clean and of a good quality. An assortment of chipped cups, plates and odd matching cutlery will only be boxed away never to be used. It is worth considering that many tenants do move with such items so perhaps wait until a tenant is found before going to the expense of buying them.

- Luxury items such as televisions, dvd players and stereos are not normally left unless specifically requested. We would only consider such requests from diplomats, or relocating overseas executives. Generally only in high-end properties with rents in excess of £2500.00 pcm might consideration be given to such items.
- Gardens can range from a small patio to an acre of land, however in both instances easy maintenance is essential. In larger properties with bigger gardens including a gardener in the rent will ensure a well cared for garden. Appropriate equipment to tend gardens will be essential where a gardener is not instructed, mowers, shears, spades, hoses, and in well stocked borders advice left regarding their upkeep.

### INFORMING THE RELEVANT PARTIES

When you let your property there are a number of people who need to be made aware of your decision to let and not informing them can have a detrimental effect on your letting experience.

If you have a mortgage the **mortgage holder** must be asked for permission before you let the property, this is usually a simple process and in our experience permission is rarely withheld however be aware that transferring a domestic mortgage to a buy to let mortgage may incur charges and a higher rate of interest.

Predominantly flats are leasehold and in turn certain regulations are imposed upon the residents of a development so informing the **management company** or **leaseholders** association is imperative and passing on any rules or regulations for residing in the property will avoid misunderstanding at a later date.

Both **buildings and contents insurers** need to be informed to ensure that cover exists in a property while tenanted, failure to advise insurers that you are letting your property can invalidate an insurance claim. Should you experience an unreasonable increase in your premiums we can assist you in finding alternative insurance quotes from specialist insurers.

The **Inland Revenue** will have to be informed about your rental income and you will be expected to declare this in your self-assessment and our advanced computer software can provide you with copy invoices and statements to assist you with your return. When a landlord resides overseas as agents for you we are obliged to retain a percentage of the rent as tax to pass quarterly to the Revenue, however landlords can apply for rent to be received without deduction by completing a form NRL1 available from our office.

The **council tax department** must be advised that there is a change of occupancy allowing the tenant to assume responsibility for the account and for your own account to be settled. The utilities, gas, water, telephone and electric companies are best given some notice before arranging for the change of account to the tenants. It is important that key meters are left operational and any debt to them satisfied before a tenant takes up occupation.

## KEEPING YOUR PROPERTY LOOKING GOOD FOR LONGER

During a typical tenancy your property will suffer some wear and tear which should be monitored so that we can keep your property looking good. Before and at the end of a tenancy Coady Phillips expect a full professional clean of the property, this will include carpets, walls and special attention paid to kitchen and bathrooms. The preparation of an inventory is invaluable in helping to monitor the condition of your property and since all deposits have to be registered with a government protection scheme claiming for damages without an inventory is made very difficult indeed. During a typical tenancy your property will suffer some wear and tear which should be monitored so that we can keep your property looking good and under our full management service regular inspections form part of this service. If you decide that you wish to manage the property yourself please remember that given reasonable notice a landlord is allowed access to view their property and at Coady Phillips we will help you to arrange this.

## LANDLORDS AND THE LAW

A tenancy agreement will be prepared for you and can stipulate any number of clauses you feel are necessary to safeguard your property. At Coady Phillips we tailor the tenancy to your personal preferences, and nothing should be left to chance. Naturally it is the management of the tenancy that ultimately leads to a successful tenancy but never the less “forewarned is forearmed”. Included with the agreement are the necessary notices to regain possession and both these are served by us at our offices. Although extremely uncommon, a tenant who fails to vacate a property at the end of a tenancy must be served a court order for eviction to take place and our experience has taught us that in some cases legal advice is necessary and we are able to assist you in this regard employing experienced law firms in this area. It is prudent to seek legal advice in such circumstances as the legislation governing our industry is always being improved and updated and at Coady Phillips we are constantly ahead of these changes and advise our clients accordingly.

**To follow are important regulations that you as landlord must adhere to.**

## ANNUAL GAS INSPECTIONS

All property with gas supplied requires an annual gas safety certificate (CP12) we can arrange these for you with a Gas Safe registered gas installer if required, alternatively you can use your own contractor ensuring we have the certificate prior to the commencement of the tenancy.

Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998

Gas Cooking Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1989

**You are required by law to meet certain criteria in respect of installed gas appliances and the supply of electricity and electrical appliances.**

- All gas appliances and associated pipe work and flues should be maintained annually and should only be worked on by a qualified Gas Safe gas engineer.
- A gas appliance with an open flue should not be installed in a bedroom.
- Where the gas meter is installed in a meter box, you should be supplied with a suitably labelled key to the box.
- After work on any gas appliances, a defined series of safety checks must be performed.
- Instructions for any gas appliance must be left for the occupier.
- Any gas appliance that is suspected or known to be faulty or incorrectly installed must not be used by anyone.
- A record of the gas appliances must be kept with the dates of inspection, any defects identified and made available for inspection by the tenant if requested.
- Ventilation is needed for gas appliances to work correctly and safely, take care not to block air vents and bricks.
- The checks will be done every year or at the commencement of a new tenancy, whichever comes sooner.

## **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES AND ELECTRICAL SUPPLY**

### **Electrical equipment (safety) regulations 1994**

### **Electricity at work regulations 1989**

### **Low voltage electrical equipment regulations 1989**

### **Electrical supply and appliances within a property must be 'safe'**

- All electrical appliances must be checked at regular intervals for defects (e.g. frayed wiring, badly fitted plugs etc.)
- Any unsafe items should be removed from the property.
- No statutory checking procedure or time scale exists. However an annual inspection for electrical appliances including an annual electrical supply safety check, by a qualified electrical engineer is advisable.
- Records of checks conducted at the property should be maintained for inspection.
- If you do not comply with these regulations the maximum penalty is a fine of £5000.00 or six months imprisonment, or both.
- They will be done every year or at the commencement of a new tenancy, whichever is sooner.

## **SOFT FURNISHINGS**

### **Fire & Furnishing (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 amended 1989 & 1993**

- It is an offence for a landlord to supply furniture which does not meet with this legislation and failure to comply could result in fines of up to £5000.00 and/or 6 months imprisonment.
- Upholstered furniture must have fire resistant filling material and pass a cigarette resistance test.

- Furniture in any property, which qualifies for the transitional period (i.e. was let prior to March 1993 and continued to be let), does not have to comply until the tenant, who occupied the property prior to 1st January 1997, vacates the property.
- Any furniture added to the property since March 1st 1993 must comply with these requirements whether new or second hand.

The regulations do not apply to:

- Antique furniture
- Bed-clothes (including duvets and pillowcases)
- Loose covers for mattresses - curtains
- Carpets - sleeping bags, cushion covers

From October 1st 2008 it is now law that all property let must have an EPC (energy performance certificate) this document assesses the energy rating of your property much like those you will find on a new fridge. Tenants can request site of one before viewing so we can arrange these for you in house.

### **The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015**

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 were laid in draft in March 2015 and are currently awaiting Parliamentary approval. If they are approved, private rented sector landlords will be required from 1 October 2015 to ensure that at least one smoke alarm is installed on every storey of their rented property, and that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room which contains a solid fuel burning appliance. They will also require landlords to ensure that such alarms are in proper working order at the start of each new tenancy. In addition, the regulations amend the conditions which must be included in a licence under Part 2 or 3 of the Housing Act 2004 ("the 2004 Act") in respect of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

### **Legionella disease and landlords obligations**

If you are an employer, or someone in control of premises, including landlords, you must understand the health risks associated with Legionella.

Duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) extend to risks from Legionella bacteria, which may arise from work activities. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) provide a broad framework for controlling health and safety at work. More specifically, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) provide a framework of actions designed to assess, prevent or control the risk from bacteria like Legionella and take suitable precautions.

This latest Health and Safety Executive recommendation requires that you as a landlord are aware of the risks associated with Legionella and that you have taken steps to ensure the storage systems both hot and cold are tested for this disease. We can incorporate this test in our smoke and carbon monoxide test for you.

### SO LETS FIND YOU A GREAT TENANT ...

Upon instruction and after our initial valuation we will take professional standard photographs of your property and prepare a property brochure on our bespoke management system that will share information on your property with all our branches. The photo's and details will then be uploaded to a host of websites aimed at an audience of thousands, 24 hours a day, to attract the best tenant for you.

We accompany all applicants who view property unless landlords wish to personally show prospective tenants around and we assess their suitability and even interview the applicants at this early stage before proceeding further with them. We strive to give you the greatest choice in potential tenants, and usually can offer you a selection of the most suitable.

We believe in freedom of choice and your preference may be for a couple rather than a single person, a family or mature professional, the choice is yours. Our advice can be helpful and our experience essential in helping you decide whom to select but only once you have made your selection does the extensive referencing process begin.

#### The referencing process

Good quality tenants are assured through our thorough referencing system. Employment, financial and personal references are obtained for all potential tenants. A banker's opinion or credit score may be obtained and where possible previous landlords' references.

Once presented with the references, alongside our opinion and background information - the choice is yours, you can select or reject!

Make certain you feel comfortable with your tenant, it helps to meet your tenant even after referencing and better acquaint yourselves before they move in. We often find bringing business onto a friendly level makes the whole process easier for all concerned, and a personalized service is all part of our philosophy. Through this hands-on approach blending professionalism with friendliness, giving you the freedom to be involved on many levels, we trust you will feel confident with your choice of tenant.

[WWW.COADYPHILLIPS.CO.UK](http://WWW.COADYPHILLIPS.CO.UK)

## THE COADY PHILLIPS PROPERTY CHECK LIST

BELOW IS A CHECKLIST, WHICH SHOULD HELP YOU SIMPLIFY AND CO-ORDINATE THE MANY TASKS ALONG THE PATH TO A SUCCESSFUL LETTING.

furniture compliance  
gas certificate  
electric certificate  
epc  
mortgage company  
insurance  
freeholders/management  
inland revenue  
references  
inventory  
clean  
council tax  
gas  
electric  
phone  
sign up  
keys  
mail  
notes

### SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

#### **ensuring you get your rent**

Virtually 98% of our clients have their rent paid via electronic banking (BACS). Our fully automated system pays accounts to landlords on the day it is received, unlike many of our competitors who pay rents fortnightly, we can have your rent as cleared funds in your account within 2 days of receiving it. Our management software package carries an indisputable rent collection feature that enables any overdue rent to be chased the day it is due, reducing the time you have to wait for your money. 95% of all Coady Phillips tenants have their rent collected by standing order. Our team collects hundreds of thousands of pounds of rent every month and experience in this area can prove invaluable.

### **the personal touch**

When you call us you will always talk to a friendly staff member who knows about your property and not have to leave an answer phone message during work hours or be redirected to a call centre like some corporate firms. A personal property manager assigned to you, working from our local offices will provide you with every assistance and answer any query you may have.

### **free regular property inspections**

Under the full management service, an inspection of your property is carried out every two months by our representative. This is designed to monitor how the property is being maintained, report on its condition, and maintain a friendly relationship with your tenants. A report is sent to you and details of any action that may be required allowing you and us to monitor the tenancy. Unlike many companies that charge, our inspections are free.

### **maintenance**

Whether you require a simple lock change or a full refurbishment there is no limit to the skills at your disposal. We enjoy good relationships with local craftsmen (builders, carpenters, roofers, electricians, plumbers and decorators), all specialists in their field, making them available to you 24 hours a day to attend to your property. All works are quoted for in advance, and you have full freedom to choose alternative craftsmen to do the task if it is more convenient for you. All payment for such works are deducted directly from your rental account and only after the work has been completed to your full satisfaction. Our management department oversees and administers any work at your request and communicating via telephone, emails or fax, we can look after your affairs and keep you informed no matter where you are in the world.