



ESTATE AGENTS

Information for landlords

A guide



Get moving with GL Property

GL & Co has been letting and managing properties in West Sussex for over twenty years and our business is ever expanding.

We believe our success is based on a strong commitment to provide a professional yet friendly service, great attention to detail and a desire to provide real value for money with many of our landlords and tenants echoing these sentiments.

With the working population becoming more transient and house prices continuing to make it very hard for first time buyers to jump onto the property ladder, many more people are choosing to rent rather than buy. This can provide more flexibility than home ownership as it does not tie up capital and has meant that the number of good, reliable tenants has increased – and continues to do so.

Changes in legislation in recent years have allowed landlords to let their properties safe in the knowledge that they can regain possession at the end of the tenancy. However, other legislation and changes in the nature of tenants have forced improvements to the standard of typical rental accommodation and required landlords to comply with more regulation. At times this can be confusing and quite daunting, especially for the first time landlord.

The Lettings Team at GL & Co can help you to attract the best tenants, minimise rental voids and ensure that you are meeting all of your legal obligations.

ARLA

GL & Co are a proud member of the letting industry's regulatory body, ARLA. This requires us to adhere to their exacting criteria, which demands the highest standards of professionalism and commitment to customer service from its members. Being a member of ARLA we are required to work within their Code of Practice and to comply with their rules on the handling of Clients' money and be a member of their Client Money Protection Bonding Scheme as well as a number of other matters.

Advertising and Marketing

We carry out extensive advertising mainly through our prominent presence on the Internet through our own website and on a number of independent sites such as Rightmove. We also advertise through the local press, our centrally located offices and our professionally produced, glossy magazine Opening Doors.

Tenant Assessment

Our aim is always to select the right tenants for our landlords using our many years of experience in the industry. We endeavour to obtain a rent guarantee for all new tenancies so providing complete financial peace of mind for our landlord. This is provided free of charge for the first six months of a tenancy and is then renewable at a small cost. However, we would still advise a landlord against accepting a tenant who we feel is unsuitable for any reason and would discuss all options if we were not able to obtain a rent guarantee.

Property Presentation

In order to attract the best tenants and minimise rental voids, properties need to be well presented and cleaned to a professional standard. We can always give advice to our landlords of any works that would be needed while marketing a property e.g. redecorating, updating kitchens and bathrooms, gardening and general maintenance. We can also advise a potential landlord of how to best present a property being refurbished in order to minimise costs whilst still providing good quality housing.

If the renovation works to the property are too much for you to carry out yourself, we can provide many recommendations for local contractors covering most fields and who have worked with us very successfully over the years.

Furnished or Unfurnished

Your legal rights are unaffected whether you choose to let your property furnished or unfurnished. In recent years we have found a far greater demand for unfurnished property. With an unfurnished property, a tenant would generally expect the property to offer curtains, carpets, light fittings and kitchen white goods. However, if your circumstances mean that you wish to rent the property on a furnished basis, the tenant would expect to find everything they need for day to day living.

If you decide to rent your property furnished, you need to comply with certain safety regulations concerning the furniture, furnishings and small electrical items left at the property. We would also recommend that you remove any items of great value, both financial and sentimental, whilst the property is being rented.

Inventories and the Dispute Service

Legislation has become more stringent with regard to the holding of deposits and deducting monies for damages at the end of a tenancy. With this in mind, we use an independent inventory clerk to prepare an initial inventory and carry out the check in and check out. This offers maximum protection for our landlords and tenants in the unlikely event of a dispute, as the condition of the property is noted when the tenant moves in and again when they move out.

The Dispute Service (TDS) administers the Tenancy Deposit Scheme, which is the organisation we use to register the tenant deposits we hold. It is a legal requirement that the deposit is registered with an approved scheme at the start of the tenancy.

If there is a dispute at the end of the tenancy, which cannot be resolved between landlord and tenant, the deposit is sent to TDS who will then adjudicate using all the available evidence and then apportion the deposit accordingly. This provides a more speedy resolution to deposit disputes than going through the court - although it is always preferable to come to an agreement between all parties yourselves as the process can take several months to complete.

Safety Regulations

Legislation regarding a landlord's obligations to ensure the property is safe changes all the time. We regularly advise our landlords of any changes that may affect them, some of the more important regulations include:

- Landlord Gas Safety Inspections: These are a legal requirement for all gas appliances provided for a tenant to use. The inspection must be carried out on an annual basis with a valid certificate provided at the start of a tenancy. We can either arrange this on the landlord's behalf or send a reminder.
- The Furniture and Furnishings Fire Regulations 1998: Our inventory clerk will advise on these regulations at the time of preparing the inventory. Generally, all upholstered furniture and soft furnishings should display the required fire safety label and any non-compliant items would have to be removed from the property.
- Electrical Safety: Whilst it is not mandatory at present to carry out a safety inspection, we would urge landlords to have the wiring, sockets/switches and any large electrical appliances checked by a qualified electrician. Also, any small electrical items left at the property must be tested annually to ensure they are safe.

- **Smoke Detectors/Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** There must be a smoke detector on each level of your Property and if a large single level property then at least two working smoke detectors and it is then the responsibility of the tenant that these are checked and tested that still working during the tenancy. A Carbon Monoxide Alarm must also be provided in any room with a working open fire or woodburner, it is also recommended to provide one for the room that houses the gas boiler.

Energy Performance Certificates

It is a legal requirement that all properties marketed to let display a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). This gives advice on the current energy efficiency of the property and how any improvements may help to reduce fuel bills. We can organise an EPC for you and it will remain valid for 10 years to be used for future marketing, unless any significant improvements are made for example a new boiler or double-glazing.

Taxation

Rental income must be declared to the Inland Revenue whether you are a UK resident or an overseas landlord. If we are collecting your rent, we will provide you with monthly statements for your accounting purposes as some items can be offset against the income. Non-resident landlords need to register on the Inland Revenue Non-Resident Landlord Scheme in order to receive rental income without us having to deduct the tax. We can supply an application form or for more information contact HMRC.

Our Services

GL & Co offers you the choice of three services with varying levels of involvement by us. Whichever type of service you choose, we always provide you with our professional and friendly service every step of the way.

Introductory Only

Our entry-level service includes the following:

- Fully market the property through local press, national websites and through our extensive database of waiting applicants
- Accompany potential tenants to property viewings
- Negotiate the terms of a tenancy
- Reference the prospective tenant through a third party reference company

- Create an appropriate Tenancy Agreement
- Provide FREE rent guarantee cover and legal protection for the first 6 months of the tenancy, subject to terms
- Collect the first month's rent and deposit in cleared funds before any tenancy starts
- Hold the tenants' deposit on your behalf and register it with The Dispute Service

Rent Collection

Along with the above services, we will deal with the financial part of the tenancy including:

- Collecting the rent and forward this to your bank account
- Providing rental statements
- Pursuit of late rental payments
- Advising on any potential rent review

Fully Managed

Incorporating all of the above, we will deal with the everyday property and tenancy management issues including:

- Notify utility companies (excluding the telephone company) and local authorities of the change in occupier
- Visit the property to conduct a visual check of the condition and highlight any maintenance issues
- Arrange for routing repairs to be carried out and paid from the rent received
- Pay property related charges and demands through rent received
- Assist in the negotiations of the release of the tenants' deposit at the end of the tenancy

In addition to the above, we are also able to provide the following services at any stage:

- Preparation of an Inventory and Schedule of Condition and organising the tenant to be checked in and out of the property at the beginning and end of their tenancy
- Organising the preparation of gas and electric safety checks

- Ongoing Landlord's Gas Safety checks throughout the life of a tenancy
- Preparation of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
- Serving of notices or other tenancy related documents during the Tenancy

Buy To Let Advice

The Lettings team works closely with our Property Sales team to offer advice to current or potential investment landlords if required. We can give an indication of the rental value of a property, any works that would be required to bring the property up to an acceptable standard and what to expect from being a landlord in this area.

If you would like to discuss your property or any aspect of the rental market in more details please email us at lettings@glproperty.co.uk or horshamlettings@glproperty.co.uk



ESTATE AGENTS

Experience the GL & Co difference...

- Open longer hours 7 days a week
- 97%* of our clients would recommend us and use us again
- Consistently adding value to the final selling price of homes using our expert negotiation skills
- Highly experienced staff delivering the very highest levels of customer service
- Matching buyers to sellers and landlords to tenants is second nature with our in depth knowledge of the local market
- No MINIMUM Sole Agency Contract stay with us for our service, not because you have to

*figures from GL & Co Client Questionnaires



Contact our experts in your area today...

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