



Why Zone Letting?

Here at Zone Letting we believe that you have to be one step ahead whether that is dealing with day to day property management matters, assisting in proactively marketing available properties or giving clients and prospective tenants the advice and information needed in this ever-changing industry.

We are constantly looking at ways to develop letting opportunities on behalf of our clients. Making information about your property more available to the people looking for a rented home. Among these many forms of media are virtual tours, our excellent website (www.zoneletting.com) and other quality portals, a smart central location for the whole of Glasgow and weekly press coverage.

As an Independent Agent the satisfaction of our clients is imperative to our survival. For this reason the best interests of our clients is of paramount importance to us and what is right for our clients takes precedence over any other commercial issue.

The driving force behind our business is the people and their commitment to our clients, our staff are "ARLA" qualified and have many years experience in the industry. You will deal with one person and have only one point of contact so that person knows you and your property, so you are not dealing with someone different every time you contact us.

FREE, Yes FREE written inventories, video inventories, and rental guarantee schemes (where applicable) are the extra benefits in using our services.

For a Free No Obligation Valuation call us on Edinburgh 0131 225 7799 or Glasgow 0141 333 0990

THE BENEFITS OF LETTING

There can be a number of reasons why you are considering letting your property. You may have to move away due to work commitments, perhaps considering purchasing a property as an investment or have decided to keep hold of your property as you move up the property ladder.

Financial returns from letting have significantly improved due to the return to real growth in house prices, the availability of 'Buy to Let' mortgage schemes, and the ability to offset costs associated with letting against rental income for tax purposes. Letting can provide both Income and Capital growth and has become a more favourable option than stocks and shares to invest in.

Steady economic growth, an increasingly mobile workforce and the continued expansion of Glasgow in respect of corporate relocation have combined to ensure a strong demand for rental property in this geographic region. Zone Letting has established professional relationships with companies and relocation specialists, helping to ensure that you have minimal void periods.

PREPARING FOR LETTING

Various factors need to be taken into account when advising a landlord of how they should best proceed with their letting. The location, condition and size of the property, standard of contents and fittings provided and prevailing market forces are all factors, which must be considered. A property assessment and initial inspection will be carried out by an experienced property manager, following which all relevant issues will be discussed in greater detail with you. This enables you to ask any questions that you may have and discuss any particular concerns. THIS SERVICE IS PROVIDED FREE AND WITH NO OBLIGATION.

Tips on Presentation

- Neutral décor works best and try to keep furniture simple.
- Remove 'Clutter'.
- Painted surfaces are easier to maintain than wall coverings.
- Gardens should be left neat and tidy.
- Professional cleaning is recommended.

“Should I let furnished or unfurnished?”

Depending on the size of the property, the market is evenly divided between a demand for furnished and unfurnished, though most letting to a Company, as the tenant will usually be on a furnished basis. If furnished then of course the better the standard of furnishing the greater the opportunity for maximising the rent achievable.

All properties should usually include carpets, curtains, cooker, refrigerator and or washing machine. Furnished properties will also include the furniture found in most homes (beds, tables, chairs, sofas) crockery, cooking utensils and cutlery are more discretionary, linen and towels are not normally provided. Better presentation and quality of the property and furnishings will be reflected in the monthly rental achievable.

Inventory

We will undertake to compile and prepare a written inventory with a schedule of condition, without a detailed inventory you will be unable to claim recompense for any damage at the end of the Tenancy. We will also arrange for a video inventory to be undertaken to back up the written report.

THE LEGAL POSITION

We will prepare the tenancy agreement for you. This will be a 'Short Assured Tenancy' (unless requested otherwise), which is the industry "norm" and assures a Landlord possession of the property at the end of the fixed term. The Tenancy Agreement details the areas of responsibility between you, your tenant and us as your agent, basically confirming to all parties who is liable for what with the property. It also clarifies what can or cannot be done to the property such as who is liable for repairs or damages etc. We will also arrange all relevant Housing Act Notices, which must be served in conjunction with the agreements.

A Short Assured Tenancy must be for a minimum of six months and the maximum we advise at any one time is twelve months.

Tenants

One of the principle functions of a managing agent is the identification and referencing of a quality tenant. We will extensively market your property using both advertising and direct contact with a wide range of 'blue-chip' companies and relocation organisations. Our aim is to secure the right tenant at the right rent in the shortest possible time.

Referencing

On your behalf we will take references on every individual tenant who is named in the Tenancy Agreement, which will normally mean everyone over 18 intending to reside in the property. To ensure this vital process is carried out as objectively and thoroughly as possible we use an independent professional referencing company. The report sent to us by the credit referencing company will be actioned on the basis that the conclusion deems the applicant to be a suitable tenant and acceptable to underwriters for legal and rent protection policies. This process will include full credit referencing and, providing they can be obtained, various financial references such as current and previous employment references, current or previous Landlord reference and a banker's reference. In some cases to further strengthen your position we may decide to ask for a Guarantor to back up the tenant's ability to meet their commitments.

Property Inspections

We will regularly inspect the property during the tenancy and advise on any adverse conditions. Inspections are usually carried out quarterly but, if required, more frequent visits can be arranged. From our experience we know that if the tenant understands that the property and their tenancy are being closely monitored they are more likely to maintain a high standard of care in the property (Along with the Inventories).

The tenancy agreements make reference to the fact that we have the right to visit the property at times acceptable to the tenant, provided that reasonable notice has been given. If you want to visit the property yourself during the tenancy we would make the necessary arrangements but again the tenant is entitled to prior notice.

What if there is any damage to the property

On taking occupancy the tenant will lodge a dilapidation deposit equivalent to four to six week's rent. This bond is held throughout the tenancy by us, as agent on behalf of the landlord, as a provision against anything above what might be considered fair wear and tear allowing for the length of the tenancy.

When tenants are checked out of a property a Property Manager will carry out a final inspection checking against the ingoing inventory. Any redecoration or minor repairs, which cannot be reasonably accepted as fair wear and tear. We will negotiate and agree with the tenant the amount that will be withheld, obtain estimates by way of confirmation and the net deposit remaining will usually be released to the tenant. We will then arrange for any necessary work to be carried out prior to the next tenant moving in.

Repairs

Repairs are of course necessary to each and every property throughout the length of the tenancy and Landlords must be prepared for this eventuality plus of course repair and/or replacement of major electrical items as they age.

We will make arrangements, on your behalf with our local contractors or contractors of your choice to carry out any such necessary works.

We will agree in advance the level of responsibility you wish us to have in arranging repairs and replacements and then proceed accordingly, without further reference to you or as discussed and agreed. The normal level of agreement is any repairs or maintenance up to the estimated cost of £150. Some landlords are happier to accept responsibility themselves for such matters once they have been reported to them by us and this is perfectly acceptable to us.

Where there is an emergency repair such as a burst pipe or a gas leak, there are different legal obligations on all parties and we may well need to instruct on the work immediately to prevent any further damage to the property or health and safety risk to the tenants. In such circumstances we may need to act first and then report to you, we will always act with common sense and with your best interests at heart.

It is also made clear to tenants that only in the most extreme of circumstances should they consider instructing their own contractor and that should they do so they may be liable themselves for the full costs. Major repairs will, of course, be discussed with you first, estimates obtained for your approval and the subsequent works supervised by us and reported to you as necessary.

What about the Garden?

Before the Tenant moves into the Property, arrangement should be made for the garden to be in good order. We can make arrangements on your behalf for a gardening contractor to carry out any necessary work. Tenants will normally be responsible for the upkeep of the garden and you should provide the relevant tools to do so, these items will be included in the inventory. Alternatively you may wish for us to arrange for a gardener during the tenancy and reflect this cost in the rental figure.

Renewals

We will contact you two months before the end of the Tenancy; this will be an opportunity to discuss your future instructions. We will then take the appropriate action with the tenant to renew their tenancy or arrange their check-out, the property will be re-marketed if the incumbent tenants are not renewing.

SAFETY REGULATIONS

The Safety regulations are very straight forward, but please come back to us if you require any more information on any of the below;

Fire and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988: Fire and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1993

A Landlord supplying furniture within a property where the supply is deemed to be "in the course of business", must ensure that all furniture meets with the provisions of the above legislation. From 1st January 1997 there has been a clear obligation on **ALL** Landlords to provide only furniture that meets with strict fire resistance tests standards. Each item of furniture must have a manufacturer's label confirming that it meets the required specification. We will inspect your furniture for you and advise on any changes that may be needed. We will not accept instructions to let any property unless these Regulations are fully adhered to. Failure to comply is a Criminal Offence on the part of both Landlord and Agent.

Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1993

Anyone letting a property must ensure that gas appliances, and/or installation pipe-work, is kept in safe condition to prevent the risk of injury to anyone in the property. It is a requirement that all such gas appliances and pipe-work are checked annually by a CORGI and ACOPS approved contractor and that a record of these checks is maintained, **and** that a Certificate confirming compliance is supplied to the Tenant annually. We will not accept instructions to let any property unless these Regulations are fully adhered to. We can obtain a Gas Safety Inspection and Report for you. Please ask for cost details.

Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994

A Landlord also has an obligation to ensure that any electrical equipment supplied is safe, will not cause danger, and that it satisfies the Safety Requirements of the 1994 Regulations. There is not, at present, any obligation for mandatory safety testing. However, unless a Landlord is an electrical expert, it is unlikely that he will know, without any doubt, that all electrical installations and appliances meet the safety requirements without having his appliances tested. Therefore, we are unable to accept instructions to let and manage a property unless the Landlord can unequivocally confirm that this property meets the required safety standard. This will usually require an electrical safety test to be conducted. Please ask for cost details.

Smoke Detectors save lives

It is a **legal requirement** that all homes built after 1992 have a mains operated smoke detector fitted to each floor of the property. It is **advised** that all homes have installed at least one battery operated smoke detector to each floor of the property and while this is not **YET** a legal obligation, this may well be so in the future.

We will assume the property will be supplied as seen, unless you advise us to the contrary, and that all appliances left in the property are in good working order, and will be maintained as such. The Landlord is required to maintain all installations in accordance with current safety standards.

We would confirm the following to emphasise the importance of complying with Safety Legislation:

If your property has a Gas Supply you must have a Gas Safety inspection before a new tenancy can begin, or provide us with a certificate to prove an inspection has been conducted within the last 12 months. If you do not comply we cannot let your property.

The electrical system in your property must be safe. If you cannot prove this an Inspection by a NICEIC Registered Electrician MUST be carried out. If you do not comply we cannot let your property.

THE TAX POSITION

“Will I have to pay tax on my rental income?”

The short answer is “yes” the long answer is “if you live in the UK then it is your responsibility to declare the rental income you receive and pay the levy”. You will be liable to pay income tax on your net income from the property that is the gross income less allowable expenses, which are incurred in the letting of the property.

What happens if I am overseas?

If you live abroad permanently or are working abroad for an extended period you will still normally be required to pay income tax on the net income from any property letting.

There are obligations on the part of the letting agent with respect to overseas landlords, which you should be aware of. We are required to withhold a proportion of the rental income (equivalent to the basic rate of tax) and pay this directly to the Inland Revenue unless we receive specific written exemption from them not to do so. We are able to provide you with the appropriate documentation to apply to the Inland Revenue for this exemption, thus allowing us to pay your rent without deduction of tax.

Professional Help

As can be seen from these brief references, personal taxation is a complex area and one where, as with the letting itself, it is essential to take professional advice from a specialist. We will be happy to refer you to a local accountant specializing in such issues or alternatively provide your existing accountant with all the necessary information to deal with your affairs in a cost effective manner.

Consents

Mortgage Consent

If your property is mortgaged it is a requirement that you must advise your bank, building society or mortgagee that you propose letting your property and obtain their written consent.

Insurance Consent

Again you must contact your relevant Insurers and advise them that the property will be let out. Please see below in respect of Insurance products we offer, in case you have problems with current Insurers or require a quotation.

PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

At Zone Letting we firmly believe that we are uniquely placed to offer you, our customer, the security and peace of mind so essential to you whilst your property, probably not only your greatest single asset but possibly also your home, is in management with ourselves.

Our business motto “We treat your property as if it were our own” is respected by our current clients, who value our responsive and professional care of their individual properties. This basis of trust and confidence is the keystone of our success, and has generated many excellent references over the years.

“How can I be sure that the Rent will be paid?”

The Tenancy Agreement is a legally binding contract and as such is enforceable by law. We do everything we can to ensure that the right tenant is selected, and in the vast majority of cases, their conduct is all we could hope for.

However there are odd occasions where problems can arise and unexpected difficulties such as redundancy, long term illness or a relationship breakdown can suddenly affect the best of tenants. We do everything we can to rectify problem situations such as promptly sending reminder letters for any outstanding rental, visiting the property and discussing as far as possible the problems being experienced. However we can only do this against the backdrop of how far the tenant can or will take us into their confidence.

We will do everything within our remit to assist in resolving rent issues if a particularly difficult or unusual situation has arisen. However a Landlord's rights and remedies are quite clearly set out in the legislation regulating tenancies and we will try wherever possible to avoid the need for legal action, unless this is the only course.

We will of course provide all the help and information needed in supporting a Landlord and there is a range of insurance policies specifically designed to protect Landlords against rental loss and the legal costs which may arise in litigation cases.

“What insurances can you arrange for me?”

We will be pleased to arrange any insurances you may feel you require to cover your buildings, contents, legal costs and rental income. Apart from the legal and rent protection policies already referred to, cover is also available for building and/or contents. You should exercise caution in assuming that an existing policy will continue unaffected by rental activity whether these are policies linked by virtue of a lenders block policy cover or separate policies. In particular do not assume that simply because consent to a letting has been granted by a lender that any cover effected through that lender will continue as before.

If you experience any difficulty in this matter or are unsure of how your existing cover is affected, we will be pleased to discuss this with you and outline alternatives that may suit your purposes better whilst you are acting as a Landlord.

We can offer Insurance products through the **Homelet Group** who are underwritten by **Barbon Insurance Group Ltd** who offer a full schedule of products covering;

Tenants Contents Insurance; Designed with Tenants in mind, the policy offers comprehensive cover at extremely competitive rates meaning your tenants will have cover for their belongings and can enjoy their new home with peace of mind.

Landlords Buildings & Contents; Homelet offer buildings and contents insurance to landlords of let property (some insurers will not cover let properties). Designed specifically with landlords in mind, the policies offer comprehensive cover at extremely competitive rates. The additional benefits of these products include cover for loss of rent and additional costs of alternative accommodation, legal liability to the public of £1 million and other added extras. Arranging cover is easy with no need to complete a proposal form, for an immediate quote or to purchase cover just ask us or click the link on our website .

Rental Guarantee & Legal Expenses Insurance. There are various forms of cover which we can arrange on your behalf and we can give quotes for each policy or you can contact Homelet direct.

What Happens to the Utilities?

The gas, electricity and water companies etc should be advised whenever the property is empty so that meters can be read, accounts prepared etc, even if this will be for a relatively short period of time. We will do this for you on the initial letting and also each time there is a change of tenancy agreement or the property is to be empty for some other reason.

The tenant is obviously responsible for the gas, electricity and water/sewage bills generated by their usage during the tenancy. Clearly their liabilities in this respect finish on the day they vacate the property. We advise against prepayment meters for gas and electricity and favor the traditional 'dry meter'; card meters invariably cause difficulties on change over of tenancies.

Council Tax

The responsibility for the payment of Council Tax is transferred to the tenant on the day that they take occupancy or the date of the commencement of the Tenancy Agreement. Zone Letting shall inform the local authority of the details of the new tenant at each change over. During short void periods the responsibility reverts to the owner.

Telephone

Generally speaking telephone companies will not deal with third parties, though if you are residing abroad they may allow us to assist. Otherwise you should inform the provider (e.g. British Telecom) that you are leaving the property and advise them what you want to do with your existing number, it is easier to arrange to disconnect the service and for the tenant to reconnect.

Mail

It is strongly recommended that you arrange to have all mail in your and all related person's names redirected to your forwarding address.

Keys

We require a minimum of three complete sets of keys for each property. Two sets for the tenants and one set for us to hold in case of emergency.

Mortgage Advice!

We can assist with all your financial advice enquires, we are connected to an Independent Financial Advisor they offer mortgage packages to suit all requirements. Because they are not tied to one lender (like most Banks & Building Societies) they can offer you all the products on the market and choose the right one for you.



Peace of mind...its part of the service