**HELPFUL HINTS BEFORE AND DURING TENANCY**

**We understand that renting a home can be a daunting experience. To help we have produced some key questions we think you should have answered to make the process as successful as possible. We believe you should be asking these questions whether you are renting through Royston & Lund or any other agent.**

**In addition to this information there is more helpful guidance and detail available in the Tenant section of our website www.royston-lund.co.uk and the How to Rent guide from www.gov.uk is very useful.**

**If you have any questions or concerns we are very happy to talk you through anything, so please call us on 0115 914 1122.**

**Key questions to ask a member of the office team before or after you have viewed the property**

What questions should I be thinking about before the viewing? **What is my budget? You will need to consider the monthly rental and to protect your interests. Each referencing company have their own rental formula, please ask Royston & Lund for further information when this is required. How much will the property cost to run? We will not be able to give you exact costs as the utilities will be dependent on your usage (apart from Council Tax). However the EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) will give you an indication of the how well the property uses energy. Make sure you look at this before you make any decisions.**

What questions should I be asking after the viewing? **What is the energy performance rating (EPC) and council tax band? It is going to be important for you to know how much your new home will cost to run. Who will manage the property? Not all properties will be managed by us if this is the case it might be good for you to ask to meet with your Landlord to get a feel of who you will be working with. What do you do in case of emergencies? How would a water leak be dealt with?**

Brief history of the property - Why have previous tenants moved on**? How much would the deposit be and where will it be kept? If you believe or request that anything is changed in the property for your tenancy this MUST BE raised and agreed at the time of submitting your application form i.e. cleaning, carpet cleaning, redecs for example. What would happen if the agent goes out of business? Is the agent a member of ARLA RICS NAEA?**

**What happens when I find a home I want to move into?**

**In order to secure a property, application forms and our tenancy administration fee must be submitted to the office. We will then discuss your application with the landlord. Should you application be of interest to the landlord, we will remove the property off the open lettings market, this ensures that no one else will view the property, the referencing procedure will commence and we can produce the legal documents needed.**

**Before you pay any fees to us we ask that you review the fees and understand what charges will be made. You will be told before you pay this fee that charge is non-refundable. You will sign our data protection declaration which is attached to our application form; this signature also confirms that you have been made fully aware of our tenancy fees. Please call one of our team members who will be able to answer any concerns you may have.**

**Tenant Charges - We aim to be as transparent as possible about what we charge and why. We routinely test our charges against the competition and know that we are one of the lowest charging letting agent in the Nottinghamshire area.**

**Deposits are held as a contingency to cover the costs of any works required at the end of the tenancy. Our aim is to return 100% of all deposits. Where people have deductions from their deposit it is usually for outstanding cleaning, especially professional carpet cleaning or gardening.**

**Unless instructed otherwise by our landlord, our standard pet deposit (1st pet) £100.00 Pets increase the chance of damage e.g. scratches, chewing, stains and carpet pulls etc.**

**Deposits are fully refunded if: the property as clean and in the same condition (subject to normal wear and tear) as shown in the inventory; there is a receipt to show carpets have been cleaned by a professional carpet cleaning company. For pet deposits we also need evidence the carpets have had flea treatment. VAT not chargeable on deposits**

**If a tenant wants to start a tenancy more than 4 weeks after agreeing to take the property we take a holding fee on behalf of the landlord. If the delay is no more than 6 weeks this will be transferred across to the landlord as rent when the tenancy starts as scheduled. If the tenancy does not start this holding fee is passed to the Landlord to cover the period when the property was not available to other tenants.**

**Delays of more than 6 weeks not normally accepted**

**The tenancy cannot commence until cleared funds for the deposit and the first month's rent have been received in our bank account.**

**What type of tenancy will I have?**

**99% of the tenancies we draw up will be Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreements and the term of tenancy will normally be for a minimum period of 6/12 months. There are a number of other types of Agreement that can be used. You will be advised which one you will be required to sign before your tenancy starts. Any tenancy agreement is a legally binding contact and therefore it is important that if you are unsure of the meaning of any clause you consult a solicitor or visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau.**

**Please note we do not accept cheques or cash as payment for your initial monies. If you pay using a credit card unfortunately due to increased bank charges we will have to add a surcharge. However we accept debit cards and you can pay by Bank Transfer, Bankers Draft on the day of your Tenancy commencing. Card payment can be made via our website, over the phone or in person.**

**Prior to our meeting to commence your tenancy make sure that you have read the Tenancy Agreement and answer any questions you may have. The Tenancy Agreement is a legal document and lays out the terms on which you will hold the tenancy and the obligations of the Landlord. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are happy with the terms of the agreement, which you will need to sign before you can move in.**

**When do I pay my first rent after I have moved in?**

**All rents are due to be with us on the inception date of your tenancy, i.e. the day of the month when your tenancy started, e.g. if you move in on 6th of the month then your rent is due on 6th of each month. Due to the UK banking system it will be necessary for you to make sure that the full rental amount leaves your bank 3-4 days before the due date to ensure it reaches us by the due date. We will go through this with you when we check you in.**

**Will an inventory be drawn up?**

**Next to the Tenancy Agreement the Inventory and Condition Report is the most important document you will have at the commencement of the tenancy. It protects your deposit as it is an accurate record of the condition of fixtures, fittings and decoration in the property at the start of the Tenancy. Subject to the landlords instruction we prepare a very detailed Inventory and Condition Report for you to sign at the start of your tenancy.**

**On the last day of your tenancy we will use this report as a guide to ascertain whether you have left the property in the same state as you found it, other than fair wear and tear. If the property is not as clean as detailed in the inventory or there is any damage then you will need to meet the cost of addressing these, usually from your deposit.**

**What do I do about changing over utility accounts?**

**As soon as your tenancy starts you become responsible for the payment of gas, electricity, council tax, telephone, TV Licence and water charges. It is therefore important that you register these in your name with the appropriate authority. If we are managing the property we will do this for you.**

**What insurance do I need?**

**Before commencement of the tenancy, we will require you to obtain your own insurance policy for contents.**

**What happens if I want to leave before the tenancy term has ended?**

**It may be possible for you to be released from your tenancy with the landlords consent subject to conditions, this normally includes you paying the rent and all utilities until the day a new tenancy starts along with the landlord's relet fee. If you wish to be released early from a fixed term Tenancy Agreement a request will need to be made to us in writing. If you vacate the property before the end of the Tenancy Agreement you will still be legally responsible under the terms of the Agreement until the property is re-let or the Agreement ends. Once we receive your written instruction and landlords’ agreement then we will commence remarketing the property in order to find a new tenant.**

**What will I need to do before I check out?**

**We have produced a guide to help you successfully prepare for the end of the tenancy. This is available on our website and will be provided to you before you leave the property.**

**What will happen during check out?**

**We will arrange a convenient time to carry out this procedure which normally takes about an hour; alternatively you can return the keys to our office for the third party Inventory Clerk to attend without your presence. We will go around the property together noting any items which are not the same as the inventory.**

**How long does it take to return my deposit?**

**Once the check out visit has been completed we will report to the landlord on our findings. Before reporting to you we must wait for their agreement to our recommendations and, if necessary, get estimates for any works. We can then agree with you if any costs need to be deducted from your deposit. On average we manage to conclude this process as soon as possible within TDS guidelines.**

**What happens if things go wrong?**

**We have a complaints and feedback procedure should you have any dissatisfaction. This is available on request. Additionally we are members of: The Property Ombudsman scheme (membership number D03544) (www.tpos.co.uk). The Ombudsman produces a helpful consumer guide, which provides advice on using a letting agent when renting a property http://www.tpos.co.uk/consumer\_guide\_rents.htm. We have printed copies available if needed. ARLA - The Association of Residential Lettings Agents (www.arla.co.uk) TDS - The Tenancy Deposit Scheme (membership number G02079) (www.tds.gb.com).**

**These each have their own codes of practice to which we subscribe and follow. We can provide printed copies if required. They also have complaints and disputes procedures if required.**

