

# Landlord Letting Guide

## Rental Valuation

When asking an agent to value your home you will have several options. It is important to consider more than just fees when making this decision. The reputation and location of a letting agent can attract tenants and an agent with membership to regulatory bodies can offer you peace of mind that your money is in safe and secure hands. Blackstones Residential will take into account the many factors affecting the appropriate rent to charge your tenants. When we value properties for rent, we look into aspects which may influence the rate you are able to charge including:

- The type of tenant the property will attract
- Fixtures and furnishings included in the property
- Local trends and demand for the property type in the area (and whether this is likely to change over time)
- Proximity to transport links and local amenities
- State of repair and décor

As experts in letting properties, we have an in-depth knowledge of what tenants are looking for. We base our valuations on our knowledge of the local market trends and use this information to guide how we market your property.

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## Select your Service Level

Before you instruct Blackstones Residential to market your property, consider how much involvement you want to have with your tenant and property; day to day maintenance, monthly rent collection and other responsibilities which may affect your current lifestyle in a way you do not want.

You can choose from our four service levels to find the best fit for you. It starts from the basic “Let Only Service” to a more comprehensive “Rent Collection Service” or choose the “Fully Managed Service” to make your property investment hassle-free. You can also choose to become our “Rent Guaranteed” landlord, where we fully manage your property and pay your rent even if the property is empty. To find out more on our services, please call or email us.

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## Marketing your Property

As soon as we receive your instruction, we will prepare your property’s details, which can include professional photography, a location map and an Energy Performance Certificate. Then we will start marketing your property to attract the right tenant with:

- **High profile advertising** - We invest in marketing through high profile advertisements in all the local newspaper, window display and publications across our branch network as well as using our extensive tenant database to target direct mail campaigns.
- **Online exposure** - Your property will also be marketed on our website [blackstonesresidential.com](http://blackstonesresidential.com), where potential tenants can sign up to our online registration service which alerts them when rental properties that match their criteria become available. We also use other major online portals to market your property. The website is also available in a mobile format for customers so they can search for properties when they’re on the go. In addition, Blackstones Residential local market knowledge, large database of potential tenants, in-branch visibility, and open house viewings, will ensure that your property will soon be seen by thousands.
- **Arranging gas and electrical safety certificates** - Your property must meet the UK’s legal safety standards. Therefore, an impartial service must be employed to provide you with essential certified gas and electricity inspections. Blackstones Residential will be able to provide this for you upon your request.

Keeping up with the latest legislation is very important. At Blackstones Residential we ensure our landlords and their investments are up to date with the newest regulations and protected at all times. It’s all part of the service.

## Viewings

We recommend you keep your property as a blank canvas for prospective tenants by keeping the space clean and clutter-free. As standard, Blackstones Residential will accompany the prospective tenants on all viewings on your behalf however, if you choose to host the viewing yourself remember to highlight all the good points that aren't immediately obvious, such as friendly neighbours and in-built storage appeal to the masses. If you are decorating your property keep it simple, don't let your personal taste put off potential tenants.

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## Agreeing an Offer

Your estate agent can handle negotiations between you and the prospective tenant. At Blackstones Residential, we strive to get you the best price; however there may be other factors worthy of consideration in this decision, such as the references of the tenant and whether they have a reliable income.

Once you accept an offer, we will do the following:

- Reference the potential Tenant(s)
  - Produce the Tenancy Agreement
  - Collect the first monthly Rent and the Security Deposit
  - Produce the Property Inventory
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## Reference and Credit Checks

It is important to run thorough checks on prospective tenants to ensure that your investment will be secure. Blackstones Residential, we use strict referencing procedures carried out by independent experts which can give our landlords a comprehensive understanding of their personal and financial circumstances, including a check on their employment history, credit worthiness and previous addresses.

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## Signing the Tenancy Agreement

This document outlines the agreed responsibilities of both parties. It is important that both tenants and landlords take the time to read this carefully before signing.

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## The Inventory

An inventory is a detailed list agreed and signed by both parties itemising the contents and condition of the property at the time of the tenant moving in. Blackstones Residential uses an Independent Inventory Service to provide a comprehensive list designed to minimise the risk of any dispute over the deposit at the end of the tenancy.

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## Securing the Deposit

Once the deposit has been paid in full, the tenant has secured the property. This deposit is held against possible damage to the property which can be checked against the inventory at the end of the tenancy. The Housing Act 2004 protects all parties in this regard as the deposit is now required to be held within a government-approved scheme on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. This scheme offers quicker and easier ways of resolving disputes, without the need for court action.

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## Tenants Move In

In order to keep checks on the property and that it is being well looked after, you will need to agree a number of visit dates with your tenant, usually a couple of times a year. Of course, if anything breaks down or needs repairing then you may be required to visit the property more often. If you want to minimise your workload Blackstones residential offers the fully managed service option to lighten the load (see our service level section for more details).

Small gestures will go a long way in building good relationships with your tenants such as leaving out instructions to appliances.

As our landlord, if anything else arises before, during or after the tenancy we will be on hand to offer you full, supportive lettings advice. Whatever your enquiry, contact us – we will be more than happy to help.