

Information for Landlords

About Ourselves

Specialists

We are a local Residential Lettings Agency, with a special interest in the Chinese Community and Property Markets. We are fully focused on the priorities and needs of the Landlord. We understand, that Letting your Property, especially for the first time, can be a worrying experience and so; with this in mind, our most important consideration is providing you the Landlord with the best possible service and the right tenant for your property. We never forget that your property is your most important asset and we can confidently assure you that by instructing us to act as your Letting and Management Agents, your asset will be in Professional and Caring hands.

Competitive Rates

Our normal fees are competitive and may be open to negotiation dependant on the level of service required. We are particularly committed to Investment Landlords and discounts may be available on even the smallest portfolio.

A Personal Service

We pride ourselves in offering a personal and friendly service, whilst maintaining a high standard of competence and professionalism.

Carefully Selected Quality Tenants

Drawn from a continually updated Register, all prospective Tenants are thoroughly referenced and credit checked. In some cases tenants will be required to provide a guarantor.

Out of Hours Service

For our initial meetings, we will if required, be pleased to visit your property outside of normal office hours and at a time that is convenient to you, in order to fit in with your busy schedule. We are also contactable by telephone out of hours.

Insurance for Landlords

We offer a range of competitively priced insurance products designed specifically for Landlords and which provide extra security and peace of mind. Key Features include:

- * RENTAL GUARANTEE COVER
- * LEGAL EXPENSES COVER
- * BUILDING INSURANCE
- * EMERGENCY REPAIR SERVICE
- * CONTENTS INSURANCE

Levels of Service Offered

Outlined below are the two basic components of our service. We are however able to offer bespoke services, by negotiation and agreement, based on your individual requirements.

Letting Only

Our Letting Only Service, includes marketing of the property and carrying out viewings, leading to the introduction and vetting of a prospective tenant. This proving satisfactory, we will then go ahead and prepare the tenancy agreement and if required an inventory.

Following this, the first months rent and the security deposit will be collected. These will be credited to the Landlord less our agreed fee. Managing the tenancy, including the maintenance and rent collection will then be the responsibility of the Landlord.

Full Management

This is our inclusive service and which provides for the marketing of the property and carrying out viewings, leading to the introduction and vetting of a prospective tenant. This proving satisfactory, we will then go ahead and prepare the tenancy agreement and if required an inventory. The tenant will then be checked in against the inventory.

During the tenancy we carry out periodic inspection visits. Should these bring to light any maintenance issues, we will (within the confines of our Management Agreement) recommend, averse and account for any necessary repairs.

Collecting and processing of rental payments is also part of the Service. These will be credited automatically to the Landlord's nominated bank account..

Towards the end of the tenancy, we will liaise with the Tenant and renew the tenancy agreement or arrange to check them out as applicable.

This service is suitable for those Landlords who are not residing locally, or would prefer not to deal with the Tenants directly, preferring all aspects to be handled by the Agent.

Preparing the Property

We have found that a good relationship with Tenants is the key to a smooth running tenancy. As Property Managers this relationship is our job. It is important the tenants should feel comfortable in their temporary home and that they are receiving value for their money. It follows therefore that a well-maintained property in a good decorative order will go towards this, whilst also achieving a higher rental figure. Tenants are also more inclined to treat such a property with greater respect.

General Condition

Electrical, gas plumbing, waste, central heating and hot water systems must be safe, sound and in good working order. Repairs and maintenance are at the Landlords expense unless misuse can be established. Interior decorations should be in good condition and preferably plain, light and neutral.

Furnishings

It is recommended that you leave only minimum furnishings and these should be of reasonable quality. It is preferable that items to be left are in the property during viewings. A list of recommended items is detailed over. If you are still unsure about certain items we will be able to advise.

Personal Items, Ornaments etc.

Personal possessions, ornaments, pictures books etc. should be removed from the premises, especially those of real or sentimental value. Some items may be boxed, sealed and stored in the loft at the owners risk. All cupboards and shelf space should be left clear for the Tenants own use.

Gardens

Gardens should be left neat, tidy and rubbish free, with any lawns cut. Tenants are required to maintain the gardens to a reasonable standard, provided they are left the necessary tools. However, few tenants are experienced gardeners and if you value your garden, or if it is particularly large, you may wish us to arrange visits by a contract gardener.

Cleaning

At the commencement of the tenancy the property must be in a thoroughly clean condition and at end of the tenancy it is the Tenants responsibility to leave the property in a similar condition. Where they fail to do so, cleaning will be arranged at their expense.

Information for the Tenant

It is helpful if you leave information for the Tenant, e.g. on operating the central heating and hot water system, washing machine and alarm system and the day refuse is collected etc.

Keys

You should provide one set of keys for each Tenant. Where we will be managing, we will arrange to have duplicates cut as required at a cost to be paid by the Landlord

Suggested Minimum contents for furnished lettings

Lounge

Sofa
Armchairs
Coffee Table

Dining Room

Dining Table & Chairs

Kitchen

Cooker
Fridge Freezer
Washing Machine
Electric Kettle
Cutlery
Glasses
Cooking Utensils
Saucepans
Frying Pan
Casserole dishes
Baking Tray
Can Opener
Washing up bowl

Bedrooms

Bed
Wardrobe
Chest of Drawers
Pillows
Duvet or blankets
(Linen – optional)

General

Vacuum Cleaner
Iron and Board
Dustpan and brush
Lampshades in all rooms
Curtains at all windows
Appropriate floor coverings

Garden

Lawnmower
Gardening Tools

General Advice for Landlord

Mortgage

If your property is mortgaged, you should obtain your mortgagee's written consent to the letting. They may require additional clauses in the tenancy agreement of which you must inform us.

Leaseholds

If you are a leaseholder, you should check the terms of your lease and obtain the necessary written consent before letting.

Insurance

You should ensure that you are suitably covered for letting under both your buildings and contents insurance. Failure to inform your insurers may invalidate your policies. We can advise on Landlords Legal Protection, rent Guarantee Cover and Landlords Contents and Buildings Insurance if required.

Bills and regular outgoings

We recommend that you arrange for regular outgoings e.g. service charges, maintenance contracts etc. to be paid by standing order or direct debit.

Council Tax and utility accounts (Fully Managed Service Only)

We will arrange for the transfer of Council Tax and utility accounts to the Tenant. Meter readings will be taken, allowing for your closing gas and electricity accounts to be drawn up. All these matters we will handle for you, however British telecom will require instructions directly from both the Landlord and the Tenant.

Income Tax

When resident in the UK, it is entirely the Landlord's responsibility to inform the Inland Revenue of rental income received and to pay any tax due. Where the Landlord is resident outside of the UK during a tenancy, under rules effective from 6 April 1996, unless an exemption certificate is held, we as Landlord's Agent are obliged to retain and forward to the Inland Revenue, on a quarterly basis, an amount equal to the basic rate of income tax from rental received, less certain expenses. An application form for exemption may be obtained from the Inland Revenue.

The Inventory

It is most important that an inventory of contents and schedule of condition be prepared, in order to avoid misunderstanding or dispute at the end of the tenancy. Without such safeguards, it will be impossible for the Landlord to prove any loss, damage or significant deterioration of the property or contents. In order to provide a complete service, we will if required prepare an inventory and schedule of condition, at the cost quoted in our Agency Agreement. The importance of the Inventory has now grown in significance with the advent of the new Deposit rules, introduced by law on all new Assured Shorthold Tenancies entered into after 6th April 2007. Information available on request.

Important Safety Requirements

The following requirements are the responsibility of the owner (Landlord). Where you have signed our Full Management Agency Agreement, they are also our responsibility. Therefore where we are managing we will need to ensure compliance.

Health and Safety – gas

Annual Safety check

Under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 all gas appliances and flues in rented accommodation must be checked for safety within 12 months of being installed and thereafter at least every 12 months by a competent engineer (i.e. a CORGI registered gas installer).

Maintenance

There is a duty to ensure that all gas appliances, flues and associated pipework are maintained in a safe condition at all times.

Records

Full records must be kept for at least 2 years of the inspection of each appliance and flue, of any defects found and any remedial action taken.

Copies to tenants

A copy of the safety certificate issued by the engineer must be given to each new tenant before their tenancy commences, or to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being carried out.

Health & Safety – Electrical

Under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, and certain other regulations, electrical appliances and equipment provided in tenanted premises must be safe. It is therefore necessary to make a visual check to ensure that all electrical items, plugs and leads appear completely safe and undamaged, and remove or replace any faulty items.

Consumer Protection – Fire

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989 & 1993) provide that specified items supplied in the course of letting property must meet minimum fire resistance standards. The regulations apply to all upholstered furniture, beds, headboards and mattresses, sofa-beds, futons and other convertibles, nursery furniture, garden furniture suitable for use in a dwelling, scatter cushions, pillows and non-original covers for furniture. They do not apply to antique furniture or furniture made before 1950, bedcovers including duvets, loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains, carpets or sleeping bags.

Items that comply will have a suitable permanent label attached. Non-compliant items must be removed before a tenancy commences.

Smoke Alarms

All properties built since June 1992 must be fitted with mains powered smoke detector alarms from new. Although there is no legislation requiring smoke alarms to be fitted in other ordinary tenanted properties, it is generally considered that the common law “duty of care” means that Landlords and their Agents could be liable should a fire cause injury or damage in a tenanted property where smoke alarms are not fitted. We strongly recommend that the Landlord fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor (in the hall and landing areas).

General Terms & Conditions

Deposits

All tenants are required to pay a deposit equalling between one and one and half months rental, unless the Landlord stipulates otherwise. In cases where the service provided is "Let only" the Landlord will retain the deposit on behalf of the tenant. It must be understood that the deposit belongs at all times to the tenant and that at no time should the Landlord use the money during the tenancy. Ideally the deposit should be retained in a separate account. As of 6th April 2007 new laws have come into effect with regard all deposits taken on Assured Shorthold Tenancy. All deposits must now be held in or under one of three Government approved schemes. Full details are available on request.

Fees & Commissions

The Fees become payable upon the finding of suitable tenants and an offer of the tenancy is made. If the Landlord withdraws from the letting, the fees will still remain payable. Monthly management fees will be charged monthly for each property and are payable on the due date of the tenancy.

Repairs – Managed Houses Only

The Landlord will wherever possible be advised of all necessary repairs before the commencement of work. It is the policy of Sino-UK Lettings not to undertake work without the consent of the Landlord, except where the Landlord's property is suffering damage by a delay in immediate commencement or a danger or threat occurs to the tenants. We reserve the right to spend £150.00 on emergency repairs and the instruction to manage the house will be understood by both parties that consent has been given to this right. Any amount spent will be deducted from the rental amount received.

In some instances, Sino-UK may require the Landlord to provide a cash float (maintained in our Client Account) to ensure prompt action and settlement of repairs.

Sign Boards

Once we have been instructed by you as your agent to market your property, we may erect a "TO LET" board outside the property.

Renting Tips

When renting your home, due consideration should be given to the state and condition of the decoration and carpets. If you feel that a room requires attention, it is likely that the prospective tenant will. Rentals can be increased by a higher standard of décor and overall appearance of a well cared for home. Gardens should be attended too and kept in a tidy manner.

We hope that the general points covered in this guide will be of some assistance to you. If there are any aspects of which you are unsure, please telephone our office. Alternatively we can visit you at your home to discuss your individual requirements at your convenience.