

Ashtons
York's number one lettings agent

Landlord Information Pack



MEET THE TEAM

KAREN HARRISON
Director



CHRIS THOMPSON
Lettings Valuer



HANNAH MARSDEN
Letting Agent



MOLLY COLE
Letting Agent



NAOMI QUARTON
Letting Agent



TRACY WINTERINGHAM
Letting Agent



INTRODUCTION

Ashton's Letting & Management have been one of York's most popular independent agents for over 15 years and were one of the first agents in York to become a member of ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents).

Ashtons Letting & Management can provide a full range of property management services whether you are a new or experienced landlord.

We can provide advice throughout the whole process whether that is guidance in purchasing your first investment property, finding a tenant or fully managing the property and tenancy.

You can rest assured as a landlord you'll receive expert support and in-depth knowledge of all current legislation.

Our comprehensive service begins with a free no obligation market appraisal with the aim of achieving the best possible rental return.

This brochure has been designed to give you a broad understanding of the steps involved in letting your property. For further information or to arrange a market appraisal, please contact:



KAREN HARRISON
Director
01904 731404



CHRIS THOMPSON
Lettings Valuer
01904 731404

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PREPARATION OF THE PROPERTY

Whatever type of property you have, we are sure to find you a tenant. But we want to make sure we find you a fantastic one! There are a few things you can do that will make your property stand out and attract the very best tenants:



PRESENTATION

When prospective tenants walk into your property, we want them to fall in love straight away. Presenting a property where they can picture themselves creating a home is a surefire way to attract a great tenant, and it's all in the presentation!

Keep things fresh and clean with neutral colours wherever possible. Neutral doesn't have to mean magnolia though! Think muted, stylish and modern decor.

Windows look best with clean, well made and fitted curtains or blinds. Adding some attractive light fittings and little finishing touches go a long way to making a house feel like a home. Try to create a comfortable, appealing space where tenants can easily imagine themselves living.

Windows should be dressed with either curtains or blinds.

The kitchen is the hub of the home and needs to be well planned and modern. As a minimum, your kitchen should include a cooker, fridge and washing machine.

Fitting a freezer, tumble dryer and dishwasher will instantly boost the marketability of the property (even if you are planning on offering it as unfurnished).

A house file is a thoughtful touch when renting out your home. It should include photocopies of all instruction manuals and any other important paperwork (but keep the originals, just in case something gets lost!) If you do provide a house file, make sure you add it to the inventory.

A clean and well cared for bathroom is a must. Before you put your property onto the rental market, make sure everything is in working order and that there are no leaks (pay special attention to the seals around the sanitaryware). A modern, white suite comprising a bath with shower over, WC and basin with white wall and floor tiles is the perfect canvas to dress up with mirrors, lighting and towels. It is strongly recommended that you consider fitting a glass shower screen in place of a shower curtain.

GARDENS

Should your property have a garden, we would recommend this being as low maintenance as possible i.e. gravelling and paving as opposed to lawns. However, the maintenance of the garden is the tenant's responsibility but gardening equipment should be supplied.

The above is general advice on how to present your investment property. Please do not hesitate to ask for further advice or contacts should you require them. We may be able to offer advice on where to buy furnishings or provide contacts for curtain making, interior designers and decorators.

The better presented your property is, the more likely it is to secure tenants quickly and for those tenants to take care and have pride in the property.



Be aware that, should your property not have been bought specifically for rental purposes under a buy to let mortgage, then you are obliged to get the permission of your lender to let the property out. You should also inform any insurance company and also the management company (if applicable).

FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED?

There is demand for both but it is often the case that potential tenants of city centre apartments are often looking for fully furnished, and more often than not, a family sized property is often required to be unfurnished. However the decision is yours. You may wish to leave this flexible by advertising "can be offered furnished or unfurnished."

Should you wish to decide to furnish the property, consideration should be given to the market to which you are appealing. Furniture should be clean and functional and must comply with The Fire and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations Act 1988 (amended 1989 and 1993).

The regulations apply to any of the following which contain upholstery and which are intended for private use in a dwelling, and includes children's furniture:

- *Beds, headboards, mattresses, sofa beds, futons and pillows*
- *Nursery furniture*
- *Garden furniture which is suitable for use in a dwelling*
- *Sofas*
- *Scatter cushions and seat pads*
- *Loose and stretch covers for furniture*

The regulations DO NOT apply to:

- *Sleeping bags and bedclothes (including duvets)*
- *Loose covers for mattresses*
- *Bedding i.e. pillow case, duvet covers*
- *Curtains*
- *Carpets*
- *Furniture made before 1950 and re-upholstered furniture made before that date*

All furniture purchased brand new after 1989 will comply with the Fire & Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988, but cannot be used unless it has a Fire Safety Certificate attached.

If any furniture supplied to the property does not comply with the regulations and does not carry an appropriate safety label, it should be removed or replaced before a tenancy commences. Please note that it cannot be stored in or at the property e.g. in a garage.

It is a criminal offence to leave any furniture in a rented property and doing so can carry a heavy penalty.

GAS REGULATIONS

An annual inspection of gas appliances is mandatory and a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Certificate should be retained by the landlord, managing agent and a copy supplied to the tenant.

There is a risk if:

- *The appliance was poorly installed*
- *The appliance is not working correctly*
- *The appliance has not been checked or serviced regularly*
- *There is not enough ventilation in the room*
- *The chimney or flue becomes blocked*
- *Unqualified people install or service the appliance*

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 place duties on gas consumers, installers, suppliers and landlords.

- *A plumber must be a Gas Safe Registered Plumber*
- *By law, all landlords are responsible for making sure that any gas appliances in their rented properties are maintained in good order and checked annually for its safety*

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

It is now compulsory that all rental properties are fitted with carbon monoxide detectors, which must be changed every five years. Please confirm if you require Ashtons to arrange for these to be installed on your behalf on your service agreement.

SMOKE DETECTORS

Again, these are compulsory. There should be a detector on each floor, fitted in the correct position. They must be renewed every ten years.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY REPORTS

With effect from July 2020 it is now mandatory for all landlords to have in place an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). The report is valid for five years. This document forms part of the Tenancy Documentation to comply with the Deregulation Act.



WINTER CARE

With empty properties, we would expect the owner to bear the cost of heating or the cost of a professional drain down/refill to avoid possible problems with burst pipes and any subsequent insurance claim. Insurers will often not give cover for burst pipes if a property is vacant in the winter, unless the heating is left on or the system drained down.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Landlords are required to maintain their properties to a satisfactory standard of repair. Failure to respond to maintenance often leads to frustration by tenants and a limitation of landlord rights.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

From 1st October 2008, it became a legal requirement for all rental properties to have an EPC (energy performance certificate). This is identical to the EPC currently required for domestic properties offered for sale. An EPC tells you how efficient a home is, on a scale of A-G. The most efficient homes, which should have the lowest fuel bills, are in band A. The certificate also tells you, on a scale of A-G, about the impact the home has on the environment. Better rated homes should have less impact through carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. A rental property should have a rating of E or above.



“

We are really impressed with the service we received from Ashtons Estate Agents, and we can't recommend them enough. They go out of there way to help you and can't do enough for you.

”

(Dawn Dale)



TENANCY AGREEMENTS

The tenancy agreement used by Ashtons Letting & Management has been written by the property specialists, The Letting Centre. It is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy which is well recognised and used by a large number of letting agencies. It is regularly updated to ensure it complies with current legislation.

INVENTORIES

Under our Full Managed Services an 'Inventory and Record of Condition' will be prepared as part of the service. This will be a detailed report of the property including fixtures, fittings as well as the condition of the property. The inventory will include photographs. You will be advised as a landlord when the inventory will be done so that you can ensure the property is ready and clean.

Opening meter readings will also be noted on the inventory.

For those landlords using our Tenant Find or Tenant Find Monthly services the fee for an inventory is £150 plus VAT.

SECURITY DEPOSITS

Ashtons will take a security deposit which will be registered in accordance with deposit scheme rules within 30 days of receipt. Ashtons take a deposit irrespective of what service a landlord opts for and is included within the fee. The deposit is usually equivalent to one months rent plus £100. With effect from June 2019 deposits are capped at no more than the equivalent of five weeks rent.



TENANCY DEPOSIT SCHEME

Ashtons Letting & Management is regulated by ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents). We are a member of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme, which is administered by:

Tenancy Deposit Scheme
West Wing, First Floor,
The Maylands Building, 200 Maylands Avenue,
Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7TG
Telephone: 0300 037 1000
www.tenancydepositscheme.com

Ashtons hold deposits as a stakeholder. The deposits are held in our client deposit account, which has client money protection insurance, thereby ring fencing the account. They are registered with The Dispute Service.

If we are managing a property, once the checkout inspection has been completed, and if there is no dispute, Ashtons will keep any amounts agreed as deductions where expenditure has been incurred on behalf of the landlord, or repay the whole or the balance of the deposit according to the conditions of the tenancy agreement with the landlord and the tenant. Payment of the deposit will be made within 10 working days of written consent from both parties.

If, after 10 days following notification of a dispute, (e.g. where the landlord wishes to make deductions which the tenant does not agree to) and reasonable attempts have been made in that time to resolve the differences in opinion and there remains an unresolved dispute between the landlord and the tenant over the allocation of the deposit, it will be submitted to the scheme for adjudication. All parties agree to cooperate with any adjudication.

The statutory rights of either the landlord or the tenant to take legal action against the other party, remain unaffected. It is not compulsory for the parties to refer the dispute to the scheme for adjudication.

They may, if either party chooses to, take the matter to court. This process may take longer and incur further costs, and the matter may still be referred back to the scheme by the judge. If the parties do agree that the dispute should be resolved by the scheme, they must accept the decision of the scheme as final and binding.

If there is a dispute, Ashtons must remit to The Dispute Service Ltd the full deposit less any amounts already agreed by the parties and paid over to them. This must be done within 10 working days of being told a dispute has been registered, whether or not it is contested. Failure to remit the deposit will not delay the adjudication but The Dispute Service Ltd will take appropriate action to recover the deposit.

The agent/landlord must cooperate with the scheme in the adjudication of the dispute and follow any recommendations concerning the method of the resolution of the dispute.

The landlord warrants that all of the information he has provided to the agent is correct to the best of his knowledge and belief. In the event that the landlord provides incorrect information to the agent, which causes the agent to suffer loss or causes legal proceedings to be taken, the landlord agrees to reimburse and compensate the agent for all losses suffered.

Ashtons Letting & Management pay an annual subscription to be a member of TDS. The fee for registering and holding the bonds is built in to all our levels of service.

If a landlord is managing the tenancy himself, and has instructed Ashtons on a tenant find basis only, the landlord is responsible for the check out inspection at the end of the tenancy. A form will need to be signed by both the landlord and the tenant to confirm that both are in agreement for the deposit to be returned (be that with or without deductions) before Ashtons can release the deposit. All deductions must be agreed with the tenant.

LANDLORD TAXES

As a UK resident landlord you have a liability to pay tax on rental income.

As a non resident landlord you are still liable for paying tax on rental income. Ashtons can pay the tax at 20% on your behalf however provided you complete an exemption form (NRT1) with the Inland Revenue, we can pay the rent gross to you. The NRT1 form is completed online. Ashtons agent number is: 904/NA 038634.

INSURANCE



It is the landlord's responsibility to maintain buildings insurance. In respect of contents insurance, it is the landlord's responsibility to ensure insurance is in place for items provided by the landlord. Please be aware that a non rental policy may not cover the rented property. We strongly recommend that you take out both buildings and contents insurance, even if the property is unfurnished, as a contents insurance policy may well provide an element of public liability for your tenants.

UTILITY COMPANIES

COUNCIL TAX

It is the tenant's responsibility to pay for the council tax levied on the property during the term of their tenancy. Ashtons Letting & Management will notify the local council office of new tenants taking up occupation of the property. The landlord is responsible for council tax during void periods. The income from your property may be the subject of taxation. We strongly advise seeking the guidance of an accountant on this.

WATER/SEWERAGE

It is the tenant's responsibility to cover the water rates during the term of the tenancy. Ashtons Letting & Management will notify the relevant water authority of the new tenants taking up occupation. Landlords are responsible for water and sewerage during void periods.

TELEPHONE

If the property has been your home prior to letting, it is your responsibility to ensure you terminate your account on this property. The tenants are then responsible for arranging the reconnection should they wish to have a landline telephone number.

TV LICENCE

Even if a landlord provides a TV, it is the responsibility of the tenant to provide a TV licence. We will advise tenants of this at check-in.

SERVICE CHARGE AND GROUND RENT

Where a property incurs a service charge and ground rent (usually in the case of leasehold properties), these are the responsibility of the landlord. You should notify your management company of your address, to ensure they have your correct details for billing.

GAINING VACANT POSSESSION OF YOUR PROPERTY

Ashtons Letting & Management will, under the 'Full Management Service', serve the necessary notices on tenants to gain back possession of the property. The Assured Shorthold Tenancy will be drawn up for a fixed period, usually six or twelve months. During that time, it is not possible to gain back possession of the property. Should you require the property back at the end of the tenancy term, two months' notice must be served on the tenant.



RIGHT TO RENT

With effect from 1st February 2016, the Immigration Act 2014 came into force, which means a landlord and his agent must check a tenant's right to rent in the UK. There are three categories of tenants' right to rent:

- **Unlimited right to rent i.e. UK citizen**
- **Time limited right to rent tenant i.e. on a visa, valid for a time period**
- **No right to rent i.e. do not have correct documents or are awaiting documents/visa**

Ashtons will, as part of their referencing service, carry out the required checks to ensure a tenant has a right to be renting in the UK. Failure to comply with this can result in a landlord being fined up to £3000 per tenant.



LETTINGS SERVICES

We offer different levels of service to our landlords which are largely dependent on how involved you'd like to be. We're very happy to discuss the services with you and support you in choosing the level that works best for your needs.

With each level of our service, Ashtons Letting & Management will carry out viewings at your property once we've been given the keys. Some landlords, however, particularly those using the Introduction to Tenant Find services, prefer to undertake viewings themselves. It's your choice.

1. FULL MANAGEMENT SERVICE

13% plus VAT of the monthly rental income
 £450 plus VAT initial set up fee (£540)
 £350 plus VAT relet fee (£420)
 £150 plus VAT new tenancy agreement for existing tenancies (£180)
 £75 plus VAT Periodic Tenancy Renewal (£90)

Service includes:

- *Marketing of the property including professional photography*
- *Accompanied viewings*
- *Referencing of prospective tenants*
- *Right to rent checks*
- *Drawing up of the tenancy agreement*
- *Preparation of the inventory including meter readings*
- *Collection of the monthly rent*
- *Holding and registering of tenant's deposit*
- *Coordination of maintenance*
- *Mid term inspections*
- *Checkout inspections*

2. TENANT FIND MONTHLY

8% plus VAT of the monthly rental income
 £450 plus VAT initial set up fee (£540)
 £350 plus VAT relet fee (£420)
 £150 plus VAT new tenancy agreement for existing tenancies (£180)
 £150 plus VAT preparation of the inventory including meter readings (£180)
 £75 plus VAT Periodic Tenancy Renewal (£90)

Service includes:

- *Marketing of the property including professional photography*
- *Accompanied viewings*
- *Referencing of prospective tenants*
- *Right to rent checks*
- *Drawing up of the tenancy agreement*
- *Collection of the monthly rent*
- *Collecting, holding and registering of tenant's deposit*

3. TENANT FIND SERVICE

£650 plus VAT (£780)
 £150 plus VAT preparation of the inventory including meter readings (£180)

Service includes:

- *Marketing of the property including professional photography*
- *Accompanied viewings*
- *Referencing of prospective tenants*
- *Right to rent checks*
- *Drawing up of the tenancy agreement*
- *Collection of the first month's rent*
- *Collecting, holding and registering of tenant's deposit*

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



As a member of the National Approved Letting Scheme and the Association of Residential Letting Agents, Ashtons Letting & Management aims to provide the highest standards of service to all landlords and tenants.

To ensure that your interests are safeguarded, we offer the following:

- *If you believe you have a grievance, please write, in the first instance, to Karen Harrison, Director: Ashtons Letting & Management, 5 High Petergate, York, YO1 7EH*
 - *The grievance will be acknowledged immediately, investigated thoroughly in accordance with established 'in house' procedures and a reply sent to the complainant within 3 working days of receipt of the letter. This reply will include a commitment to send a formal written outcome of the office investigation to the complainant within 21 days*
 - *If the complainant is dissatisfied with the result of the internal investigation, the complainant is entitled to receive information on how they can get redress within the company.*
- This should provide the opportunity for a speedy, separate and detached review of the complaint. In the case of a single office member, a member of staff not directly involved in the matter will deal with the complaint*
- *Following the conclusion of the in house review, a final written statement as to further action, including any offer made, will be sent to the complainant. This will include information on how the matter can be referred to the Ombudsman*
 - *We agree to deal with any properly appointed representative of a complainant who acts on behalf of the complainant*
 - *If you wish to refer to the matter further, please contact Peter Docwra, Senior Partner, Ashtons, 1 Bootham, York, YO30 7BN*

Stays *York*



Stays offer a fully managed, expert service to ensure letting your property in this way is a truly hassle free experience.

Our properties have had excellent occupancy rates during 2018, often resulting in a higher yield than on residential tenancy.

1a High Petergate, York, North Yorkshire YO1 7EN

T: 01904 466146 E: info@staysyork.com Twitter: @staysyork

www.staysyork.com



Ashtons

With branches in York, Acomb and Selby, our dedicated team of experienced professionals all live locally and have expert knowledge of the region and its housing market.



ashtonsnet.com

5 High Petergate,
York, YO1 7EN
T: 01904 731 404

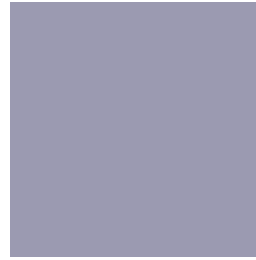
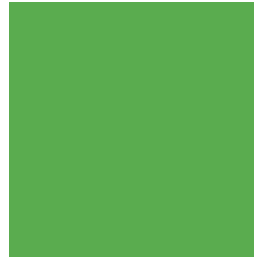
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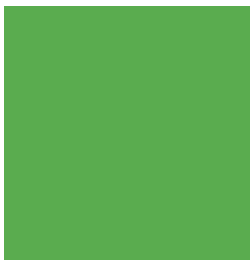


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