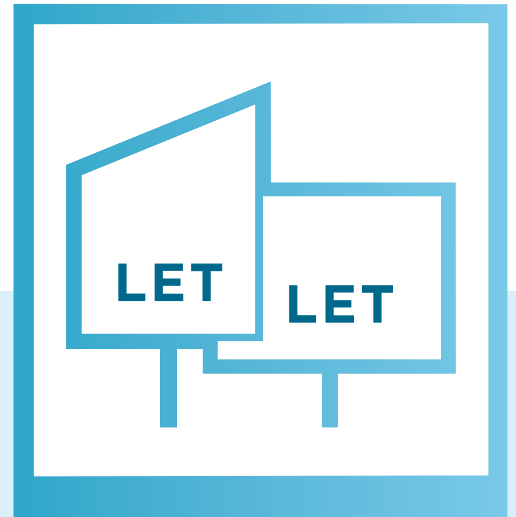


# Guide to Letting Your Property



# Welcome to Martin & Co

We are the property professionals, a national network of independently owned property agents. Each of these businesses has been built with pride, on personal service, local knowledge and investment expertise.

With over 30 years of experience in residential lettings across the UK, we are the lettings experts. We manage more than 41,000 properties across our network\* and let nearly 450 new properties every week.

This is why we are best placed to advise you on the lettings market in general and in your local area specifically, provide the management services best

suited to your requirements, and make sure your investment is working for you.

Our full property management service gives our landlords true peace of mind, and we'll work with you every step of the way and navigate you through the complex journey of letting your property.

\*February 2020



# Why choose Martin & Co?

At Martin & Co, we have been building a lettings and property management pedigree since 1986. Our dedicated lettings experts are highly experienced and are often landlords themselves.

We are about real people with the integrity and commitment to do the right thing for you. We listen and understand what's important to you, and we always keep you informed.

Whether you're a private landlord letting your own home, a first-time investor or a professional landlord with a large property portfolio, we have a service to suit your needs. Our agents will advise you on the best way to present your property and find you trustworthy tenants.

We work hard to let your property quickly and minimise void periods by promoting it online and through

traditional marketing channels, giving your property the exposure it deserves.

With our robust approach to compliance and lettings legislation, we ensure that your largest investment is in a safe pair of hands.

Many of our branches offer a complete landlord service, providing industry leading tenant background checks, guaranteed rental income, and no legal bills\*.

We offer access to government approved tenancy deposit schemes and client money protection insurance, and make utility switching hassle-free. With straightforward and transparent fees, you have the clarity to make informed decisions. Whatever the situation, we are here and happy to help.

\*Terms & Conditions apply

# Letting your property with Martin & Co



# Getting started

The first step is to meet with a representative from our lettings department. We'll be able to make recommendations to maximise the letting potential of your property and advise on a realistic rental value.

Whether you had an intention to invest in property or became a landlord through circumstance, your local Martin & Co team is here to ensure your experience is rewarding and stress-free.



# Things to consider



## Financial considerations

Phased changes from April 2017 until April 2020 mean residential landlords can no longer fully claim tax relief on their mortgage interest payments.

Under this legislation, rather than fully deducting their mortgage interest on top of allowable expenses in order to calculate their taxable rental income, landlords will only be able to claim tax relief at the basic 20% rate on whichever is the lowest figure from finance costs (including mortgage interest), rental income profit (less allowable expenses) or total income.



## Pets or no pets?

Many pet owners experience difficulty in finding accommodation that accepts pets. Some properties will simply not be suitable for pets, and sometimes landlords may feel that the potential problems that pets can cause are not worth the risk.

Landlords who do allow pets will typically find that it's considerably easier to fill their properties, as well as achieve higher rents. They also find that once in, tenants tend to stay for longer periods of time.

If you decide to allow pets, make sure there are no restrictions, especially if it's a leasehold property, and consider what type of pets you will allow. Your local Martin & Co team will be able to provide further advice, based on your individual circumstances, and ensure adequate provisions are in place.



## Furnished or unfurnished?

If you choose to let your property furnished, it will need to be fully equipped, so that tenants can move in with only personal belongings. Generally, furnished properties tend to attract shorter term tenancies. Anything included by you will be your responsibility to repair or replace.

Unfurnished accommodation should include the basics - carpets, curtains, basic kitchen appliances. We particularly recommend this option for first-time landlords.

Tax considerations may affect your decision to furnish your property or leave it unfurnished, as landlords only get tax relief for the cost of directly replacing furniture, furnishings and appliances. This tax relief replaced the traditional "wear and tear" allowance which in the past gave tax relief proportionate to the rental income.

# First impressions count

Tenants today are sophisticated, and look for a rental property that reflects their lifestyle. To achieve a competitive rent and ensure your property is let quickly to a preferred tenant, remember that first impressions count.

## Tips to consider when preparing your property for viewings:

- ✓ Keep colours neutral.
- ✓ Kitchens and bathrooms should be well equipped.
- ✓ Less is more in terms of decoration.
- ✓ Rooms should be light and bright.
- ✓ Where possible, use earth tones on floors.
- ✓ Gardens should be neat and tidy.
- ✓ Contemporary lighting is particularly important in modern apartments.
- ✓ Everything should be sparkling clean, including the windows.

## There are also practical considerations, including:

- ✓ Windows and doors need to be secure and in good working order.
- ✓ Roofs should have no broken tiles.
- ✓ Outside patios, walls, fences and paved areas should be well maintained.
- ✓ The heating system needs to be functioning properly.
- ✓ Stairs and rails should be secure and safe.
- ✓ Seals around showers, sinks and baths should be in good repair and drainage fully functioning.
- ✓ Electrical appliances should be PAT tested and compliant with current electrical safety regulations, and an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) provided.
- ✓ Gas appliances, fittings and flues need to have a yearly Gas Safety Check.
- ✓ Smoke alarms must be fitted on each floor of the property.
- ✓ Carbon Monoxide detectors must be fitted in rooms where there is a solid fuel burning appliance.
- ✓ Window blinds must comply with relevant safety regulations.
- ✓ The risk of exposure to Legionella in water systems must be properly controlled.

## Next steps

When we receive your instructions and signed terms of business, we'll visit the property to take internal and external photographs.

We'll finalise your tenant requirements with you, so that we can match your property to the potential tenants we have on our database. Our multiple office network gives us a real advantage, as we have access to a large number of potential tenants.

Whether it's through existing contacts or from advertising enquiries, we aim to find the right tenant to suit both you and your property.

To protect your investment and show the property to its best advantage, all potential tenants are accompanied during viewings by a Martin & Co member of staff, who will be familiar with the property and able to answer any questions.

## Promoting your property

We recognise that the majority of tenants start their search for a property online, and that is why we made a serious investment in online technology for promoting property.

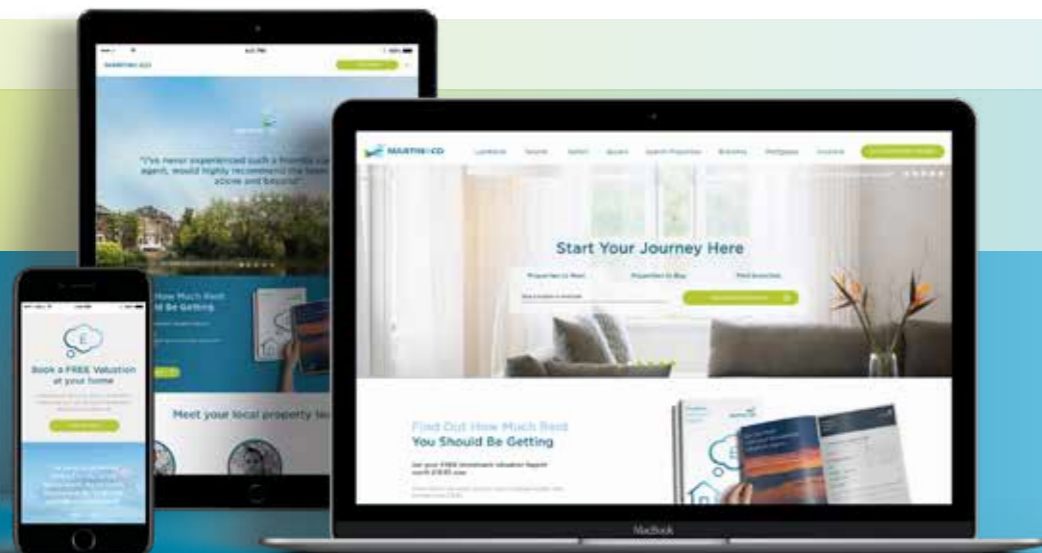
Martin & Co's website uses cutting edge technology and links directly to the UK's largest property portals. It is optimised to present properties exceptionally well on mobile, tablet and desktop devices, and allows potential tenants to enquire about properties 24/7 using our Live Chat\*.

Our website achieves around 250,000 views per month, the majority of which come from new visitors – another great way of demonstrating how our brand power attracts new people to search out our rental properties every day.

Martin & Co communicates with potential tenants across social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, to ensure your property gets the maximum exposure.

On top of that, we'll proactively notify potential tenants on our database as soon as we take on your property. We will also prepare professional property listings and brochures, as well as display a 'To Let' board to attract maximum attention.

\*At participating branches.



## Comprehensive tenant referencing

Once a tenant has been found, references are taken up by one of the UK's leading independent referencing agencies.

Our tenant referencing includes multiple checks to highlight any potential issues and provides verification of the information supplied by the tenants.

The referencing agency will check that each tenant is able to afford to pay their rent, and verify they are credit worthy by checking for any adverse credit history such as bankruptcy, County Court Judgements (CCJs) and court decrees.

They will also obtain employer references, as well as landlord references to check if the applicant paid their rent in former tenancies.

Talk to your local Martin & Co office to find out about our comprehensive tenant referencing\*, which may also include checks against fraud databases and other relevant risk assessment measures to determine the likelihood of the tenant defaulting on rent.

\*At participating branches.



# Start of tenancy

## Tenancy agreement

Once everything is in place, we'll prepare and sign an agreement with the tenant on your behalf. Martin & Co use approved tenancy agreements which have been carefully drawn up to protect the landlord's rights to possession, help control the tenant's activities and comply with standard mortgage lender requirements.

Tenancy agreements are usually for an initial term of 6 or 12 months. However, shorter or longer term tenancies can be negotiated. Your tenancy is likely to be an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, but this does depend on specific circumstances. Our team will advise you which agreement will be appropriate when an offer is agreed.

## Taking note

Whether you are letting your property furnished or unfurnished, an inventory/schedule of condition is essential, and we will arrange this for you. At the end of a tenancy, the property is checked against the inventory and any damage or deterioration is noted.

The tenant is responsible for the cost of rectifying any damage over and above what is considered to be fair wear and tear. It is necessary to provide a properly prepared and accurate inventory/schedule of condition to protect the landlord's interests.

# Deposit custodial scheme

As part of the Housing Act 2004, the Government introduced tenancy deposit protection for all Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) in England and Wales.

## Deposit Protection

All tenant security deposits paid under an AST must be registered with a Government approved tenancy deposit scheme within 30 days of receipt.

At the end of a tenancy, the landlord and tenant need to agree the basis for repayment of the deposit. If Martin & Co is managing your property, we will conduct these negotiations on your behalf. In case of a dispute, each deposit scheme has an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) service.

## Receiving Initial Monies

When the tenant signs the tenancy agreement, we take the initial rental payment and the security deposit. From 1st June 2019, the maximum level of security deposit is 5 weeks' rent.

We ensure funds are cleared before the tenant is allowed to move in and a payment method is agreed for ongoing rent.



# Property management expertise

At Martin & Co, we provide property management services to suit all types of landlords. Our qualified team boasts extensive experience in rental property management and is able to offer you professional advice at all times.



## Essential Managed Service

Our Essential Managed service delivers peace of mind from the time your property is first marketed until the deposit is returned.

We'll provide expert support to meet your legal and safety obligations as a landlord and handle all routine tenancy matters. We commit to regular visits during the tenancy, and will look after your property including maintenance and repairs. We work with proven contractors and reputable tradespeople ensuring prompt service at a reasonable cost, or use your own contractors when requested.

Our accounts team will ensure that your tenant's rental payments are passed on to you quickly. We will provide you with monthly statements of rental income and expenditure to ensure you have full information for tax purposes.

We'll also conduct regular rent reviews and assist with extending or ending the tenancy when required, including handling all end of tenancy dilapidations negotiations.



## Premium Managed Service

Our Premium Managed service is designed to safeguard your finances and give complete protection for your investment.

In addition to all services provided under the Essential Managed service, we also give you the ultimate level of protection against risks associated with letting a property.

Your rent payments will be protected in the event of a tenant going into rent arrears, and you will have access to legal assistance and eviction service in the event of serious breaches of the tenancy agreement, with legal fees covered\*.

\*Terms & Conditions apply, contact your local Martin & Co office for more information.

# Being a landlord

Whether you invest in property intentionally or became a landlord through circumstance, we're here to ensure your experience is rewarding and stress-free.

## Letting for the first time

If you are a first-time landlord, make sure you have consent from your mortgage lender, freeholder and insurer to let your property, as well as have a clear understanding of any restrictions placed on the type of let or type of tenant.

## Insurance

Make sure you have adequate building and contents insurance cover in place for all fixtures, fittings and white goods (or plumbing and heating installations). Consider including public liability in your insurance, so that you are protected in the event of an accident in the property.

## Landlord obligations

Legislation governing how landlords, tenants and tenancies must operate in England is extensive. Your obligations as a landlord include compliance with safety regulations, as well as the legal requirement to maintain the structure and exterior of the property, heating and plumbing installations, and deal with routine repairs. If the property is leasehold, the landlord is responsible for paying the service charge and ground rent.

## Landlords in Wales

Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, any landlord who has a rental property in Wales is required to register with Rent Smart Wales and must be licensed if they undertake letting and management tasks. However, when using a licensed letting agent and declaring the agent on their registration, they do not need a license. Our Welsh offices can assist with these requirements.

# Compliance with regulations

At Martin & Co, we have the knowledge and experience to help you to comply with all relevant legal and safety regulations when you let a property.

## Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Properties must have a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with a rating E or above before they can be marketed. Landlords are obliged to provide tenants with a copy of a valid EPC before the start of every tenancy. We can arrange this for you and provide your tenant with a copy.

## Gas safety regulations

If your property has a supply of gas to it, you must arrange for a 'Gas Safe' registered engineer to check all gas appliances. You must then provide a certificate to your tenant before the start of any new tenancy and annually thereafter. Where we manage the property on your behalf, we will renew the certificate and provide an updated copy to your tenant.

## Electrical safety

Landlords must meet the electrical safety standards by providing an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) compiled by an NICEIC qualified electrician on fixed wiring before the start of each tenancy. In addition, each electrical installation must be safe and therefore tested at regular intervals.

## Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS)

Landlords must comply with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 which assesses 29 housing hazards and the effect that each may have on the health and safety of tenants. Landlords must take appropriate action for any identified hazards.

## Blinds safety

Landlords must comply with the Blind Cord Safety Regulations 2014 and ensure any window blinds in the property either have no accessible cords, or have safety devices to prevent cords or chains from forming a hazard.

## Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors

Smoke alarms must be installed on each storey within the premises, and carbon monoxide detectors must be installed in any room with a solid fuel burning appliance. All alarms and detectors must be operational and tested on the start date of the tenancy and maintained throughout the tenancy.

## Right to rent

ID checks have to be made on all adult occupiers of the property, and evidence needs to be obtained that they have a right to remain in the UK via appropriate documentation such as a passport or biometric residence permit. There is also a requirement for follow up checks for tenants who have a limited right to remain in the UK.

## Furniture and furnishings

These regulations set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery. All furniture and furnishings must comply with fire resistance regulations, and non-compliant items must be removed.

## Legionella

The risk of exposure to Legionella in water systems must be properly controlled, and a risk assessment carried out by the landlord or a competent third party. If a risk is identified, appropriate steps must be taken to remove or minimise the risk, and the tenant must be kept informed.



## We set high standards

Martin & Co has an established reputation to protect. We ensure our branches meet and exceed the highest professional standards.

All Martin & Co franchised offices are members of The Property Ombudsman (TPO) and abide by their Code of Practice, and all hold Client Money Protection insurance (CMP).

Many offices are licensed by The Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA), The National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA), or belong to The UK Association of Letting Agents (UKALA) and/or accredited by the Safeagent scheme.

Commitment to the highest standards is developed within our team through the Martin & Co training academy's unique mix of on-the-job training and external professional development courses.



## 10 reasons to choose Martin & Co to let and manage your property



Efficient local property management and reliable customer service



Rental income protection and legal expenses cover available



Straightforward and transparent fees



Detailed property inventory and hassle-free utility switching



Compliance with ever changing lettings legislation and safety regulations



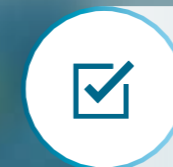
Repairs and maintenance using reputable tradespeople



Industry leading tenant background checks



Your landlord legal rights protected and enforced



Government approved tenancy deposit schemes



Regular property visits and safety checks

Talk to Martin & Co lettings and property management professionals today, we'll look after your property as if it was our own and make things easier for you!



Visit us at [martinco.com](http://martinco.com)  
to find your nearest branch.

We have  
**160 offices**  
across the UK

We let a  
property every  
**6.5 minutes**

In the last  
year we let  
**23,000**  
properties

We manage  
**41,000**  
properties

