

# d&g&you're a landlord

A step-by-step guide to  
letting your property



Douglas  
& Gordon  
HOMES & PROPERTY



Douglas  
& Gordon  
HOMES & PROPERTY

A photograph of a desk lamp and a cup of coffee on a wooden table. The lamp is on the left, casting a warm glow. The cup of coffee is on the right, with steam rising from it. The background is a dark, textured wall.

# contents

d&g&you	5
Valuing your property	6
Preparing to let	8
Preparing for viewings	12
Marketing your property	14
Viewings	18
The offer process	21
Tenancy administration	22
Commencement of tenancy	25
Appendix	26
Letting offices	27



# d&g&you

Letting your property can be daunting. Along the way you'll need to make some important decisions about a hugely valuable asset. You, and your agent, will need patience, persistence and attention to detail. So it pays to have the right one by your side, right from the very start.

As one of London's leading estate agents, the D&G team are here to help you maximise the rental income of your property - doing everything we can to make the process run smoothly. Preparing carefully, and using our wide network and years of expertise to find tenants you can trust.

To help guide you through each step of the process, we've compiled our top tips for successful letting into this handy guide. Keep hold of it. Refer back to it. And please don't hesitate to ask if you need help or advice.

Because letting your property doesn't have to be daunting when it's d&g&you.

# valuing your property

Our property valuations are always carried out by a senior member of our lettings team. Deeply knowledgeable on the local market, they'll be able to show you recent rental prices for properties like yours in your area.

They'll also be able to provide you with area-specific research, compiled with the help of D&G Asset Management - a company that advises some of the leading residential property investment funds in London.





# preparing to let

Before you place your property on the market, there are eight key areas to take care of:

## 1. Condition of property

When it comes to letting your property, first impressions count – so it's hugely important to think about decoration and furnishings. Freshly decorated properties in neutral colours, with modern kitchens and bathrooms, wooden floors in reception areas and good storage really do rent faster, and for higher prices.

To help you maximise your property's potential, ask our team about our professional Refurbishment & Interior Services Department, who have successfully let every property they've improved within two weeks.

## 2. Appliances and manuals

It goes without saying that all appliances and machinery, including the boiler, must be in good working order and serviced appropriately. Manufacturers' operating and instruction manuals for all appliances and electrical equipment should be left in the property. And details of any maintenance contracts should be supplied.

## 3. EPC

Before being placed on the market, all rental properties are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which rates the energy efficiency and environmental impact of a property, on a scale from A to G.

You will need an EPC with an energy efficiency of band E or above as it is unlawful to let a property with an EPC rating of F or G. We use a number of accredited EPC providers, and can organise this certificate on your behalf.

## 4. Safety regulations

As a landlord you need to adhere to a number of legal requirements regarding the safety of your property. For more information please refer to the Appendix at the back of this guide.

## 5. Consents

If you're a leaseholder, you'll need to check the requirements of your lease in connection with sub-letting, and obtain the necessary consent if required. If you have a mortgage on your property, consent may also be required.

## 6. Insurance

Landlords are required to make sure that both the property and its contents are fully insured. You must inform your insurance company that your property is going to be let, and adjust your policy as required. If you're in need of landlord cover, we can recommend Eggar Forrester Insurance. Please ask us for more details.

## 7. Tax implications

Any income generated from letting property in the UK is liable to UK tax, whether the landlord lives in the UK or not. Non-resident landlords will need to apply to HMRC to pay tax on their rental income through Self-Assessment, in order to receive UK rental income without deduction of tax.

You must pay tax on the profit you make from renting out the property, after deductions for 'allowable expenses'. The tax liabilities associated with letting a property will vary from person to person, so we recommend you seek the advice of a property tax specialist in order to minimise your liabilities.

## 8. Legal ownership

If your property is jointly owned, co-owners must be named on our terms and conditions, and on the tenancy agreement.

## Long lets: six months or more

### 1. Furnished or unfurnished?

Furnished and unfurnished properties will appeal to different tenants, but there is often no difference between the level of rent achieved for a property either way. 'Unfurnished' properties will usually include curtains or blinds, carpets or other flooring and white goods in the kitchen. Whereas 'furnished' properties tend to be ready for someone to move into. We'll be happy to advise you on what should be left and what should be removed.

### 2. Property Management

It's important to identify early on who will be looking after the property while it's let. If you're in need of ongoing help and support, we can provide a comprehensive property management service. Please don't hesitate to ask us for more details.

### 3. Term of letting

Most tenancies are for an initial term of one or two years. Tenants' options to renew and early termination clauses can be negotiated.

### 4. Utilities and Council Tax

The tenant is normally responsible for paying all gas, electricity, telephone, water, council tax and television licence bills during the tenancy. The landlord is responsible for any ground rent and service charges payable.

## Short lets: from one to six months

**Please note: Short-term lets are subject to local authority restrictions.**

### 1. Furnished or unfurnished?

A short let property is normally fully furnished. This includes sufficient bedding, bed linen, towels, bathmats etc. for the number of bedrooms, bath/shower rooms and occupants.

However, there is also a need for unfurnished short lets depending on a tenant's situation.

### 2. Fully equipped

Most short let tenants will require a property that's fully equipped. This means all kitchen equipment such as crockery, serving dishes, cutlery, glassware, utensils, pots and pans. As well as all the usual white goods, you are also required to provide a working microwave, toaster, kettle, vacuum cleaner, iron and ironing board.

### 3. Utilities

With a short let, utility bills and council tax are included in the weekly rent. The management and payment of all bills are the landlord's responsibility. Telecommunications will be the responsibility of the tenant.

## 4. Technology

Most short term tenants will desire internet access and televisions, so these should be provided where possible. Short term internet access can be arranged.

## 5. Personal items

All personal items must be removed.

## 6. Property Management

Because short let tenants want a completely hassle-free tenancy, all short let properties will be fully managed by D&G's Property Management department.



# preparing for viewings

We suggest you consider the following when showing your property to prospective tenants:

## 1. First impressions

A clean front door and litter-free entrance gives an excellent first impression. Any communal areas within the property should also be cleared of junk mail and vacuumed regularly.

## 2. Lighting

Clean windows and open curtains are essential in maximising natural light. In the winter months, good lighting is equally important — consider using lamps to add extra warmth and charm to a room. If the property is empty, ensure that the mains power is on and all light bulbs are working.

## 3. Temperature

Appropriate temperature for the season helps prospective tenants imagine themselves in the home. Open windows in the summer, and use a working fireplace or regular bursts of central heating in the winter.

## 4. Freshness

The damp smell that's often prevalent in cellars can be kept to a minimum by good ventilation or a dehumidifier.

## 5. Cleaning

Regular cleaning is essential. It doesn't take long for dust and dirt to gather on shelves and window sills, which could easily put off tenants..

## 6. Garden

Gardens, front and back, should be kept tidy and attractive, with well-mown lawns, hedges cut and colour emphasised where possible.



# marketing your property

At D&G, we have a dedicated marketing team who work closely with your local lettings office. We recognise that properties often require different marketing strategies, so we use cutting edge marketing techniques, alongside more traditional methods, to help your property achieve its full potential.

## 1. Photography and floor plans

When letting your property, it's important we present it in the best possible light. To make this happen, we have a team of professional photographers who are experts at capturing the correct property features. We also use experts to construct accurate and detailed floor plans.

## 2. Brochures

So that potential tenants have everything they need, at-a-glance, we combine well-written property descriptions with photography and relevant technical information in our brochures.

## 3. The Internet

Today, at least 90% of tenants start their property search online. We therefore use a number of digital marketing techniques to make sure your property's seen by as many potential tenants as possible. All of our properties are listed on the D&G website, along with leading property search sites, Rightmove, Zoopla and OnTheMarket.

## 4. Our tenant network

We maintain a central database of potential tenants, so we can instantly call and email matches for your property.

## 5. Corporate services

This specialist department is dedicated to creating and maintaining long-lasting relationships with major blue chip companies, relocation and property search agents, who regularly consult us on briefs. Our professionalism and responsiveness, as well as our honest approach to property, means we're frequently their first port of call during a search. Our experience in corporate lettings enables us to advise you on the best way to present your property in order to secure this type of tenant.

## 6. 'To Let' boards

Although simple, 'To Let' boards are a surprisingly effective marketing tool for landlords. A large number of potential tenants register as a direct result of seeing one of our boards, so we would always recommend displaying one, where possible.

## 7. Brand, advertising & PR

We invest heavily in the D&G brand, ensuring that we are at the top of people's minds when they are looking to rent.

Our marketing strategy spans online portals, digital and physical, and includes geo-based targeting to reach your potential tenants.

The D&G marketing team also work closely with our PR agency to maximise exposure of properties to prospective tenants.

## 8. Office windows

Many of our enquiries come from potential tenants walking into our offices. We therefore regularly update our window displays with the latest listings.



# viewings

When it comes to viewings, the most successful landlords are those who make sure their property's looking its best – adding finishing touches, such as fresh flowers and good lighting.

We recommend that restrictions on viewings be minimised, wherever possible. Potential tenants may have multiple properties to look at, and if they can't access yours at a time that suits them, you may miss out!

We'll always provide you with details and feedback from each viewing. You'll also be able to access information about the viewings of your property via our website in the 'My Property Tracker' section.



# the offer process

Receiving an offer from new tenants is an exciting moment. At this point the help and support of your D&G agent will be critical. With some properties in London attracting multiple offers, it's important that this stage is handled carefully, fairly and ethically.

## Agreeing the tenancy

Your D&G agent will be experienced in negotiating confidently with prospective tenants on your behalf; working hard to protect your interests and obtain the best possible terms for the tenancy. At this point, close communication between our team and yourself will be key for a successful outcome – so we'll be on hand to provide advice and support whenever you need it.

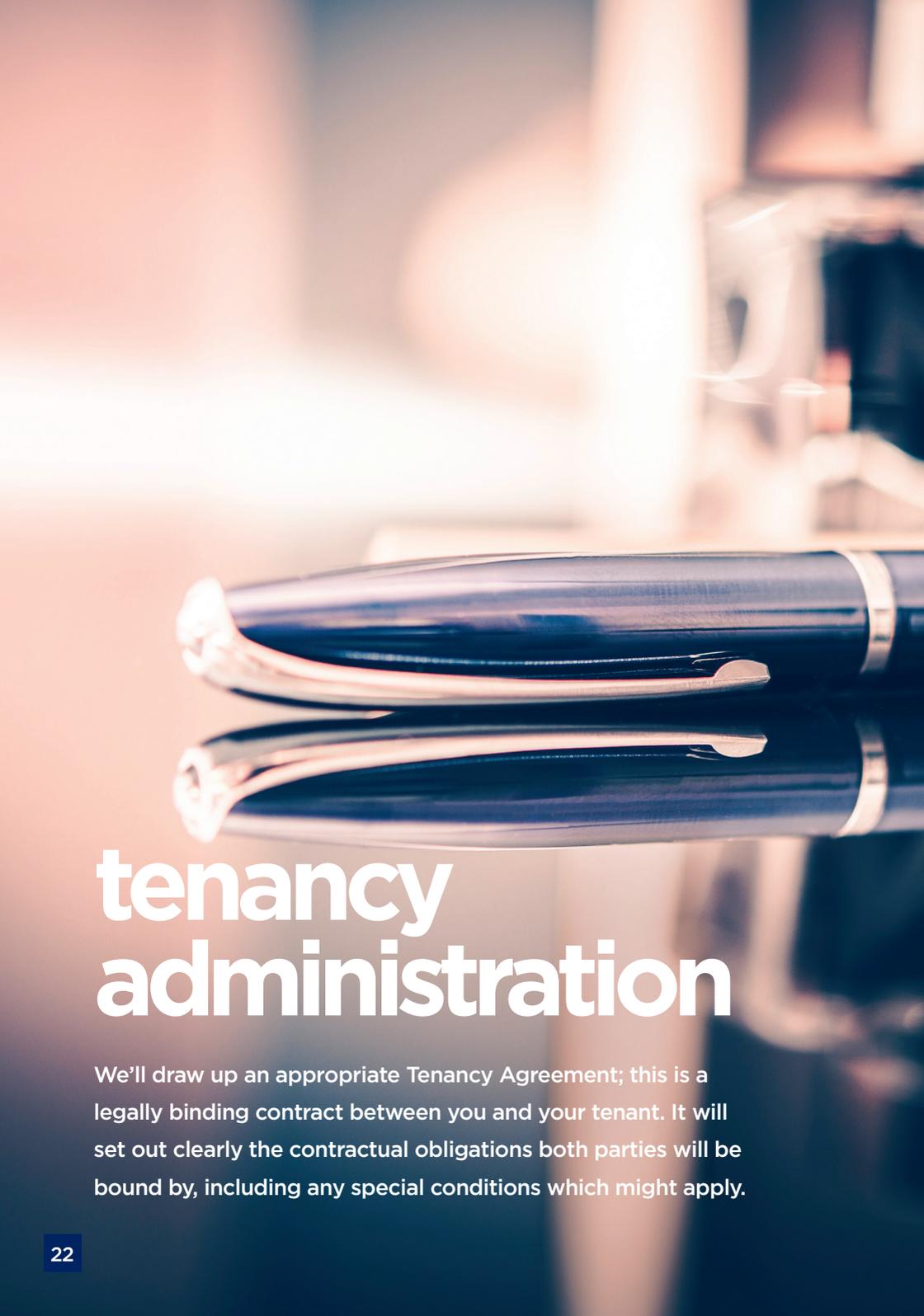
## Accepting an offer

Once you've accepted an offer, the let is agreed in principle and you will receive an agreed offer letter. This confirms in writing to you, and your tenant, the terms of the tenancy which have been agreed, including any special conditions, the proposed start date of the tenancy, etc. Check this letter carefully; although it's not legally binding, it forms the basis of

the Tenancy Agreement. At this stage it is normal for the tenant to pay an administration deposit, usually the equivalent of one or two weeks' rent.

## Referencing

For all long term tenancies, we will carry out the detailed referencing process through our preferred specialist provider. For short term tenancies, due to the rent being taken in full in advance, only basic referencing may be required depending on your needs. Finding tenants you're 100% happy with is hugely important – so we'll send you a detailed reference analysis on each individual tenant for your approval.



# tenancy administration

We'll draw up an appropriate Tenancy Agreement; this is a legally binding contract between you and your tenant. It will set out clearly the contractual obligations both parties will be bound by, including any special conditions which might apply.

## Signing the Tenancy Agreement

There are two types of tenancy that can be created when letting residential property:

- Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)
- Contractual Tenancy

Different criteria apply for each type of tenancy, depending on whether the tenant is an individual or a company, and how much the annual rent is, etc. We will be happy to advise you accordingly.

In order to protect your position, it's extremely important that the Tenancy Agreement is professionally drawn up, including all the necessary provisions and is kept up-to-date in terms of the latest legislation.

We'll send copies of the Tenancy Agreement to you and your tenant; you'll need to make sure you are happy with the agreement before signing and sending it back to us, before the start of the tenancy.

## Inventory

In order to minimise the risk of any dispute over the deposit at the end of the tenancy, it's essential to have a detailed Inventory and Schedule of Condition prepared by a professional inventory clerk. This is something we normally arrange

on your behalf. This document will accurately record the state and condition of the property and its contents before the tenant moves in.

Before tenants move in, the property must be professionally deep-cleaned, including carpets and soft furnishings, if necessary. The tenant is contracted to return the property and all contents at the end of the tenancy in the same state and condition as recorded on the inventory at the start, with the exception of 'fair wear and tear'.

## Tenancy Deposit Protection

Any landlord or agent who takes a deposit from a tenant for an Assured Shorthold Tenancy must safeguard it in an approved tenancy deposit scheme. We are members of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme, which is administered by The Dispute Service Ltd. For all Assured Shorthold Tenancies where we hold the deposit, it will be protected by this scheme. For more information about The Dispute Service please visit [www.thedisputeservice.co.uk](http://www.thedisputeservice.co.uk).



# commencement of tenancy

Before the tenancy starts, we will collect the initial monies payable by the tenant, including the deposit and first instalment of rent (for long lets) or the deposit and rent in full (for short lets).

Following receipt of cleared funds and an exchange of signed Tenancy Agreements, the keys can be handed over to the tenant at the inventory check-in.

It's important that an appropriate number of key sets are made available, bearing in mind security keys will need to be copied in advance.

Congratulations, your property is now successfully let!

## Appendix

### Fire

As a landlord, you must make sure that all upholstered furniture; soft furnishings, beds, mattresses, pillows, cushions, headboards, loose and stretch covers for furniture and seat pads comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 and the subsequent amendments to that Act. Items that are exempt are: curtains, carpets, bed linen, duvets, period and antique furniture manufactured before 1950. All furniture purchased new, since 1st March 1990, should comply – if it does it will have a safety label attached to it. If in doubt, the items should be removed. For more information you can download a copy of the regulations at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk).

### Gas

In accordance with the Gas Safety (installation and use) Regulations 1988, it is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances (boilers, cookers, gas fires, pipework and flues) are checked for safety by a Gas Safe registered engineer before a tenancy begins, and then rechecked for safety at least every 12 months. The regulations also state that you must retain the gas safety record for a period of two years. For more information please visit [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk).

### Electrical appliances

The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 place a legal responsibility on landlords to make sure all electrical wiring, installations and appliances supplied as part of the property are safe. To comply with the Electrical

Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, all electrical installations and appliances in the property need to be regularly checked and serviced by an appropriately qualified engineer. We would recommend that landlords carry out regular checks of such equipment. Properties that are managed by us are required to have a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) on an annual basis.

### Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

All tenanted properties must be equipped with a working smoke alarm on each storey that has living accommodation. They also need a working carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as living accommodation which contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance. The landlord (or representative) must ensure that the alarms are in proper working order on the day the tenancy starts. New homes built since June 1992 are required to have mains operated and interlinked smoke alarms fitted on every floor.

### Safety checks

We can arrange for gas and electrical safety checks to be carried out, by a qualified engineer, on your behalf.

### HMOs

Any property let to three or more unrelated people is deemed to be a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, require that all HMOs have every fixed electrical installation inspected and tested at least every five years and an Electrical Installation Condition report (EICR) prepared by a qualified electrician.

# letting offices

## North of the River

### Chelsea

55-57 Sloane Avenue  
London, SW3 3DH  
T: 020 7581 6666  
E: [chelsealets@dng.co.uk](mailto:chelsealets@dng.co.uk)

### Fulham

656 Fulham Road  
London, SW6 5RX  
T: 020 7731 4791  
E: [fulhamlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:fulhamlets@dng.co.uk)

### Gloucester Road

22 Gloucester Road  
London, SW7 4RB  
T: 020 7584 8888  
E: [sthkenlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:sthkenlets@dng.co.uk)

### Hammersmith & Shepherd's Bush

118-120 Glenthorne Road  
London, W6 0LP  
T: 020 8563 4422  
E: [hamlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:hamlets@dng.co.uk)

### Kensington

172 Kensington Church Street  
London, W8 4BN  
T: 020 7792 1331  
E: [kenlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:kenlets@dng.co.uk)

### Notting Hill

299 Westbourne Grove  
London, W11 2QA  
T: 020 7727 8000  
E: [nhlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:nhlets@dng.co.uk)

### Pimlico & Westminster

106 Wilton Road  
London, SW1V 1DZ  
T: 020 7931 8200  
E: [pimlicolets@dng.co.uk](mailto:pimlicolets@dng.co.uk)

### Queen's Park & Kensal Rise

T: 020 3848 1605  
E: [queenspark@dng.co.uk](mailto:queenspark@dng.co.uk)

## South of the River

### Balham

81 Nightingale Lane  
London, SW12 8NX  
T: 020 7042 3320  
E: [balhamlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:balhamlets@dng.co.uk)

### Battersea

128 Northcote Road  
London, SW11 6QZ  
T: 020 7924 2000  
E: [battlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:battlets@dng.co.uk)

### Battersea Park

236 Battersea Park Road  
London, SW11 4ND  
T: 020 7498 5248  
E: [battpklets@dng.co.uk](mailto:battpklets@dng.co.uk)

### Clapham

30 Abbeville Road  
London, SW4 9NG  
T: 020 8675 0888  
E: [claphamlets@dng.co.uk](mailto:claphamlets@dng.co.uk)

### East Putney

190 Upper Richmond Road  
London, SW15 2SH  
T: 020 8788 3333  
E: [eputneylets@dng.co.uk](mailto:eputneylets@dng.co.uk)

### Southfields & Earlsfield

24 Replingham Road  
London, SW18 5LR  
T: 020 8874 8844  
E: [sthfldslets@dng.co.uk](mailto:sthfldslets@dng.co.uk)

### Streatham

T: 020 3848 1600  
E: [streatham@dng.co.uk](mailto:streatham@dng.co.uk)

### West Putney

127 Lower Richmond Road  
London, SW15 1EZ  
T: 020 8785 6688  
E: [wputneylets@dng.co.uk](mailto:wputneylets@dng.co.uk)