

## **Dealing with troublesome tenants**

It's no great secret that the property market is something of an unpredictable beast at the moment. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a rapidly increasing number of people are finding the task of selling their home difficult to the point of hopeless and so instead look to rent the property out.

While there are obvious benefits to this, allowing tenants to occupy your property does bring with it a mixed bag of concerns and headaches. As a landlord, you want minimal problems and quick resolutions. This can be greatly aided with the signing of an official and comprehensive tenancy agreement, an unarguable essential even if you know the tenant. Of course, in an ideal world, your tenants will be neat, tidy and responsible beings, treating the property exactly as you would. This, however, cannot always be the case and the time may come when you need to consider eviction. To help you make your mind up, follow these helpful hints.

### **1. Listen to your gut**

If something doesn't feel right deep down, then it probably isn't. And if you're 100% sure it's not too much curry or a dodgy lasagne, then listen to yourself and don't be afraid to make decisions based on instinct. Getting a good tenant is arguably the most important thing in property and the right person can be worth a lot of money. A troublemaker, however, will bring nothing but, well, trouble, hassle and potentially end up costing you a small fortune.

### **2. Update your records regularly**

Nobody really enjoys paperwork, and goodness knows there's enough of it about in property dealings, but it is vitally important to keep as detailed an account as possible of any legal or financial transactions between yourself and the tenant. In fact, it's best to go the whole hog and keep a hold of any emails and letters both to and from the occupier as well as the dates, times and details of any telephone conversations between you. Any warnings and requests issued by you should also be kept. Basically, if it was said, write it down. If it was written, keep it.

### **3. Open communication**

As mentioned, any landlord wants resolutions to be found quickly and easily. Well, this is a two way street. Deal with problems as soon as they arise as ignored issues will only multiply and increase in their severity and complexity. You'd be surprised at how much can be solved simply by having a chat.

### **4. Carry out tenant references**

It's not probing, spying or being nosy. It's simply doing your job and the right thing. This quick and easy service will give you a picture of the tenants in terms of their suitability, guarantors and, crucially, their ability to pay rent.

### **5. Keep your eyes and ears open**

Your tenants aren't your children (well, in most cases), so constant supervision will not be appreciated. Occasional but regular visits, however, are vital to ensuring you have a clear

picture of both the state of the property and any issues your tenants may have with the neighbours or vice versa.

## **6. Do an inventory**

Not only do it, make it as thorough and exhaustive as possible. Nothing puts a stop to disputes over deposit returns at the end of the tenancy quite like being able to point and say 'look, that wasn't like that at the start.'

## **7. Protect yourself**

It may sound obvious, but making sure you obtain the correct insurance can make or break the success, and even enjoyment, of renting out a property.