



Letting Agents - What to look out for?

The purpose of this guide is to help you to make an informed decision about choosing a letting agent.

Although as the Advice Centre, we cannot not recommend a particular agent to you, we would encourage you to carry out a few checks before you decide to go ahead with renting and paying any administration fees.

General tips

- Shop around. Letting agent fees vary from no fees to hundreds of pounds for drafting a contract
- Make sure there is an office you can go to if there are any problems
- Read the small print of any paperwork before you sign or pay any money
- Get any agreements or promises in writing
- Never pay any money via Money Transfer schemes, or before you have had a chance to read the terms and conditions

What should you check?

- **Are they registered as a company and what is their business status?**
Check the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/get-information-about-a-company>
- **Are they registered with one of the letting agents Redress Schemes?**
Letting agents should be registered with one of **2 Redress Schemes**:
 1. **The Property Ombudsman (TPO)** <https://www.tpos.co.uk/>
 2. **The Property Redress Scheme** <https://www.theprs.co.uk/>

Both redress schemes have codes of practise for their members. They are good reference points for the standards you should expect from your agent. You can contact them if you are not happy with how the letting agent has been dealing with your complaints. You would usually have to follow an internal complaints procedure with the letting agency before approaching the redress scheme.



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Fact!

Agents who are not members of a Redress Scheme are breaking the law! A local authority can fine an agent up to £5,000 if they do not join a scheme.

- **Do they belong to a professional body?**

Some letting agencies also belong to professional membership bodies, who have standards of conduct, which the agents have to comply with, for example:

- [National Approved Lettings Scheme \(NALS\)](#)
- [Association of Residential Letting Agents \(ARLA\)](#)
- [UK Association of Letting Agents \(UKALA\)](#)
- [National Association of Estate Agents \(NAEA\)](#)

- **Are all their fees displayed and transparent?**

By law, since 2015 all letting agents should have clear information (in office or on their website) about all charges and fees they take. Make sure you shop around and compare the fees between agents before you sign any agreement.

- **Do they mention Client Money Protection?**

Letting agencies should also state if they are using a 'Client Money Protection Scheme', which indicate that the tenant and landlord money is separate from the agency's business account, and is protected if the agency gets into financial trouble. Some of the schemes include: UKALA Client Money Protection Scheme, SAFEagent or CMP (Client Money Protect)

Other things to consider:

**Has anyone
complained about
them?**

Do your research. Check for online reviews about the letting agents or landlords before you commit.

**Have you spoken to
the current tenants?**

Current tenants are usually good source of information on how good an agency is with repairs and general customer service. When viewing a house, make sure you speak to the residents and ask them about their experience.



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Have you spoken to the Advice Centre?

If you are not sure about an agent, ask the Advice Centre. We see students who complain about agents and even if we cannot recommend any particular agency, we can highlight if there have been any complaints coming from students.

Further guidance

For further guidance on letting agents, contact the Advice Centre.

- 02380 592 085
- advice@susu.org

You can also visit us in Building 40, Highfield campus. Our opening hours are Monday–Friday 09.00–17.00.

Disclaimer: While care has been taken to ensure that information contained in the Advice Centre publications is true and correct at the time of writing, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. The Advice Centre and SUSU cannot accept responsibility for any actions taken as a result of advice given in this publication.
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