

WhiteKnights 

**Lettings made easy**  
Your essential guide





## About WhiteKnights

WhiteKnights have been selling houses for over 28 years, from six offices located in the Reading area. That in itself is impressive, but even more remarkable is the fact that almost all of our Office Managers have been working in their designated areas for the same length of time. With this experience we can truly say that we have a unique insight into the type of properties we sell and more importantly, we understand how to maximise their values to the benefit of our clients.

With offices in Earley, Lower Earley, Woodley, Reading, Spencers Wood and Tilehurst we have the Reading area covered. We are confident that this gives us unrivalled access to all of the buyers looking in Reading. More potential buyers mean quite simply better prices.

We have worked our careers in Reading, we live in Reading, we know Reading... we are Completely Reading.



## The property management experience that makes the letting journey effortless

Letting your property for the first time can be daunting. That's why with many years of property experience behind us, we can help you avoid the pitfalls.

Written for landlords, this essential guide will lead you through the process, explain the requirements and regulations, and present the options for our tiered lettings management services, enabling you to successfully let your property.

## Proud of our swift and professional service

By choosing to market your property with us you will give yourself the peace of mind of knowing that your property is being managed by experienced staff. We are dedicated to lettings across six prime office locations and combined with strong corporate partners, will ensure you are given the highest level of service.

## Marketing

Targeted, rather than 'shotgun' marketing of your property, locating quality tenants at excellent levels of rent:

- Corporate lets and relocation
- E-marketing
- Local media advertising
- Online advertising
- Social media marketing

## Tenancy

We provide comprehensive tenancy agreements that set out the rights and obligations of both you and the tenant for:

- Tenancy agreement
- Terminations
- Tenant management





## Technology

We offer cutting edge solutions that produce fast and effective marketing of your home, using:

- The latest online technology
- Industry leading software
- Fast and secure payment facilities

## Requirements

We'll guide you through the necessary steps to ensure that your property is let successfully, including:

- Permissions required
- Tenant reference
- Property cleanliness

## Safety

We are fully versed in the current safety legislations to ensure that both you and the tenant are fully protected in areas such as:

- Furnishings
- Smoke detectors
- Gas and electrical equipment

## Logistics

1. A detailed inventory is paramount in the event of unavoidable accidents
2. Tenants deposits must be held in an approved Government deposit scheme
3. An independent Check-in and Check-out should be carried out (mandatory for our Premium Managed service).
4. As part of our fully managed service we will also arrange for a professional clean of your property.
5. We undertake property maintenance on all our fully managed properties.



## What we need from you

1. An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). As of the 1st October 2008, legislation requires that we have an EPC prior to conducting viewings on your property. If you do not currently have a valid EPC we will assist you in obtaining one.
2. Proof of ownership. This should be a copy of an up to date Land Registry certificate proving you are the legal owner of the property.
3. Gas and Electrical safety certificates. These are mandatory requirements and we will automatically organise these on your behalf unless you have provided us with a valid certificate seven days prior to any tenancy commencing. We can provide a price list for these services upon request.
4. Completed Terms of Instruction Form. This confirms the legal owners of the property and confirmation for us to act on your behalf. This will be required prior to a tenancy agreement being produced.

## Deposit scheme information

1. You are required by law to protect your tenants deposit monies within a Government approved tenancy deposit protection scheme.
2. If you have appointed us as agent for any of our managed options, we will arrange the protection of the deposit on your behalf (charges apply).
3. If we act for you on a let only basis, you will be able to hold your tenant's deposit in our scheme but you will need to supply us with the following details at least five working days before the tenancy starts to enable us to ensure you are compliant with the law:
  - a) The name of the scheme you are registered with
  - b) Your membership number
  - c) Supporting documents to confirm that you are a member of that scheme such as an email or letter that you have received from the scheme confirming your membership.

## Three outstanding levels of service

The type of service you choose should be determined by your situation and exactly how much involvement you wish to have in the management of your property. When we meet with you, our experienced members of staff will provide advice on which service best suits your needs. A summary of these services is provided opposite.





## Let Only

Our standard Let Only service includes:

- Extensive advertising and full preparation of property details
- Accompanied viewings with all prospective tenants viewing the property
- Full references taken on any prospective tenants by an independent credit reference agency
- Preparation of legal documentation and ensuring all documents are signed by tenants prior to a tenancy commencing
- Collection of the first month's rent, along with the security deposit. Commission for this service is taken from
- the money received at the time of signing in advance of the term of the tenancy.



## Managed Light

Our Part Management service includes the above, plus the following:

- Registering tenants deposit with an approved scheme
- Rent and legal protection policy to cover you if the tenant should fail to pay the rent
- Regular rental collections paid direct to your bank account, with itemised monthly statements
- Management of tenancy renewals
- Reminders when safety certificates are due for renewal



## Premium Managed

Our Full Management service includes both of the above plus the following:

- Utility switching once the tenancy has commenced
- Issuing Check-in reports to landlord and tenant
- Carry out routine property visits and supply a written report to landlord and tenant
- Management of tenancy check out reports including dilapidations and making the necessary deductions from the tenant's deposit
- Renewal of annual gas and electrical safety inspections
- Arranging any repair works the property may require within agreed repair limits or arranging quotes for your approval if required
- Payment of contractor invoices on your behalf



## A little Q & A

### Who is responsible for what?

As a rule of thumb, you are responsible for exterior and interior maintenance. You are also responsible for buildings and contents insurance and any other outgoings. The tenant has a responsibility to show a duty of care to the property and contents and is accountable for any council tax, gas, water, electric and telephone accounts.

### What happens about insurance?

Insurers must be notified of the letting of your property so that the policy on the structure and contents may be endorsed. Insurance will be invalid if insurers are not correctly informed. We advise that insurance specific to contents cover is arranged to protect against possible damage by tenants, as Whiteknights cannot be held responsible for loss or damage to the property or its contents.

We can assist you in arranging specialist, tailor-made insurance for landlords at competitive rates.

### How do I receive my rental payments?

Rents are usually paid on a monthly basis, in advance. An account is then raised and our commission is deducted, along with any relevant charges applicable. Payments are then sent to your bank account and an itemised statement is sent electronically.



## What about tax?

It is necessary to prepare accounts each year on all rental properties and should be presented to the Inland Revenue indicating what tax liability might arise. Tax liability is assessed on the tax year running from 5th April every year. You can offset a number of costs against your tax liability including letting agents fees, solicitors fees, accountant fees, maintenance and repair work carried out during the letting or wear and tear allowances. You can also offset service charges, ground rent and mortgage interest.

The responsibility for payment of tax depends on whether you live in the UK or abroad. If you live in the UK the Inland Revenue will assess you for the appropriate tax.

If you are moving overseas, you should notify the HMRC by completing a 'Non Resident Landlord Form' that allows us to continue paying the rental without deduction of tax. You can download the form from the HMRC.

The HMRC will then issue you with an approval notice and a copy should be provided to us. If you have not obtained approval then we will be responsible for paying the tax on your behalf, by deducting tax from the monthly rent on a quarterly basis, direct to the Inland Revenue at the current rate of tax of the net rental.

## Should I tell my mortgage company?

If you currently have a residential mortgage, your mortgage lender may apply a wide range of parameters before providing consent. In many cases the following will apply:

- You may be charged a higher rate of interest
- You may have to pay an administration charge
- You may need to show references and tenancies before being granted permission
- Your managing agent may need to be an approved member of a recognised body, such as the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) Lenders may also set the length of time the property can be let for, and permission will usually only be given if the mortgage account has been managed to the lender's satisfaction.



## Fire regulations

Under the 1988 Fire Regulations Act, it became law from March 1993 onwards that any property let furnished must comply with the Act. Therefore, any furnishings (except pre 1950's) left within a property must comply with BSI standards. Failure to comply with these regulations now carries a heavy penalty of £5,000 or a six month prison sentence if not adhered to.

We recommend that any items which may have a high or sentimental value are not left within the property.

We would also recommend that expensive china or glassware is not considered suitable and that electrical items such as food mixers, televisions, computers, DVD players and Hi-Fi equipment, are not to be left due to their costly repair liability.

## Electrical & Gas regulations

The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 The above regulations impose an obligation on a landlord to ensure that all electrical appliances left as part of a let property are safe. Cabling fuses and plugs should also be inspected and replaced where necessary to the correct rating for that particular appliance.

## Gas Safety Regulations (1998)

These regulations came into effect 31st October 1994 to ensure that gas appliances are properly installed and maintained in a safe condition so as to avoid the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning. It is the responsibility of landlords to ensure all gas appliances and gas installation pipe work owned by them are checked for safety at least once a year by a member of the council for registered gas installers (Gas Safe).

In addition accurate records of the safety inspections and any work carried out must be kept. The current safety certificate must always be available for any tenant prior to them taking occupation of a property.

Faulty equipment can lead to death and a conviction of unlawful killing on a landlord. Under the regulations any appliance that does not conform can be disconnected.

**YOU MUST HAVE A CURRENT GAS SAFETY CERTIFICATE IF THERE IS A GAS METER PRESENT AT THE PROPERTY, REGARDLESS IF THERE IS A GAS SUPPLY GOING INTO THE PREMISES.**



Revised guidance takes effect on 1st January 2011: Revised technical guidance requires inspection hatches to be fitted in properties where the flue is concealed within voids and cannot be inspected. The homeowner (or landlord etc.) has until 31st December 2012 to arrange for inspection hatches to be installed. Any gas engineer working on affected systems after 1st January 2013 will advise the homeowner that the system is “at risk” (AR) in accordance with the GIUSP and, with the owner’s permission will turn off the gas supply to the boiler so it cannot be used.

For more information [www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/fluesinvoids.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/fluesinvoids.htm)

We can arrange for such services to be carried out by our recommended registered engineers or a registered engineer of your choice. There is also a mandatory requirement that all electrical appliances are safety tested, which we can also arrange on your behalf, if required.

### To help you along the way we have provided a useful checklist

- Proof of ownership provided
- Mortgage consent obtained
- Building & contents Insurance arranged
- EPC arranged
- Keys provided to agent (one set for agent and one for each tenant)
- Furniture checked (if applicable) for compliance
- Non resident landlord form completed/posted (if applicable)
- Professional cleaning arranged
- Deposit scheme details provided (if Let Only service chosen)
- Bank details provided for rental payments



**Earley Office**

183 Wokingham Road, Earley  
Reading RG6 1LT  
Sales: 0118 966 8655  
Lettings: 0118 334 1118  
earley@whiteknights.co.uk

**Lower Earley Office**

Unit 5 Chalfont Centre  
Lower Earley, Reading RG6 5SY  
Sales: 0118 931 0011  
Lettings: 0118 935 1004  
lowerearley@whiteknights.co.uk

**Woodley Office**

134 Loddon Bridge Road  
Woodley, Reading RG5 4AB  
Sales: 0118 969 7000  
Lettings: 0118 334 1117  
woodley@whiteknights.co.uk

**Tilehurst Office**

152 Park Lane, Tilehurst  
Reading RG31 4DU  
Sales: 0118 942 0600  
Lettings: 0118 334 1119  
tilehurst@whiteknights.co.uk

**Central Reading Office**

183 Wokingham Road  
Reading RG6 1LT  
Sales: 0118 334 1790  
Lettings: 0118 334 1121  
centralreading@whiteknights.co.uk

**South Reading Office**

1 Buckland Road  
Reading RG2 7SP  
Sales: 0118 986 8888  
Lettings: 0118 334 1122  
southreading@whiteknights.co.uk

**Spencers Wood Office**

Tankerton House  
Basingstoke Road  
Spencers Wood  
Reading RG7 1AE  
Sales: 0118 988 2011  
Lettings: 0118 334 1120  
spencerswood@whiteknights.co.uk

**Lettings Management Centre**

Unit 5 Chalfont Centre  
Lower Earley, Reading RG6 5SY  
Tel: 0118 334 1123  
management@whiteknights.co.uk