



Your Guide
to Residential
Lettings

www.matthewsbenjamin.co.uk

WELCOME TO MATTHEWS BENJAMIN LETTINGS

Matthews Benjamin established in Windermere in 1993 by the late David Benjamin and Peter Matthews, both local property experts. Matthews Benjamin has since earned an excellent reputation based on trust, expertise and care that has been developed from a family business run by only local people with an extensive knowledge and love of the local area.

To mark the celebration of our 25th anniversary in 2018, we have expanded further into residential lettings and property management. Matthews Benjamin and Fine & Country will be offering prestigious rental services to landlords and tenants alike from all of our offices. We are backed by a seasoned team of local experts ready to provide professional advice and assistance, determined to provide a premium service that eases the stresses behind residential letting.

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We are proud of our unrivalled reputation.





WHY CHOOSE US?

For a fuss-free rental. Naturally prospective tenants need to know about your property. Your property will be advertised strategically. We are pro-active, employing a portfolio of marketing tools including traditional publications, online channels and social media. We are dynamic in our advertising approach, constantly seeking and researching new methods to succeed in a changing, competing arena.

Our Promise To You

You will receive honest, informed advice and a personal, efficient service tailored to your individual circumstances.

As members of the Property Ombudsman scheme Matthews Benjamin lettings adheres to a rigorous code of conduct and at all times will endeavor to handle any sale or enquiry in a professional and fair manner.

We will advise on most suitable marketing method, time frames and benefits marketing at particular times of the year, pricing and general market conditions.

Within our high levels of service Matthews Benjamin lettings will offer:

- Free Market Appraisals
- Competitive fees
- Prominent offices and window displays in the South Lakes & North Lancashire
- Full coloured particulars
- Floor plans
- Local advertising
- Internet advertising
- To Let boards
- Accompanied viewings 7 days per week
- Virtual tours where appropriate
- Private meeting rooms
- Arrange EPC (Energy Performance Certificate)
- Access to comprehensive mailing lists

- Regular contact & feedback
- Professional and aerial photography if required
- E Zines
- Members of the Guild Of Property Professionals
- Members of ARLA Propertymark

All backed up by an established, knowledgeable, local and friendly support team.





PREPARING YOUR HOUSE FOR LETTING

Higher quality properties will always attract better quality tenants

Mortgages

Where the property to be let is subject to a mortgage, permission must be granted from the mortgagee in writing. It is sometimes appropriate to remortgage with a buy-to-let specialist.

Insurance

It is essential that the property and your contents are adequately insured, both while the property is empty and while it is let. Your insurers must be told that the property is to be let since failure to do so may well invalidate cover.

Security

Security systems (locks on windows and external doors, lights, and even full alarm systems) are often considered essential by prospective tenants, and are taken into consideration by all the leading

insurance companies when calculating premiums.

Decorations and Carpets

We recommend these should be fresh and neutral in terms of colour and style. Higher quality properties will always attract better quality tenants and therefore it is vital that a property is well presented to meet the expectations of a potential tenant.

Furnished or Unfurnished?

By far the greatest level of demand from tenants is for properties that are available unfurnished. This traditionally includes just carpets, curtains and a cooker. This has the advantage, from the landlord's perspective, of avoiding the need for additional maintenance/replacement and for annual testing of electrical appliances.

Domestic Appliances

These should also be of good quality and condition and subject to regular servicing. It is important that full instructions for use are left on the premises to avoid the need to call in an engineer to demonstrate. Gas and electrical appliances must meet legal safety requirements and oil appliances should be tested annually.

Cleaning

It is essential that the property is handed over in clean condition. We very strongly recommend that the property be professionally cleaned throughout, including all carpets. This creates a benchmark that will be recorded in the Inventory and Schedule of Condition, and will allow us to maintain a high standard through subsequent tenancies. We can provide the names of reputable and economical cleaning contractors.

Gardens

Gardens should be left in good seasonal order so that the benchmark is set for the tenants, whose responsibility it will be to maintain the same standard. We recommend that relevant tools are provided by the landlord. If the garden is particularly large, or complicated to maintain, it may be appropriate for the landlord to retain responsibility for maintenance, in which event this will be reflected in the rent. We will be happy to help find

suitable gardeners, be it for a full maintenance programme, hedge/lawn cutting, pruning or an occasional tidy.

Gas, Electricity and Water

These services should be left connected and we will arrange for their transfer into the tenant's name. Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, tenants must be able to control and regulate heating systems.

Council Tax

We will notify the local council tax office of each change of occupier and of any void period between tenancies.

Keys

Three complete sets of keys should be provided in all cases – two for the tenants and one to be retained at our office. We will be obliged to charge for key cutting if insufficient keys are supplied at the outset.

Telephone

If a telephone line is installed at the property you should instruct the provider to put a temporary stop on the line, when you vacate, and send you a closing account.

Empty Properties

It is important that you comply with any insurance requirements during vacant periods, especially during the winter months.



SAFETY REGULATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS



Lettings Agents, Landlords and Tenants should all be aware of the current and ever changing legislations within the residential lettings industry. Below we have outlined some of the most important legislations you should be aware of.

Gas Safety

It is a legal requirement that, as a Landlord you are responsible for the gas safety within each dwelling you own and are responsible for. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 outline what landlords must do in order to ensure gas appliances, fittings and flues within a property are safe.

Landlords must ensure that pipework, appliances and flues are maintained in a safe condition. Gas appliances should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If these are not available it is recommended that they are serviced annually unless advised otherwise by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Landlords must arrange an annual gas safety check on every gas appliance and flue by a registered Gas Safe engineer. Before any new tenancy starts landlords must ensure these checks have been carried out

Within one year before the start of the tenancy date, unless the

appliances in the property have been installed for less than 12 months, in which case they should be checked within 12 months of their installation date.

Please Note: The checks are essential for both mains gas, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and appliances including hobs and gas fires.

Smoke & Co2 Alarms

From the 1st October 2015 landlords will have to ensure that a smoke alarm is fitted on every floor of their property where there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation. They will also have to put a carbon monoxide alarm in any room where a solid fuel is burnt, such as: wood, coal or biomass and/or open fires. It does not include gas, oil or LPG.

Electrics

There are no specific regulations relating to electrical safety in the same way as there is for gas safety. Electrical appliances provided by the landlord must be safe at the commencement of the tenancy. There will be a legally implied term on the tenancy that the electrical installation is kept in good repair and proper working order. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 there is a requirement for portable electrical appliances to undergo a PAT Test. This applies to



premises where employees work e.g. sheltered type accommodation. Matthews Benjamin Lettings fully recommend any appliance provided by a landlord or brought in to a property by a tenant undergoes a PAT test. It is also recommended that prior to a tenancy being granted a full electrical check is carried out and a certificate provided.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

What is an EPC – An EPC gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient) and is valid for 10 years. They are needed whenever a property is built, sold or rented. It contains information about a property's energy use and typical energy costs as well as recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money.

NB: Since October 2015, where a landlord hasn't provided an assured shorthold tenant with an EPC, they won't be able to evict them using a Section 21 Notice.

Changes In EPC Legislation

– From 1 April 2018 it will be unlawful for landlords to grant new tenancies of properties that have an energy efficiency rating of F and G on its EPC, unless an exemption applies or the landlord has made all the relevant energy

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Matthews Benjamin Is one of the Leading Agents in The Lake District & North Lancashire

efficiency improvements. Under the rules relevant energy efficiency improvements which a landlord may choose to install to reach an EPC rating of E (either a single measure, or a combination of measures) are any energy efficiency improvements recommended for the property through a relevant Recommendation Report (contained within an EPC), a Green Deal advice report or a report prepared by a qualified surveyor.

A landlord of an F or G rated property will be expected to install all energy efficiency improvements required to reach an EPC E, where funding is available to cover the cost. Funding (or a combination of funding) can come from a Green Deal Plan, Energy Company Obligation or similar scheme, funding from Central Government, local authority, or third party at no cost to the landlord.



Matthews Benjamin Lettings LTD are members of The Property Ombudsman



LANDLORD SERVICES WE PROVIDE

Matthews Benjamin Lettings are pleased to offer the following three levels of service.

Tenant Introduction/Let Only

This service includes the following

- Advertising & Accompanied Viewings
- Regular Feedback & Marketing Updates
- To Let Board
- Brochure Including Floor Plan
- Fully comprehensive referencing
- Tenant right to rent checks
- Preparation of tenancy agreement package
- Standard inventory
- Deposit Registration (Additional Fee May Apply)
- Accompanied Tenant & Landlord handover

Rent Collection

Our rent collection service includes all the benefits of our tenant introduction/Let Only service and in addition Matthews Benjamin Lettings will provide:

- Rent collection
- Monthly statements
- Arranging Renewal of mandatory safety checks (Additional Fee May Apply)
- Serving notice
- Tenant move Out & deposit negotiations / returns

Fully Managed

This Provides landlords with comprehensive and thorough administration of their property allowing them to distance themselves from day to day management of the property and includes:

- Advertising & Accompanied Viewings
- Regular Feedback & Marketing Updates
- To Let Board
- Brochure Including Floor Plan
- Fully comprehensive referencing
- Tenant right to rent checks
- Preparation of tenancy agreement package
- Standard inventory
- Deposit Registration (Additional Fee May Apply)
- Rent collection
- Monthly statements
- Arranging necessary maintenance
- Arranging Renewal of mandatory safety checks
- Tenant communication on Landlord behalf
- Mid tenancy inspections
- Tenant move Out & deposit negotiations / returns.



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Our services support you as a landlord, maintaining high services.

WHY USE AN ARLA PROPERTYMARK PROTECTED AGENT?

Agents do not currently have to be qualified, anyone can set up a lettings agency but only an ARLA Propertymark agent offers true protection and peace of mind. All agents who belong to ARLA Propertymark are required to operate in a transparent way, providing services which are subject to independent scrutiny. Any agents who falls below Propertymark's standards will be subject to disciplinary action.

Using a Propertymark protected agent provides guarantees:

- Your income is backed by Propertymark Client Money Protection, a scheme which reimburses landlords and tenants for missing rent or deposits if their agent's business fails*
- The responsible agent holds a property management and lettings qualification to at least Level 3 eg A Level standard or equivalent
- Your agent's experience is supported by regular continuing professional development and refresher training
- They must belong to one of the three government approved independent redress schemes: The Property Ombudsman, Ombudsman Services: Property or Property Redress Scheme
- Your agent is up to date with complex legislative changes and best practice
- The agent must comply with a nationally recognised Code of Practice
- All agents offering Propertymark Protection must hold appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance

- If they hold client money their accounts are independently inspected regularly
- If your agent is also dealing with sales they need to be registered with HM Revenue and Customs for anti-money laundering.

ARLA Propertymark members are required to undertake training every year, this means that agents are up to date with best practice and understand legislative changes which regularly alter the requirements involved in residential lettings.



PayProp

- Payprop is a Real time, automatic and consistent communication with both landlords and tenants which is 100% accurate.
- Ring-fenced, same day rental payments giving existing and potential landlords complete peace of mind.

- The only payment system which is fully bank integrated ensuring all money movement and subsequent communication is both immediate and transparent.
- Landlords will receive the following automatic communications at the same time as they are released from the bank;
 - A remittance advice showing any payments deducted from the rent
 - A monthly owner statement to the landlord
 - Cumulative summary statements for multi-property landlords
 - Quarterly, Year End statements
- All communications can be emailed up to a further 10 recipients (i.e. accountant/joint owners)
- All statements generated from within the bank environment ensuring complete transparency for the landlord.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Fine & Country

Fine & Country is a stronghold of over 300 independent national and international offices that specialise in the marketing and sale of prestigious properties. So if you choose to market with Matthews Benjamin Lettings you will instantly benefit from the highly proficient expertise and unique marketing approach offered by a Fine & Country agent.



The Guild of Property Professionals

The Guild of Property Professionals is a national network of carefully selected independent agents that work together to ensure a 'best in class' service to its clients. Exclusive Guild members and their staff have access to extensive training and are fully qualified in Estate Agency practice and customer service, under The Guild Associate Scheme. Members are further supported by The Guild and Fine & Country's Park Lane head office which provides access to the lucrative London and investor market.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS



The Tenancy Agreement

The Housing Act 1988 specifies different types of tenancy. Whilst there are several different types, it is almost certain that the tenancy of your property will either be an Assured Shorthold Tenancy or a Contractual Tenancy.

The Tenancy Deposit Scheme

At the outset of each tenancy we will collect a deposit from the tenant. The amount of the deposit is usually equivalent to 1 months rent plus an additional £100. Since April 2007, in line with The Housing Act 2004, all deposits collected under an Assured Shorthold tenancy (or any renewal thereof) must be protected in one of the Government's authorised Insured tenancy deposit schemes. As an ARLA accredited agent we are approved members of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

Inventory and Schedule of Condition

It is essential to have an inventory/schedule of condition prior to each tenancy. At the end of a tenancy the property is inspected against the inventory and any deterioration to its condition 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 caused by them at the property.

Security Deposits

We will obtain a deposit equal to 1 months rent plus an additional £100 from the tenant. This security deposit is held by ourselves, as stakeholder, throughout the tenancy. Once damages, if any, have been agreed and copies of all receipted final invoices have been checked, the balance of the deposit will be returned to the tenant.

Matthews Benjamin Lettings is a member of The Tenancy Deposit Scheme, which is administered by:

The Dispute Service Limited
PO Box 1255,
Hemel Hempstead,
Herts HP1 9GN.

Phone: 0300 037 1000
Email: deposits@tenancydepositscheme.com
com Fax: 01442 253193
Web: www.tenancydepositscheme.com



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We keep you up to date on all legislation you need to comply with.

Void Periods

Our management service does not include the supervision of the property when it is vacant although, in the normal course of showing it to prospective tenants, periodic visits may be made to the property by our lettings staff.

Instruction to Solicitors

You will be informed of any rent arrears or breaches of covenant brought to our attention. Should it prove necessary to employ the services of solicitors you will be responsible for instructing them, and for all fees involved.

Taxation of UK-Resident Landlords

Landlords who remain resident in the UK are required to declare rental income annually, together with all other income, as it is assessable, after allowable expenses, for income tax.

Taxation of the Non-Resident Landlords

Where the landlord of the property is resident abroad for six months or more and has not been approved under the Non-Resident Landlords Scheme (see below), the Commissioners for Inland Revenue will, under UK income tax law, hold the managing agent (or the tenant where there is no managing agent appointed) personally liable for the payment of tax on income from rent collected on the landlord's behalf. The taxation of income from landlords (Non Residents) regulations 1995 requires the rent-receiving agent to retain the tax element on the net rent and to pay it to the Inland Revenue on a quarterly basis, within thirty days of the end of the quarter.



Mortgage Consent

If you have a mortgage on the property you are letting you will need to obtain consent from your mortgage lender.

Most will give consent but they may charge an administration fee. To allowing consent they may require information on the type of Tenancy Agreement you intend to use and the length of the tenancy.

They will probably also require reassurance that you are using a professional and ARLA registered agent.

Insurance

As a landlord you should ensure that you have both buildings and contents insurance in place to cover your investment. Tenants are responsible for insuring their own contents and personal belongings.

Please also note that standard homeowner insurance policies will not suffice once a tenant is in residence and you are not an owner occupier. The policy will need to be specifically designed for let property.

We also offer Rent Guarantee and legal cover insurance. A quote can be provided to you once the referencing of your tenants has been completed.

Council Tax and Utility Bills

In addition to the rent, tenants are responsible for paying water charges, council tax, gas and electricity bills.

Keys

You will need to provide your tenants with two sets of keys. If your property is being managed by Matthews Benjamin Lettings, a further set of keys will need to be held at our local branch.

Property Folder

Many landlords choose to make a property folder. This should include copies of manuals and guides. It is also advisable to leave a local guide and any other information that your tenants may find useful such as details on parking, refuse collections etc.

Professional Cleaning

Prior to occupation, all properties should be professionally cleaned. When the property is returned, the tenant is expected to do the same. Any outside space should also be left in seasonal order.

You Can Be Reassured

Matthews Benjamin Lettings are proud to be members of:

- The Property Ombudsman
- ARLA Propertymark
- The Guild of Property Professionals



WE ARE PROUD MEMBERS OF THE GUILD

KNOWLEDGE. INTEGRITY. RESULTS.

We have our own strict Code of Conduct which ensures every Member of The Guild is either a qualified Member of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) or a Member of The Property Ombudsman.



National Network

As a Member of The Guild, we demonstrate a real commitment to local, regional and national marketing. We are part of a national network of offices working together to serve you better.

Trust and Confidence

The Guild have their own strict Code of Conduct which ensures every Member of The Guild is either a qualified Member of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) or a Member of The Property Ombudsman.

The Guild Standard of Service

Every Member company of The Guild of Property Professionals is

a carefully selected independent estate agency – as such, we adhere to the highest standards of estate agency practice and all work together to provide you wider marketing and better service.

As part of the national network of property professionals, we have access to a myriad of other services all bound together in an enterprising spirit of teamwork and professionalism that helps with selling houses.

Training

You can be sure you are dealing with professionals as The Guild offers training through its Guild Associate Scheme. This is an educational

training system for Member's staff to ensure fundamental technical competency throughout the network. It covers the basic legal estate agency practice, plus knowledge of The Property Ombudsman, The Guild and Money Laundering. Entrants are examined on their competency and, when an adequate level of proficiency is achieved, are invited to become a Guild Associate.

Auditing

The Guild is committed to raising industry standards with compulsory auditing for new Members. This ensures that every agent operates to the same level. We are property professionals.

Find your local Guild agent at guildproperty.co.uk





For more information contact:

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Matthews Benjamin - Kendal *Non Guild Member Office
97 Stricklandgate, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4RA
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