

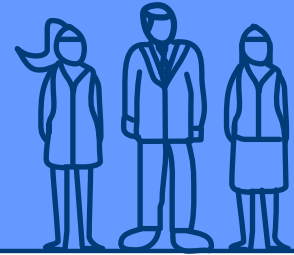
Andrew Craig

Hello!



Here's our Guide
for Landlords

Why us?



We are one of the leading firms of Sales and Letting Agents in the North East with 12 branches across the region. Our success in the market place, is due to our forward thinking, family style of management and our well motivated teams of property professionals.

We manage around 1,000 properties and have been letting and managing property since 1974. As Chartered Surveyors we are 'Regulated by RICS', ensuring the highest professional and ethical standards and allowing our clients the benefit of the RICS Client Money Protection Scheme. Any money entrusted to a firm, that is 'Regulated by RICS', will be covered by the scheme, up to a maximum of £50,000 per claim.

A landlord today has a number of requirements. Of course a good return on investment is crucial but you cannot nowadays ignore the responsibility and risk associated with letting property. For this reason, you should use an agent who is professionally qualified, who understands those requirements and who can look after your interests, ensuring maximum return and minimum stress levels!

We trust that our Landlord's Guide will not only help you understand letting and managing property but also help you decide that we are the professionals to help you achieve your goals in property.

Andrew Craig



Mr & Mrs MJ - Thank you so much for all your help and advice
- we couldn't have got the house of our dreams without you!



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Your letting partner

We have been collecting rents and managing property, since 1974. Our name is synonymous with the highest levels of care in lettings and management of residential and commercial property.

“Your rented property, whether it be your home or an investment, will be safe with us.”

We are an independent family owned and run business. We manage almost 1000 properties including small flats, family homes and commercial properties. Whether you have one property, or two hundred, we have the skill and experience to look after your interests.



Mr K - Many thanks for a friendly, efficient and stress-free service. I shall be recommending Andrew Craig to all my friends and family.



The professionals



Andrew Craig
Partner



Sarah Craig
Partner



Brenda Hernandez
Property Manager



Denise Brown
Office Manager



Lorraine Smith
Accounts Manager



Debbie Sinclair
Sales Manager

We maintain the highest professional standards by conforming to the strict rules of conduct of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), which is the most senior and respected property organisation, in the world.

The RICS is the worlds leading qualification when it comes to professional standards in property. Attaining RICS status is the recognised mark of property professionalism.

The advantages of using a firm 'Regulated by RICS'

CONFIDENCE - because regulated firms follow RICS Rules of Conduct (monitored by RICS Regulation), you know they are acting in your interest and committed to maintaining the highest levels of professional and ethical standards.

PROFESSIONALISM – you can be sure of clear, impartial and expert advice from qualified professionals.

SECURITY – you have the comfort of knowing that the firm:

- has a recognised procedure in place to help resolve any complaint as fairly and efficiently as possible
- provides consumer access to free independent redress
- has Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) to protect you should you need to make a claim.

CLIENT CARE – firm members and staff regularly update their skills and knowledge to ensure customers are treated fairly and receive the best possible service.

The right agent

“Choosing the right agent gives you peace of mind”

A good agent will help you get the right return from your property, whilst giving you confidence that everything is being looked after, legally and reliably, on your behalf. Bad agents do exist, as regulation is not compulsory.

“Don’t be the next victim of incompetence, or fraud, by a letting agent.”

Huge legal expenses, misappropriated rent, property damage and loss of tenants deposits, are some of the problems that could be in store, if you choose the wrong agent. It makes sense to insist on a ‘Regulated by RICS’ agent.



Mr B - I have used the letting service provided by Andrew Craig for over 18 months and I have nothing but praise for the service offered. They are extremely efficient in finding an excellent tenant for my property and the management service is first class. I can honestly say the whole process is totally hassle free.



Why we're different

- **BRANCH NETWORK** - We have the North East covered for lettings and management, with 12 lettings branches across the region and our branch staff have the local knowledge to find you a tenant fast. Our accounting and administration is handled centrally, at our Head Office in Gateshead. Here our team of skilled professionals deal with tenancy administration, property management and accounting. Andrew Craig FRICS is directly involved in the lettings and management business, having worked in the field since 1974.
- **LEADING TECHNOLOGY** - We use leading edge IT systems including cloud technology, to ensure our staff and clients, have access to accurate and up to date information and fast communications. All staff have access to all properties and applicants, meaning that all branches can offer all properties to rent. Tenants do move around the area meaning landlords have the benefit of all 12 branches working for them.
- **CUTTING EDGE MARKETING** - Tenants want to move fast, so we have found we get the best response from extensive internet marketing. Properties are instantly available on our leading and acclaimed web site and we also upload to the major property portals, including Rightmove, Zoopla, Globrix and many more. This 24/7 marketing is supplemented by traditional methods such as To Let boards and press advertising.
- **APPLICANTS** - Lots of them! As a major North East letting agent, many tenants contact us first when they decide to look for a new home. We keep in regular contact with hot applicants and also use sophisticated email marketing systems to keep in touch with applicants, ensuring new properties are showcased – fast.
- **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND CONTACTS** - As a respected leading North East agent, we are in touch with many leading employers and relocation companies who require quality homes across the region.
- **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT** - Only our truly professional administration and accounting teams look after the specialised work of tenancy admin and financial accounting. Collection of the rent regularly and on time is one of our priorities. Careful and professional monitoring of the tenants, from initial vetting and referencing to regular property visits, means that we are constantly looking for warning signs of any problems. If we discover a problem we work with the tenant and the landlord to try and find a solution. We never forget who we work for however and our prime responsibility is to the landlord.
- **ACCOUNTS** - Accounting software enables us to produce professional statements, which are acceptable to your accountant and bank and also HMRC. RICS regulation means that these accounts are balanced weekly, so your money is always accounted for.

What we can do for you

Our management services are designed with flexibility in mind – to suit each individual clients needs. Don't hesitate to ask if you would like to discuss a bespoke service to suit your needs.

The chart overleaf gives a brief summary of what each level of service includes as standard. We offer flexible management service levels including our Premier Rent Warranty service, as follows:-

LETTING SERVICE - This is offered as an alternative to our management services and is ideal for landlords who wish to collect their own rent and deal direct with the tenant. The landlord can also register the deposit themselves, although most Letting Service clients do prefer us to do this for a nominal charge.

LETTING SERVICE WITH RENT COLLECTION - This is similar to Full Management but without some key components, which not all landlords require. See the summary overleaf for full details. If a landlord decides at a later date to have further services, then these are still available but at additional cost.

FULL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICE - This is a complete management service where Andrew Craig act on behalf of the landlord throughout the whole tenancy. The tenant's point of contact is our admin centre and we will deal with all tenant enquiries. If a problem occurs then we contact the landlord to discuss and then resolve with the tenant. If repairs are required, the landlord can use their preferred contractor or we can instruct somebody who we deal with. The only extras are EPC's, safety certificates and a small admin fee to cover the cost of tenancy deposit registration fees. We carry out a full inventory and a tenant check out visit to ensure all is in order. If there is a problem, we prepare the submission to the deposit company on behalf of the landlord.

PREMIER FULL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICE - Get complete peace of mind with our Premier package, with rent cover included. This service includes all of the services included with Full Property Management plus Rent Warranty, legal fees and our court attendance fees.(Terms and conditions apply and our court attendance is for cases heard in the North East of England). In the event of the tenant not paying rent, then the Warranty will pay the rent to us on your behalf. If you require this service, then our referencing company will provide the rent warranty. You cannot request this service after the tenancy reference application has been submitted.

If you have any queries regarding the level of service which suits you best, then please call us to discuss fully.

At your Service

Summary of Services	Letting Service	Letting Service with Rent Collection	Full Property Management	Premier Full Property Management
Market Appraisal and Advice	•	•	•	•
Arrange EPC	•	•	•	•
To Let' board	•	•	•	•
Implement comprehensive 24/7 marketing plan	•	•	•	•
Arrange Gas/Electric safety Certificate(s)	•	•	•	•
Accompanied viewings	•	•	•	•
Complete any tenant negotiations	•	•	•	•
Process application including tenant referencing	•	•	•	•
Prepare and sign tenancy agreement	•	•	•	•
Collect first months rent and deposit	•	•	•	•
Prepare inventory with photographs		•	•	•
Collect rent (where possible by standing order)		•	•	•
Pay rent to the landlord on collection		•	•	•
Provide detailed rent statement		•	•	•
Arrears Management		•	•	•
Solicitor's referral service		•	•	•
Register the deposit with an approved scheme			• *	• *
Carry out periodic inspections			•	•
Day to day tenancy enquiries			•	•
Maintenance management			•	•
End of Tenancy inspection			•	•
End of tenancy deposit handling			•	•
Rent Warranty Service (Terms apply)				•
Legal Fees up to £25,000				•
Andrew Craig Court Attendance Fees				•

Additionally, we can help with Tenancy Agreement renewals and the transfer of utilities.

* Subject to a small administration charge to cover the high cost of TDS membership.



Be prepared!

We have found from experience that a good relationship with tenants is the key to a smooth-running tenancy. As Property Managers the relationship part is our job. Our policy of offering a service of quality and care therefore extends to our tenant applicants too and we are pleased to recommend properties to rent which conform to certain minimum standards. Quality properties attract quality tenants.

GENERAL CONDITION - Electrical, gas, plumbing, water, central heating and hot water systems must be safe, sound and in good working order. Repairs and maintenance are at the landlord's expense unless misuse can be established.

APPLIANCES - Similarly, if the property contains appliances such as a washing machine, fridge freezer, cooker, dishwasher etc. these should be in working condition. All portable electrical appliances must be PAT tested. We can arrange this for you. Repairs and maintenance are at the landlord's expense unless misuse can be established. If you are worried an appliance may be at the end of its life then replace or remove it. If it's part of the inventory and it expires during the tenancy, you will have to replace it.

DECORATIONS - Interior decorations should be in good condition, and preferably plain, light and neutral. It is worth considering cleaning or replacing carpets if necessary.

FURNISHINGS - It is recommended that you leave only minimum furnishings, and if you leave anything at all, these should be of reasonable quality. It is preferable that items to be left are in the property during viewings. If you are letting unfurnished, we recommend that the property contains carpets and curtains. It is worth remembering most tenants have their own personal possessions.

CROCKERY AND BEDDING - Our experience shows that most tenants will put any items left in the property into a cupboard and use their own. For this reason we recommend you take them out, or at least just leave the minimum. If a applicant asks for such items we can liaise with you at the time.

PERSONAL ITEMS, ORNAMENTS ETC - Personal possessions, ornaments, pictures, books etc. should be removed from the premises, especially those of real or sentimental value. Some items may be boxed, sealed and stored in the loft at the owner's risk, or perhaps one built in cupboard could be locked. It is important that adequate cupboard space is left for the tenant. We do not recommend that a whole room or the garage be locked, thereby reducing the space for the tenant and of course, the rent.

GARDENS - Gardens should be left neat, tidy and rubbish-free, with any lawns cut. Tenants are required to maintain the gardens to a reasonable standard provided they are left the necessary tools. However, few tenants are experienced gardeners and if you value your garden, or if it is particularly large, you may wish us to arrange maintenance visits by our regular gardener.

CLEANING - At the commencement of a tenancy the property must be in a thoroughly clean condition. This should include kitchen worktops and cupboards together with all other drawers/wardrobes etc. If you prefer, we can arrange for the property to be cleaned on your behalf. At the end of each tenancy it is the tenant's responsibility to leave the property in similar condition. Where they fail to do so, cleaning should be arranged at their expense.

MAIL FORWARDING - We recommend that you make use of the Post Office redirection service. Application forms are available at their counters, and the cost is minimal. It is not the tenant's responsibility to forward mail.

INFORMATION FOR THE TENANT - It is helpful if you leave information for the tenant on operating the central heating and hot water system, washing machine and alarm system, and the day refuse is collected etc.

KEYS - You should provide one set of keys for each tenant. Where we are Managing we will arrange to have duplicates cut as required, at your expense.

UTILITIES - A tenant can change utilities provider if they choose to do so. We can arrange to have them changed to a provider who we find efficient and whose charges are reasonable, albeit perhaps not the cheapest.

GOLDEN RULE - The golden rule is that good quality accommodation will always attract good quality tenants and a property should ideally, be presented in a condition that you would expect if you were living there.

Important stuff



CONSENT - You must obtain consent to let a property from various interested parties such as your bank, mortgage lender, superior landlord or freeholder.

INSURANCE - Please ensure that your buildings and contents policy is valid for property that is let. If not then contact us for details of Specialist Landlord Insurance.

TAX - You must pay tax on any income earned from property and we would advise you seek advice if unsure what to do. Many of the costs associated with letting are allowable expenses when calculating tax due. If you live outside of the UK then you will have to register with the Inland Revenue, in order to receive rent gross. Again, we can provide details upon request.

REGULATIONS - We can advise on compliance with your legal obligations with regard to gas and electricity appliances and furniture within the property.

EPC - All properties available to let must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and it is the responsibility of the Landlord to provide it to a tenant. There are substantial penalties for non compliance. We can arrange to have an EPC prepared immediately upon request.

TENANCY AGREEMENT - We will prepare a plain english agreement and arrange to have this signed by the tenant and by us, on your behalf, at the commencement of the tenancy.

TENANCY RENEWALS - If the landlord wishes to renew the tenancy, after the initial period, then we can try to arrange this with the tenant. Otherwise the tenancy can continue, with the tenant holding over, with the benefit of a periodic shorthold tenancy. This can usually be brought to an end with two months notice from either landlord or tenant. The advantage of a new agreement is that there is another fixed term, thereby giving both the landlord and the tenant further security.

TENANCY CHECKOUT - At the agreed time and date, we will attend the property and meet the tenant to inspect and agree the condition of the property. We will also take utility readings.

DEPOSIT - The Tenancy Deposit Scheme forms part of the legislation implemented under the Housing Act 2004. It applies to all new Assured Shorthold tenancy agreements. All landlords must comply with the regulations and again, penalties for non compliance are harsh. We can arrange to register and administer the deposit on your behalf. We use TDS as this scheme allows us to retain the deposit in our Client account as stakeholder, so we can release the deposit immediately the parties agree.

INVENTORY - We believe it is critical that a detailed Inventory is prepared before the commencement of each tenancy. Failure to do so can make it very difficult to prove damage by a tenant. A full inventory is included as part of our service if you choose Property Management or Letting Service with Rent Collection. If you choose the Letting Service then we can still prepare an Inventory but at additional cost. You should remove all personal items and superfluous items (ie: unnecessary crockery/cutlery/ornaments etc) from the property and just leave enough items for the number of intended occupants.

UTILITIES - You should take final meter readings and inform your utilities provider before the tenant moves in and again at the end of the tenancy. We normally attend to this at the same time as the preparation of the inventory and at checkout, with the tenant. We can also arrange transfer of utilities to alternative providers, if required.



Q: What does the service cost?

A: We charge a fixed fee for marketing and finding a tenant for your property and a percentage of the monthly rental for our managed or rent collection services.

Q: When do I receive the rent?

A: We recognise that many Buy-To-Let landlords have mortgages to pay for their investment properties, so we can transfer the net rental funds to your account as soon as cleared funds are in our bank account. This should take 3 days but can take longer when the tenant pays us by cheque.

Q: How can I be sure my tenant is suitable?

A: It is in our best interests to ensure the tenants have impeccable references, too. All prospective tenants are credit referenced and we also request employment references, and (if applicable) previous landlord references.

Q: What can I do if my tenant doesn't pay their rent?

A: Our credit control system ensures any late payment is flagged straight away and will result in immediate contact with the tenant. Persistent late payers are given verbal and written warnings and exceptionally, an application to the court would have to be made to recover any loss of rent and legal advice taken. With our Premier service, the Rent Warranty will pay the rent in the event of a valid claim. The product is based upon warranted references and full terms are available on request.

Q: Can I inspect the property at any time?

A: The tenancy agreement requires you to give 'reasonable notice', usually 24 hours notice at least, except in an emergency. Landlord's using our Management Service should contact their property manager who will make the necessary arrangements.

Q: Who is responsible for maintenance and repairs?

A: It is the landlord's responsibility to ensure the building and the main supply systems such as central heating, plumbing, gas and electricity including appliances are fully working. Once the tenancy starts the tenant is responsible for any repairs arising from misuse or abuse within the property.

Q: Can I increase my tenants rent?

A: Not within the initial tenancy period.

Q: Whose responsibility is it to keep the garden tidy?

A: Generally, it is the tenants' responsibility to ensure the garden is kept tidy. In this instance, we recommend basic gardening equipment is provided.

Q: Do I need an inventory, even if my property is unfurnished?

A: All properties require a detailed up to date inventory prior to the commencement of any new tenancy. This document is then used to check for any damage when the tenant moves out. Damage to property can be deducted from the tenants deposit but general wear and tear cannot. An inventory is included in our rent collection and our managed services.

Q: Why do I need an agent like Andrew Craig Lettings?

A: Many property owners who are new to property investment believe they can handle everything themselves. After all, finding tenants and collecting the rent can't be too difficult, can it? But by the time they have placed an advertisement and interviewed tenants, checked out the Electric and Gas safety Regulations and complied with the legalities of the Tenancy Agreement, not to mention collection from a bad payer, they begin to see the benefit in asking a professional team to look after everything on their behalf.