

Following the workshop interactive 'brainstorm', local landlords passed on their 'top tips' to you:

How to handle initial enquiries:

1. Detach emotionally from the property.
2. However, if you are a 'live-in' landlord, your own internal personal assessment matters, so heightened awareness is essential. Your tenants will be living with you.
3. Be honest with tenants
4. When you receive an enquiry following your advert, do the 'Fact Finding' during the 'Initial Telephone Test' BEFORE you book a viewing [see below].

The 'Initial Telephone Test' is the time for 'you to sell yourself to them', whilst enabling 'them to sell themselves to you'. Bear in mind this call will not last long, especially if you are not prepared.

Apply the following 3 Principles during the initial enquiry:

1. **Be Friendly:** 1st impressions really do count during initial contact...both ways!
2. **Be Sincere:** take time to understand enquirers situation, and explain yours if needed
3. **Be Knowledgeable:** about your property, location, tenancy details, tenancy procedures and ultimately tenancy law. Come across like you 'know what you're doing', this will deter time wasters; persistent 'bad' tenants, and set the professional relationship from the beginning.

During the 'Initial Telephone Test' establish the following:

- a. Does the enquirer have a deposit available?
- b. Do they have the means to cover the rent every week/month?
- c. Who will be moving in?
- d. If you are a 'live-in' landlord:
Initial assessment/first impressions: 'will I get on with you?'
Personal safety: 'will your invited visitors be safe in my house?'

If you agree to a viewing, advise the enquirer that should they want the room/property after the viewing, you would need the following to secure/hold the property to enable referencing to take place:

- e. A 'holding deposit' of £??
- f. **Identification:** Passport / Driving Licence. If this is unavailable ask for a birth certificate and a current bill or bank statement with their current address.
- g. **Evidence of Income:** Recent payslips, Benefit entitlement details [DSS, housing benefit etc], 3 months worth of Bank Statements
- h. **References:** Previous landlord details, mortgage company details, current employer details

How to handle viewings:

1. Prior to receiving enquiries, consider giving just 1 timed appointment to all viewers e.g. Saturday, 11am/11.30am/12noon etc
2. Or hold an 'Open House' e.g. Saturday between 2-4pm.
3. Liaise with current tenants to see if this would be appropriate [they may prefer this option as it is easier to organise]
4. View during daylight hours and take someone with you for security [especially important if you are conducting a number of viewings at one time]

These approaches:

- **Create A Competition** atmosphere amongst viewers, as they can see other interested parties wandering around.
 - **Avoids time wasters**, as more viewers are expected to come along during the session
 - **Saves yours and existing tenant's time.**
5. Be open to negotiations during the viewing stage. Always negotiate issues **BEFORE** you sign the tenancy/hand over keys etc.
 6. Consider an 'inventory deposit' that reflects 'actual damage potential' i.e. 6-8 weeks deposit with extra for Pets/Smokers or 'cleaning bond' for carpets.

Once a viewer expresses that they would like to take the property/room:

7. Request a 'holding' deposit, I.D , along with reference details.
8. Issue a receipt for 'holding deposit' along with the conditions of re-imburement.
9. Advise that a 'Credit Reference Check' will also be conducted
10. Negotiate suitable move-in date, subject to references clearing.

Other considerations:

11. Credit Reference Checks can also help you check for bankruptcy and can be conducted online. Check out: <http://homeletuk.com/>
12. Consider putting in place a 'late rent payment charge', this is if the rent is overdue. This charge should be 'reasonable' as excessive charges may be viewed negatively should you go to court. Remember to include this provision within your 'tenancy agreement'.