

Tenants - get the property you want

House hunting for rental properties can be very frustrating; demand is high and often houses are not on the market for very long. We often hear tenants saying they've been "looking for ages", or that the property they like won't accept pets or that agents are useless and never respond to queries etc. Well... some agents are useless actually but for the purposes of this article we'll concentrate on what you, the prospective tenant, can do. Finding your perfect home is a bit like finding your perfect job - in the same way that you need to get noticed by a potential employer then tenants need to get noticed by the agent. Follow these steps to give you the best possible chance of securing that perfect home.



Keep watching the market

Login every day and keep an eye on new listings. Use the well known portals such as OnTheMarket.com and Zoopla.

Be pro-active

Target the properties you want and phone the agent direct - simply sending an email to an agent with some vague requirements will probably not work.

Make sure the property is right for you before viewing.

Ask plenty of questions over the phone - and be prepared to answer queries from the agent - the agent should want to know a little bit about you and anyone else who will be living in the property.

Don't view properties that are outside your budget!

Understand the market you're in and make sure you have a reasonable idea of the going rate for the type of property you're after.

Be friendly and easy going!

Moving is a stressful situation and a good agent will understand this - furthermore, landlords can also find the prospect of new tenants stressful. A calm, measured, friendly and understanding approach will allow everyone to think clearly and negotiate the various requirements they each have.

Don't delay - view as soon as you can!

View the property as soon as you can - the rental market place is fast-moving and waiting several days to view might mean you miss out. If you do have to wait then ask the agent if there is a deadline; often agents like to take several viewings and present several prospective tenants to the landlord and tenancies might not be offered on a first-come-first-served basis.

At the viewing give feedback to the agent

If you like, love or hate the property then tell the agent, and if you like it, then ensure you know the next steps to take to start securing the property for you.

Pets: the best dog in the world

If you have pets then tell the agent early on! Most landlords would prefer tenants without pets... and most tenants have pets! Every tenant thinks their pet is really well behaved and house-trained; the agent will have heard this a thousand times before! Instead, say that you are prepared to mitigate the risk by paying an increased rent or a pet fee or signing a pet agreement etc. Perhaps offer to make professional cleaning of carpets or flea treatment etc. a condition of the tenancy. You could also offer to restrict parts of the house (e.g. upstairs) to your pet.

Money: know the costs

Know what the agent's fees are upfront and make sure they're reasonable. Be prepared to undergo a credit check and if you have CCJs or adverse credit then this could seriously affect your chances; again, mitigate your risk - tell the agent early and perhaps offer a guarantor or 6 month's rent up front.

The rental asking price

There is absolutely nothing wrong with making an offer below the listing price. However a good agent should have valued the property accurately relative to other comparable, local properties. Any offers significantly below the asking price are likely to be dismissed by the landlord - remember, there may be a queue of tenants lining up to view the best properties! You may even want to offer more than the asking price if you are really keen! However, that is rare and not expected.



This document was authored by Victoria Waldron of Proudhouse Property Management.

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