

Furnished or Unfurnished?

One of the most common questions that we get asked, especially by new Landlords, is whether they should provide their property furnished or unfurnished. It is a good question, and there are pro's and con's to both.



Generally speaking a furnished property is likely to attract short term tenants; it is very easy for a tenant to arrive into a furnished property; all they need to do is unpack their bags and start using the property. However, it is also very easy for a tenant to leave... As a general rule furnished properties attract transient tenants. So if the property suits short term tenancies, a small flat or a small house located in a good area with a high throughput of professional people who might be working on contracts for a large firm, then you could consider providing a furnished property.

However, unfurnished properties are more likely to attract long term tenants; they are likely to bring their own possessions and take the time and the personal investment to install all their possessions in an unfurnished home. Having gone to all that effort, it is unlikely that they will want to move again in a hurry.

It tends to be the case in South Somerset, where Proudhouse Property Management is based, that the majority of our tenants are looking for long term homes and therefore unfurnished properties are definitely the most popular choice in this area.

There are also some great advantages for a landlord with an unfurnished property; firstly council tax is free for 3 months if the property is unfurnished and vacant. However, if the property is furnished and vacant then the landlord is liable

for council tax. Your local authority may be different and different rules may apply but generally speaking there are council tax advantages with unfurnished properties.

The second major advantage is reduced wear and tear; clearly not having any furniture means reduced wear and tear, therefore reduced cost for the landlord. If you provide any furniture or appliances as part of the tenancy then if they break or wear out then the landlord has a responsibility to repair or replace them. By supplying an unfurnished property there is reduced liability to repair. Also, with an unfurnished property, the landlord is unlikely to be affected by the Fire and Furnishings Regulations which states that all furniture, soft furnishings etc. must be fire retardant. Most new furniture now should comply but some older furniture is not compliant.

White goods are another area to think about. There is no hard and fast rule these days, a few years ago there used to be an unwritten rule that unfurnished properties should still be supplied with white goods, eg a cooker, fridge, washing machine etc. However, I would advise that if you are letting an unfurnished property then reduce the amount of white goods to an absolute minimum or even possibly none at all. As outlined above, this reduces the landlord's liability to repair, washing machines these days are not the reliable machines that they once were and they do tend to break down and have problems, likewise so do dishwashers, ovens and fridges etc. So if they are not supplied in the property then you do not have to worry. That said, generally speaking, a modern kitchen in a modern property will have integrated appliances such as an oven and hob and possibly an integrated dishwasher, so you will have to expect to repair those as they break or wear out. If it is a new kitchen with new appliances, then keep hold of the warranties and reference numbers, telephone numbers etc. Proudhouse Property Management are more than happy to invoke any warranties on the landlord's behalf as part of a management service. Something else to consider is electrical safety (portable appliance testing). Generally speaking if your appliance is new or under a warranty, then it may be that all that is required is a visual inspection, however older appliances like kettles, toasters, microwaves etc. will need to be regularly tested, so again, if you are not supplying the appliances then you will not have this requirement to PAT test.

Another area to consider, even for unfurnished properties, is whether to supply curtains or curtain poles. We strongly advise that you supply curtain poles or tracks because you don't really want the tenants trying to put up curtain poles themselves. Tenants will want curtains and you may as well do the job for

them and reduce the risk of the tenant penetrating cables or pipes whilst they drill and screw brackets and curtain poles to the wall. It may also be that their workmanship is not quite as good as we would expect and you can't guarantee the quality of the work. It is therefore far easier to provide the curtain poles at the start of the tenancy.

Also, it may be worth providing curtains and lampshades. They do help, especially when a property is completely empty, to soften and warm things up for viewings and make the house feel a little bit more homely and presentable which will pay dividends when searching for tenants.

So that about wraps up this article, you can get more information from our website or feel free to call Proudhouse Property Management anytime on 01935 388456 or email us at office@proudhouseproperty.co.uk. If your property is in the South Somerset area then we would be more than happy to offer you services, however if you are in a different part of the UK then feel free to give us a call or request information, it's all free.



This document was authored by Chris Chambers of Proudhouse Property Management.

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