

19 September 2013

Dear Jane

Given our fees are, if not the lowest, one of the lowest in the area, we have never had any problems. The issue was brought up by Shelter earlier this year, they suggest that the AST's we draw up are simple documents, they are often quite complex and many changes have to be made, if they would like to start a service where they would do all this work for nothing I would welcome it.

We are signed up to the The Property Ombudsman (TPO) Code of Practice, the NAEA and ARLA. Copies of the code of practice are available in the office or can be sent by email, (copy attached). Our charges are clearly explained and available on our website to tenants.

When people come into the office they are usual keen to find a property. Otherwise it's rather like walking into Peter Jones to buy a washing machine, people want to know about the machine and what it does rather than know the delivery price to a SW11 postcode or the day it can be delivered.

There are no hard and fast rules as to the time we tell someone of our fees, we do it when we think it is appropriate, if someone wanted to know the charges when they first contacted us we would of course explain this – in my experience however this is extremely rare. We also provide the tenants with a 'Check in Guide Lines' prior to them paying the holding deposit, which sets out all the charges and we ask the tenants to read and sign this document to confirm they fully understand. Here is the link on our website front page regarding fees;

<http://www.courtenay.co.uk/> follow the link FEES FOR LETTING

We have already discussed with our web designers and they are putting in place asap, a link against every property on our website with a link to our charges.

I therefore believe we are 'Up Front, and indeed we go further as a family business to give the very best possible service and value for money to both our clients and all our applicants. Over the years we have had a number of people asking us to let their properties, I assume because the service we gave them as tenants they liked.

The effect of this 'witch hunt' is that as soon as every agent is forced to publish their prices, the agents charging less than other agents will increase their prices so that they all charge basically the same. If then the government outlaws fees to tenants, rents will rise to cover the costs. The system may not be perfect however it is a free market and the less interference from councils and government the better.

In summary for your website;-

*'Courtenay have been established as a family firm for almost thirty years, we are 'upfront' about our fees to tenants which are fully available on our website. Prior to any letting, we ask all tenants to read our Guideline for Check In' which sets out all our fees and charges. We ask all tenants to sign this document which is sent out via an electronic signing system. We are members of The Property Ombudsman, the NAEA and ARLA and we comply with their Code of Practise'*

Richard

**Richard à Brassard MARLA FNAEA**  
Director

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