

30 SEP 2013



Ms Jane Ellison, M.P.
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 September 2013

Dear Ms Ellison,

Being "Up Front" about fees

You wrote to Fraser Allen at our Battersea office on 18th September about fees charged to people privately renting accommodation.

As all our branches operate in the same way, Fraser thought I might like to respond to your letter on behalf of the whole Company and confirm our support of your 6 criteria.

To answer your questions specifically:

- We are a licensed member of ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents) which is a regulatory, (albeit currently voluntary) body and a member of the Property Ombudsman (TPO) Scheme. Both operate a Code of Practice which we subscribe to
- All our staff receive training about the relevant codes of practice, how to access the codes themselves and how they can direct consumers to them.
- We believe the charges that we make to both Landlords and Tenants are explained in "plain language" at all times and in a number of appropriate ways (including a "Guide for Prospective Tenants which is handed/mailed to applicants looking to rent property)
- Charges are also detailed on our website. Specifically charges for Tenants are listed under the section "Guide for Tenants" which can be accessed with one click from each page of the site
- All lettings negotiators are instructed to tell Tenants about any applicable charges at the earliest possible opportunity, either on the phone or in person
- Fees have not changed for many years but if they did, people would only be charged the fees that they had been told about

I am not aware that we receive comments or complaints about the fees we charge to Tenants (possibly because they are relatively simple compared to some of our competitors). Referencing fees depend on the number of proposed Tenants for whom referencing is required (£35 each

including VAT) and, assuming we are preparing the Tenancy Agreement, a further charge of £360 including VAT (per property) is split equally between the Landlord(s) and Tenant(s), i.e. £180 for the Tenants.

We will be incorporating this information into our property advertising in line with the CAP guidelines which we received last week. Our web and advertising designers are currently working on putting together some ideas which we hope will be as straightforward as possible for inclusion by 1st November.

There is a great deal of very important information that people need to know about when letting or renting property privately. Fees are one element of this. Any steps that can be taken to explain these and all the other obligations and responsibilities involved in a straightforward way can only be helpful to everyone.

I hope this has helped to answer your concerns but please do get in touch if there is any other information you would like.

Yours sincerely,
For and on behalf of Featherstone Leigh

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joanna Hamilton', with a small horizontal line at the end.

Joanna Hamilton
Director

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