



COOKE & CO

A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Guide to finding (and keeping) dream tenants

Come Live By The Sea

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Welcome,

Hello, my name is Damien Cooke and I'm the Managing Director of Cooke & Co Estate and Letting Agents.

We've been serving landlords across Kent since 1992.

Over the following pages, we will share advice on the most important decision a landlord has to make – which tenant to accept for your property.

We will also look at what you can do to attract the type of tenants you want.

And we'll highlight why it makes such good financial sense to aim to keep great tenants for as long as possible.

Important topics this guide covers:

- Why it's a crucial decision to get right
- How it can be a nightmare for landlords who get it wrong
- A profile of your dream tenant
- How to keep tenants happy

Finding and keeping your dream tenants will undoubtedly help you sleep easier. It will also make a HUGE difference to your peace of mind and property's profitability.

If you have any questions about the topics discussed within the guide or anything else rental property related, please feel free to contact us.

We're here to help.

Thanks for your time,

Damien Cooke MNAEA MARLA
Founder and Managing Director
Cooke & Co Estate and Letting Agents



Top Tip:

Consider having your rent reviewed by local letting experts who know the current market rate for properties like yours.

What makes a dream tenant

In our experience, there are three excellent indicators of a potential tenant's suitability.

History

Look for a good track record of steady employment, sensible personal financial management, and positive past rental experiences. A good letting agent will collate all this information for you to make the most informed decision possible about who to rent to.



Responsibility

A good tenant will treat your property as if it's their home – because, after all, that's **precisely** what it is. That sense of responsibility also applies to paying rent on time, being a good neighbour, and communicating with the landlord and/or letting agent should any issues arise with the property. This type of tenant is always co-operative when it comes to periodic inspections.

Organisation

The best tenants tend to have their paperwork in order. If requests for documents such as bank statements, ID, application forms, payslips, tax returns and employment references are handed over swiftly, it's usually an excellent sign. However, the opposite can often be said if there are delays from a potential tenant in providing requested information.



Top Tip:

Perhaps the best reason to take time and make an effort to find a great tenant is to know the impact of renting to a bad one. When tenancies go wrong, a landlord can suffer serious financial loss (through non-payment of rent and damage to the property) and endure high levels of stress until the problem is resolved.

How to find dream tenants

Now that we know what makes for a dream tenant, let's look at how to find them for your property. Here, we've focused on two key aspects to unlocking your rental's potential.



Marketing matters

You could have the best, most fairly priced rental property in the world, but if its marketing is substandard, it won't grab the attention of your ideal tenants.

Brilliant marketing basics include having good quality photographs that highlights the property's benefits, extensive promotion on property portals, and working with an agency with a database of potential tenants.

And not just any tenants. A good letting agency will advise you on the best target markets for your kind of property. They will then help create a marketing strategy around appealing to the **ideal renters**, be they professional couples, young families, or single people.



Present your property properly

Today's renters are more demanding, especially those in the dream tenants category.

So, it's important that your property is well maintained, safe, secure, and fits the lifestyles of your ideal renters. For example, a young professional couple may be drawn to your two-bedroom property because the 'spare' room offers the perfect place to work from home.

Also, void periods need not be a landlord's biggest fear but can be used as the perfect opportunity to redecorate, refurbish and reimagine how the property can be presented to a new target market.



Top Tip:

If you are unsure of what your ideal tenant type is for your property, get in touch with us. We can advise you on which types of people are interested in your kind of property.



How to keep dream tenants

Good tenants are worth keeping because they save you money, time, and hassle.

- Money -** A good tenant who stays in your property eliminates void periods and pays the rent on time. This is great for cash flow.
- Time -** A problem tenant can soon become a time and energy drain if you're trying to deal with the situation without the help and expertise of a good letting agent.
- Hassle -** Once everything is correctly set up, rental payment dates arranged, regular inspections planned and maintenance matters dealt with promptly, a good tenancy tends to run very smoothly.

Here are five simple ways to raise the chances of keeping good tenants in your property for longer.



Respect

Treating your tenants fairly and respectfully is a recipe for a good, long-term relationship. Remember, **your** property is **their** home.



Pets

This is a red line for some landlords, but you could be missing out on excellent tenants due to a 'no pets' policy.



Communication

Always communicate clearly with your tenant about matters that affect them.



Professionalism

Many landlords do not have the time or inclination to get involved with the running of their rental. This is where an excellent letting agent steps in to become the reliable bridge between a responsible landlord and a dream tenant.



Efficiency

By quickly dealing with any issues and addressing any concerns, you build trust and rapport with your tenant.



Top Tip:

A very common reason why a tenant looks to move is a slow response to any maintenance issues that arise. A good letting agent will have a bank of contractors who they work closely with. This ensures that most maintenance issues can be dealt with swiftly – which keeps the tenant happy.

Four tenancy myths busted

There are many myths and lots of incorrect information about getting the best possible tenants.

Here are four common myths we have to bust on a surprisingly regular basis.

1. MYTH: The tenant willing to pay the most rent is the best option.

FACT: In our experience, this isn't often true. When selecting a tenant, you need to ensure that their references have all been checked, they've provided all necessary paperwork promptly and their employment/financial situation is secure. Sometimes, a more stable, longer-term potential tenant willing to pay a fair rent is better than someone agreeing to a higher fee but who may become problematic in the future.

2. MYTH: I only need to check a prospective tenant's credit score and not bother with any other referencing.

FACT: Someone's credit score only tells you a small part of their situation. Legally, you'll also need to check their right to rent in England. To protect your investment, you should also seek references from their employer, wage slips and testimonials from previous landlords.

3. MYTH: The rental market is so strong that my property will let itself.

FACT: Yes, the local rental market is robust, but properties that are not correctly marketed attract tenants who will pay less rent. Also, failing to follow the procedures and checks that an experienced letting agency carries out can leave you vulnerable to tenancy issues. It's always wise to provide a good quality home and not become complacent when rental demand is high.

4. MYTH: Renting to my family or friends is always a really safe bet.

FACT: Unfortunately, this can be a recipe for disaster. Many landlords rush into this kind of arrangement without proper tenancy agreements in place. If the situation turns sour, there's often an emotional and financial cost.

Top Tip:

The best tenants tend to have high expectations. So, it's vital that the standard of your property reflects this if these are the kind of people you want renting it.

Your 11-point checklist for finding (and keeping) dream tenants

- ☐ **Is your property in a suitable condition to attract good quality tenants? We can give you an honest assessment of where your property sits in the current local rental market and advise on how to improve its condition.**
- ☐ **Do you have a plan for attracting as much interest to your property as possible? Again, this is something we can help with – professional marketing of your rental means it benefits from more attention from potential, high-calibre tenants.**
- ☐ **Are you clear on what makes a tenant fall into the ‘good’ category? Clue – reading page 4 will help you.**
- ☐ **Do you know all the steps needed to reference a potential tenant properly? We can do this for you.**
- ☐ **Is your tenancy agreement professionally drawn up, and will it stand up to scrutiny?**
- ☐ **Do you have a government-backed deposit scheme in place for the tenancy?**
- ☐ **When will you be making periodic property inspections? There are strict rules around this that we can advise you on and create a plan of action around.**
- ☐ **What’s your plan for ensuring the property is well maintained and legally compliant? You’ll need gas, electrical, and other safety certificates in place.**
- ☐ **How much will you be budgeting for repairs and maintenance? As mentioned in this guide, dealing with issues swiftly and successfully lays the foundations for long-term tenancies.**
- ☐ **Following on from the last point – do you have access to trustworthy and qualified tradespeople who can attend the property quickly to carry out any maintenance or repairs?**
- ☐ **What does your renewal process look like? When you have good tenants, it’s worth finding out if they want to renew their tenancy 6 – 8 – 10 weeks before it ends.**

We hope you enjoyed our guide to finding (and keeping) dream tenants. Contact us today if you have any questions about this guide or anything else to do with rental property.

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