**KHG Guide to Virtual Lettings**

The Kent Tenancy Management Group, sub group of the Kent Housing Group have developed a Good Practice Guide to Virtual Lettings, designed to help membership organisations plan for and undertake this key service provision when the process is unable to be delivered through traditional methods.

Under each heading is a list of key points for consideration across each element of the process.

**How to Make, Edit and Post Lettings Videos**

* Firstly do not under-estimate that undertaking the process of videoing, editing and posting virtual letting videos is a new skill, it may require training or upskilling to ensure a clear and informative video is produced. Consider whether any training can be delivered internally and what other departments or colleagues you may need to engage in the process and at what point.
* Agree internally when the video of a potential let will be taking place, before, during or after any void works have been completed. Working around the void works schedule will need consideration, if undertaking before or during completion of work this may need to be reflected in any narrative to support the video.
* Create a checklist of what should be covered as a minimum within the filming, what are the key features of any property that need to be show cased.
* Agree a script or key points about the property, by room if necessary, to include if using a narrative when filming, be concise and speak clearly. Introduce the property, confirm the address, size of property and what floor it is on if appropriate.
* Ahead of commencing filming go through the property and open any doors to aid smooth movement between the rooms, this reduces noise disturbance. Consider footwear as some can create a higher level of noise depending upon the floor covering (flip flops on a wooden floor for example).

**Accessibility**

* Liaise with colleagues about the most appropriate platform to where your video will be posted, is your organisation already using a particular platform and have experience in posting, via You Tube for example.
* Ahead of loading your film to the chosen platform consider how the link is accessible on a variety of devices, will it require additional software or log in access for the applicant to view it, vision and/or sound, effectively for example.
* Consider applicants who may need additional support, such as web-tools to view the film.
* Agree an Exemptions process should an applicant be unable to access online lettings videos, be vulnerable or need to have medical suitability for a property assessed. (As per below).

**Socially distant viewings on site**

If you are conducting a social distance viewing, be clear about messages to the applicant before they arrive about how the viewing will take place, including the following. Where possible ensure that the

checklist or consideration for applicants undertaking a physical viewing is shared verbally and is accessible on line.

* Only bring themselves where possible
* Wait to be invited into the property by the housing representative
* Wear mask/PPE
* Bring your own stationary to make notes/sign documents
* Have access to a telephone so that a verbal viewing can be undertaken by the housing officer whilst the applicant is physically viewing the property.

*Housing Representatives/Organisations should consider the following:*

* Ensure that the property is sanitised ahead of a viewing, use door wedges to reduce touch points and have sanitisation available at the viewing
* Use of key safes for housing representative to access the property to reduce handling of keys (recycle the use of key safes to other void properties and change the safe code as appropriate to ensure that the property remains secure until an offer is accepted)
* Housing representative to have allocated PPE to take and use at a viewing, to remain outside where possible during the applicant viewing the property
* Housing representative to carry their digital device in wipe able wallets or with secondary wipe able screens
* Explain paperwork may be received in an e-form, how this is completed and returned and the timeframes for all stages
* If an unaccompanied viewing is taking place the appropriate Housing representative should call the prospective tenant whilst at the viewing to confirm their rights and responsibilities if they accept the property and tenancy. This will ensure that they have all the information to make the decision about the tenancy.
* If appropriate an Income Officer or appropriate representative should contact the tenant to collect the first rent payment or payment in advance and confirm the arrangements for future payment of rent.

**Electronic Documents – Sharing and Signing**

* Identify and agree internally the platform to use for sharing and obtaining signatures on key documents, for example Docu-Sign. Explore the license and cost for the platform, including how you may be able to add additional documents in the future.
* Can the digital documents be accessed and signed by multiple signatories (joint tenancy).
* Ensure that document templates are fit for purpose, invest time to ensure that documents comply with your corporate identity and style, whether they can be viewed clearly on line, do they look sleek and professional and most importantly are they easy to navigate through and use. Ensure where possible that the documents can be viewed and signed on any smart device or computer.
* Agree how and where a digital document will be stored outside of the platform to enable future access, for example a change in provider (storing on an EDM Solution)
* Consider how you will provide access to the digital document for those who do not have access via a digital device or online platform.

**Safe Access to Keys once property is let**

* Use a key safe to store keys following virtual viewing and sign up, the code to be shared after completion of all paperwork. The key safe should then be removed and recycled.
* Have provision for collection of keys from a designated office should a key safe not be an option. Applicant to be advised of the Covid-19 safety measures in place ahead of collection of keys to enable safe collection.

**Accepting Digital Payments**

The following are examples of how rent in advance can be accepted by an organisation to secure a property following a successful viewing:

* Using PayPal via Docu-sign is an example
* Using PayPal invoicing
* BACS payments
* Deferred payments