



NEWS DIGEST JUNE 2009

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Hi Readers

I couldn't resist the temptation of mentioning MP's Expenses, could I? I was moved to write to one of the political parties last week to remind them there is a superbly equipped industry that could handle everything connected with relocation – and that the Civil Service had spent a lot of time and effort putting policy together for their own moves – why not take advantage of their and our expertise, I said! And of course these days we are also including Serviced Accommodation – so there would be no reason for MP's to try to get away with charging absolutely ridiculous sums of money – you just need some professional people from our industry to manage the whole process! I received a very dull answer to the effect that they were looking closely at the problem! I bet they were!

Anyway, here are a few interesting snippets for you that I've gathered together – some of which I am sure you will already be aware of – others possibly not!

Private Landlords

We await the Green Paper on private landlords and the Government plans for them to be licenced, with interest. I have been particularly concerned about some of the landlords with whom the industry is having to deal and the quite appalling gap that exists between the 'professional' landlords and those who are without question 'amateurs' when it comes to understanding their responsibilities.

I have concerns about the amount of time and effort that our professionals put in to ensure that an agent and his client – the landlord – has taken the necessary steps to inform his lender about a potential letting of a property – then the prospect of failing to meet his own mortgage payments and thereby dispossessing our clients as tenants.

One article I kept from the beginning of this month suggested that the rental sector's lack of professionalism would be a concern, even if it were not forecast to become an even bigger industry – and we certainly realise this. In fact the person commissioned to devise rental accommodation reforms, highlighted the diversity of the rental customer base – which again we are very conscious of in our industry. Apparently, there are moves elsewhere to improve the position of tenants by better policing of the conduct of what they describe as 'middlemen' – i.e. letting agents.

I have contact with some of the destination service providers who are constantly telling me how frustrating their dealings with some of the letting agents are. My suggestion has been to only deal with those agents in whom we can place our trust, on behalf of our clients, and that the others should be sidelined.

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

This was raised in an article in Property Drum (www.propertydrum.com) where one agent was complaining that many landlords and letting agents are still holding deposit monies themselves without complying with the Tenancy Deposit Protection regulations. This, he pointed out, could lead to misappropriation – another thing to be aware of as a Destination Service Provider.

Estate Agents League Table

Were you aware that such a thing existed? I certainly wasn't but there is a website www.estateagencynews.co.uk/league.asp that lists the top 50 in England! Top of the List was Countrywide plc, with Connell's second and sadly for them - Cumbrian Properties in 50th place.

As far as UK business is concerned, we seem to be keeping our heads above water and I hear through my grapevine that members are remaining very positive about the future. This cannot be anything but good news for all concerned.

Annie