



## **THE CURRENT RENTAL PROPERTY MARKET - SEPTEMBER 2012**

### ***Sue Bury***

When one of our members told us that they were finding it harder to source quality rental property in their area, we thought it might be useful to explore the current residential lettings market to see if this is a regional problem or a general trend.



Mary Smith of Relocation

Scotland provides destination services in the Aberdeen area and regularly surveys the stock of available property for the expat rental market on behalf of their clients. This service is extremely useful as it provides a benchmark and context for her clients and helps to manage their expectations. The particular issue in Aberdeen seems to be the lack of well decorated, nicely presented properties and a notable downturn in the number of properties actually coming on to the market.

Other areas, such as Bristol and Oxford are also having problems; Alan Dickenson of DPS Relocation reports that the rental property market in Bristol, for instance, is the worst for ten years. London and the Midlands, report no great difficulty in sourcing property, but all advise that the market is very competitive. It is usual to expect greater demand for rental property over the summer months and, according to Jane Fawls of HCR, many potential lessees arrive at viewings armed with their deposits and references in order to get ahead of the competition! This seasonal demand for property had, until recently, been met by an adequate supply, but this trend has now reversed; inevitably, prices are pushed higher and the quality of the available stock may be poorer. Also, many landlords are deciding to sell, rather than continue renting in the current economic climate. However, the availability of high-end properties remains stable.

Other seasonal factors are students and some hospital personnel whose handover generally happens at the same time of year. Moreover, traditional student accommodation is changing, and competing for the same quality properties as parents are helping out more with financial assistance.

As available properties are being snapped up, it has become really important to develop strategies to cope with the situation. At times like this, the excellent relationship you have built up with local Letting



Agents pays dividends. It is equally important to maintain the relationship with HR contacts and develop an arena of trust, whereby it becomes easier to manage both their expectations and that of the assignees. Part of this management involves ensuring assignees stay focussed and minimise their 'wish lists' in such a competitive market. As Oliver Beswick, from Beswick Relocation Services says, it is ever more essential to structure your business so that you can be responsive and reactive to prevailing market conditions.

Letting Agents, Knight Frank and Hamptons regularly publish research on the property market, which may be helpful. We will monitor the rental property market over the next editions and would be grateful to you for your input. Thanks, too, to Mary, Alan, Jane and Oliver for sharing their thoughts.