

JW WOOD

COUNTY DURHAM · DARLINGTON

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1910

YOUR PROPERTY GUIDE

A Landlord's Guide to *letting well.*

Everything you need to know about letting a property in the North East — from setting the right rent to managing a long, successful tenancy under the new 2026 rules. Friendly, clear, and written by people who have been doing this since 1910.

JW WOOD ESTATE AGENTS
OPENING DOORS SINCE 1910

JWW.CO.UK

A WARM WELCOME

Let's get your property let — well.

Letting a property is a serious business. It's a significant investment, a legal responsibility, and a commitment to the people who'll call it home. Whether you're letting for the first time, growing a portfolio, or an accidental landlord who's inherited a property, our job is simple: find you the right tenant, at the right rent, and keep the whole thing running smoothly.

This guide walks through the process in plain English — with particular care to explain the Renters' Rights Act 2025, which reshapes the private rented sector from 1 May 2026. Keep it to hand, and pick up the phone whenever you'd like a human answer.

The JW Wood Lettings Team

COUNTY DURHAM & DARLINGTON

A family-owned agency with deep local roots

JW Wood has been letting homes across County Durham and Darlington since 1910. Five branches, one local family, and a dedicated lettings team who live and breathe the villages, towns and cities we serve. We're ARLA PropertyMark protected, so your rent and deposits are held to industry-leading standards.

115+ years local

Generations of experience placing good tenants in good homes across the North East.

ARLA PropertyMark protected

Client money protection, strict codes of practice, independent redress.

Full or part management

Choose the level of service that suits you — from fully managed to tenant find only.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Your guide, chapter by chapter.

We've broken the journey into bite-sized stages so you can read the whole thing through, or jump to the bit you need right now.

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THE JWW DIFFERENCE

A century of matching landlords and tenants.

When you're trusting someone with one of your most valuable assets, who you choose matters. Here's what sets us apart for landlords.

A dedicated lettings team, not an afterthought

Lettings isn't a sideline at JW Wood. Our Durham and Darlington Lettings offices are staffed by specialists — people who live and breathe rental law, compliance and tenant management. They're on top of every rule change, every new certificate, every Section 8 ground. Our expertise keeps you compliant, and your tenants happy.

ARLA Propertymark protected

We're members of ARLA Propertymark — the industry's gold standard. That means client money protection, strict codes of practice, independent redress through The Property Ombudsman, and access to the latest legal guidance. Not every agent offers this. We insist on it.

"Efficient, helpful, and the whole process was smooth from start to finish. Highly recommend for landlords — they know what they're doing."

— CLIENT REVIEW

Full-service or part-service — your choice

Some landlords want to hand us the keys and hear from us once a month. Others want to handle day-to-day themselves and just need help finding a tenant. We offer three service levels — Fully Managed, Rent Collection, and Tenant Find — and we'll help you pick the right fit for your property and your time.

Recognised for excellence

Voted 'Best North East Agent' five times by the Relocation Agent Network, with a 4.7/5 Feefo rating from customers. Members of ARLA Propertymark, NAEA and The Property Ombudsman.

YOUR SELLING JOURNEY

Seven steps, start to finish.

Every property is different, but the path from "I'm thinking of letting" to a signed tenancy generally follows the same seven stages. Here's the lay of the land – the rest of the guide unpacks each step in detail.

01

Step

Book a free rental valuation

Invite us over for a no-obligation appraisal. We'll give you an honest, evidence-based rental figure for your area.

02

Step

Pick your service level

Fully Managed, Rent Collection or Tenant Find – decide how much you want to do yourself and how much you'd like us to handle.

03

Step

Make it compliant & ready

Gas Safety, EICR, EPC, smoke and CO alarms – we coordinate the safety certificates and ready the property for photos.

04

Step

Launch to market

Professional photography, a detailed floorplan, and premium listings on Rightmove and OnTheMarket.

05

Step

Find & reference a tenant

Accompanied viewings, applications, Right to Rent checks, full referencing through a specialist provider.

06

Step

Move-in day

Agreement signed, deposit protected within 30 days, inventory completed, How to Rent guide served, keys handed over.

07

Step

Ongoing management

Rent collected, inspections scheduled, repairs handled, renewals managed – a quiet life for you while your tenant's happy.

STEP 01

Getting ready to let.

Before the first viewing, a handful of decisions will shape your whole experience as a landlord. Let's get these right.

Start with a proper rental valuation

What your property would rent for in today's market – not last year, not the headlines, but right now, in your postcode. Our lettings team knows the going rates for one-bed flats in the city centre, three-bed semis in the villages, and everything in between.

Pick your service level

Three main choices:

- **Fully Managed** – we handle everything. Rent collection, repairs, inspections, renewals, legal notices. You hear from us monthly.
- **Rent Collection** – we find the tenant and collect the rent; you manage the day-to-day.
- **Tenant Find** – we market, reference and sign. You take it from there.

£ Book a free rental valuation

Our lettings valuers will visit your property, walk through the market with you, and explain the 2026 regulatory changes that affect what you can charge and how.

Tell your mortgage lender

If the property has a residential mortgage, you'll need "consent to let" before you can rent it out. Many lenders charge a fee. If you're buying specifically to let, you'll need a Buy-to-Let mortgage.

Update your insurance

Standard home insurance doesn't cover let properties. You'll need specific Landlord Insurance, covering buildings, landlord liability, and optionally loss of rent. Ask us about rent guarantee insurance too.

i Understand the tax position

Rental income is taxable. You can offset allowable expenses (insurance, maintenance, lettings fees, some finance costs). If the property isn't your main home, there's Capital Gains Tax to think about on sale. Speak to an accountant early.

STEP 02

Compliance & safety.

Letting a home comes with serious legal obligations. Get these right before the first viewing – a compliant property is a lettable property.

The four essential certificates

Before any tenant moves in, you need:

- **Gas Safety Record** – annual, if any gas appliances. Carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- **EICR** – Electrical Installation Condition Report, valid five years. A registered electrician assesses the installation.
- **EPC** – valid ten years. Must be Grade E or above to let legally.
- **Legionella risk assessment** – a simple written assessment of your water system.

Alarms

Smoke alarms on every storey, carbon monoxide alarms in every room containing a fuel-burning appliance. Test them on the day the tenancy begins – and document it.

Your pre-let checklist

- Gas Safety Record**
Current certificate, one copy to the tenant within 28 days.
- EICR in place**
Copy given to the tenant before move-in.
- EPC Grade E or above**
Displayed on the listing and given to the tenant.
- Smoke alarms**
Tested and working on tenancy start day.
- CO alarms**
In every room with a fuel-burning appliance.
- Legionella assessment**
Document your water-system check.
- Right to Rent scheme**
Prepared to verify every adult occupant.
- Deposit scheme chosen**
DPS, TDS or mydeposits.
- How to Rent guide**
Latest edition ready to issue to tenants.
- HMO licence (if applicable)**
Check with your local authority.
- Furniture fire-safety labels**
If you leave any soft furnishings.
- Clean & decorated to let**
Neutral, professionally cleaned, lightbulbs working.

STEP 03

Marketing & finding tenants.

Getting your property in front of the right tenants, quickly, and with a minimum of void. Our specialist lettings marketing does exactly that.

Photography that gets clicks

Tenants scroll through dozens of listings in minutes. Great photography is the difference between being viewed and being ignored. Every JW Wood listing uses a professional photographer, a detailed floorplan, and written description tailored to the kind of tenant your property will suit best.

Where your property appears

- Rightmove and OnTheMarket premium listings.
- jww.co.uk and our five branch windows.
- Alerts to our registered tenant database.
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram.
- To-Let board (subject to your preference and local rules).

Accompanied viewings, as standard

You don't have to play tour guide. We accompany every viewing on your behalf, answer questions, gather genuine feedback, and report back promptly. It's safer, more professional, and generates much better tenant interest.

! New rules from 1 May 2026

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 changes how rental marketing works:

- Rental bidding wars are banned – advertise a rent, and don't accept offers above it.
- You can't refuse tenants with children or on benefits.
- Pet requests must be considered on the merits – blanket "no pets" is no longer allowed.
- Marketing must clearly state the advertised rent.

Our registered tenant list

Many of our lettings agree before a property even hits the portals, thanks to the database of active tenants we've built up over the years. When we take on your property, we check that list first.

STEP 04

Referencing & agreements.

An application has arrived. Now comes the important bit: checking your prospective tenant properly, and getting the agreement right first time.

Tenant referencing

We use a specialist referencing provider to check every applicant thoroughly:

- Credit history and affordability.
- Employment and income verification.
- Previous landlord references.
- Right to Rent immigration check.

Holding deposit

Once an applicant is agreed, they pay a holding deposit – capped by law at one week's rent. This takes the property off the market while checks are completed, and is either credited to the first rent or refunded.

Rent guarantee (optional)

For added peace of mind, rent guarantee insurance covers you for unpaid rent and legal costs if things go wrong. We can arrange this for you as part of the referencing process.

The tenancy agreement

From 1 May 2026, all new tenancies are **Assured Periodic Tenancies** – rolling month to month, with no fixed term. We use an updated, fully compliant JWW tenancy agreement.

The written statement of key terms

For tenancies starting 1 May 2026 or later, you must give your tenant a written statement covering the key terms of the tenancy before they move in. Our agreement meets this requirement in full.

Deposit & rent in advance

Deposit is capped at **five weeks' rent** (six if the annual rent is over £50,000). Rent in advance is capped at **one month** under the new rules. We protect every deposit in an approved scheme within 30 days and serve the prescribed information to your tenant.

STEP 05

Ongoing management.

A good tenancy is a long tenancy. Staying on top of rent, repairs and inspections keeps both sides happy and protects your investment over time.

Rent collection

We set up a standing order from day one, monitor every payment, and chase any late rent the day it becomes overdue. Rent is transferred to your account with a clear statement, monthly.

Repairs & maintenance

Tenants report issues to us, not to you at weekends. We triage every report, quote as needed, and either act immediately (emergencies) or check with you first. Our panel of vetted tradespeople know the portfolio and respond quickly.

Periodic inspections

For Fully Managed properties, we inspect every six months and send you a written report with photographs. It lets us catch small issues before they become big ones.

Rent reviews via Section 13

From 1 May 2026, rent can only be increased once per year, through a formal Section 13 notice, with at least two months' notice. We'll advise on what the local market supports, and handle the paperwork correctly.

Retaining a good tenant

With fixed terms abolished, "renewal" in the old sense disappears — tenancies simply roll on unless either side gives notice. The best way to keep a tenant long term? Look after the property, respond fast, and treat them fairly.



Your MyJWW portal

Log in anytime to see statements, certificates, works orders, inspection reports, and the status of your tenancy. Everything in one place.

The best landlords don't just collect rent — they build relationships. A tenant who feels heard stays longer, looks after the property, and pays on time.

STEP 06

Your 2026 obligations.

Being a compliant landlord means ticking every box, every time. These are the key legal duties, updated for the Renters' Rights Act 2025 which takes effect on 1 May 2026.

REQUIRED SAFETY CERTIFICATES

Certificate	How often
Gas Safety Record (CP12)	Annually
Electrical Installation (EICR)	Every 5 years
Energy Performance (EPC, Grade E+)	Every 10 years
Smoke & CO alarms tested	Every tenancy start

! New from 1 May 2026

- Section 21 abolished – Section 8 with grounds only.
- ASTs abolished – all new tenancies are Periodic.
- Rent in advance capped at **1 month**.
- Rent rises once/year via Section 13 only.
- Rental bidding wars banned.
- Pet requests must be considered.
- No discrimination against children/benefits.
- Written statement of key terms required.

✓ Still applies

- Deposit cap: **5 weeks' rent** (6 if £50k+).
- Protected in approved scheme within 30 days.
- Prescribed information within 30 days.
- Holding deposit capped at **1 week**.
- Right to Rent check on every adult.
- "How to Rent" guide to every tenant.
- EPC Grade E or above required.
- HMO licence if applicable.

§ Existing tenancies — act by 31 May 2026

If your tenancy started before 1 May 2026, you must serve the government's Information Sheet to your tenants between 1–31 May 2026. Fines up to £7,000 per offence. Our managed landlords have this handled automatically.

BUDGET CONFIDENTLY

The real cost of letting.

Letting isn't pure profit — there are setup costs, ongoing certificates, and the occasional void to plan for. Here's the full picture, so nothing catches you out.

Fully Managed fee MONTHLY	Typically 10–15% + VAT of the monthly rent. Covers rent collection, inspections, repairs coordination and legal notices.
Tenant Find fee ONE-OFF	Usually equivalent to one month's rent + VAT. Covers marketing, viewings, referencing and agreement.
Setup costs BEFORE TENANCY	Inventory and schedule of condition (£100–£250), deposit protection, Right to Rent checks.
Gas Safety Record ANNUALLY	£80–£150 depending on number of appliances. Required every year if there are gas appliances.
EICR EVERY 5 YEARS	£150–£400 depending on size and condition. Required to legally let the property.
EPC EVERY 10 YEARS	£60–£120. Must be Grade E or above to let legally (likely tightening further in future years).
Landlord insurance ANNUALLY	£150–£400+ for buildings, contents and liability. Rent guarantee is optional and typically £100–£200 more.
Maintenance & voids ALLOW FOR	Budget roughly 1 month's rent per year for maintenance, plus a reserve for void periods between tenancies.



Ask us for a fixed-fee quote

Every property is different. Talk to our lettings team and we'll put together a clear, itemised fee proposal for your property — showing exactly what you pay, what's included, and the net rent you'd expect to receive.

PLAIN ENGLISH

The words you'll hear, explained.

Letting comes with its own vocabulary — and the 2026 reforms have added a few new terms. Here are the ones you're most likely to meet.

ARLA Propertymark

The industry body for letting agents, with strict codes of practice and client-money protection.

Assured Periodic Tenancy

The new standard tenancy from 1 May 2026 — rolling, no fixed end date, terminated only by notice.

AST

Assured Shorthold Tenancy — the old fixed-term tenancy type, abolished for new lets from 1 May 2026.

Consent to let

Permission from your residential mortgage lender to rent the property out. Usually fee-bearing.

Deposit protection

Legally required — every deposit must be in an approved scheme (DPS, TDS or mydeposits) within 30 days.

EICR

Electrical Installation Condition Report. Required every five years before letting.

EPC

Energy Performance Certificate — must be Grade E or above to let. Valid ten years.

Fair wear and tear

Normal deterioration from reasonable use. You can't deduct from a deposit for this — only for damage beyond it.

Fully Managed

JW Wood handles rent, repairs, inspections, renewals and compliance throughout the tenancy.

Gas Safety Record (CP12)

Annual inspection of any gas appliances by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Copy to the tenant within 28 days.

HMO

House in Multiple Occupation — usually three or more unrelated people sharing. May require a specific licence.

Holding deposit

Max one week's rent. Taken to reserve the property while references are checked.

How to Rent

Government-issued guide to renting. Must be given to every new tenant at the start of their tenancy.

Inventory

A written and photographic record of the property's condition at the start of a tenancy. Used at check-out.

Renters' Rights Act 2025

The 2026 reform package abolishing Section 21, fixed terms, and rental bidding.

Rent guarantee

Optional insurance that pays out if your tenant falls into arrears. Often bundled with legal cover.

Right to Rent

Immigration check required on every adult occupant before a tenancy starts.

Section 8

The notice used to end a tenancy for a specific reason (rent arrears, breach, sale, move-in). The main route from 1 May 2026.

Section 13

The formal rent-increase notice. From 2026, limited to once per year with two months' notice.

Section 21 (historical)

"No-fault" eviction notice. Abolished for new and existing tenancies from 1 May 2026.

Tenant Fees Act 2019

Banned most upfront fees to tenants. Still in force — alongside the 2026 reforms.

Void period

Time when the property is empty between tenancies. Budget for at least 2–4 weeks per year.

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Ready to let? *Let's talk.*

Five branches across County Durham and Darlington, with dedicated lettings teams in Durham and Darlington. Pop in for a coffee, book a free rental valuation, or just ask us a question – whichever helps most.

Durham (Sales)

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durham@jww.co.uk

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This guide is intended as a general introduction to letting residential property in England. It is not financial, legal or tax advice. The Renters' Rights Act 2025 continues to be implemented in phases; always confirm current rules with an accredited lettings professional or at gov.uk before acting. JW Wood Estate Agents is a trading name of JW Wood Ltd.