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SEPTEMBER 2021



MORE SERVICES, LESS HASSLE

LETTING'S MARKET BOOM



PROPTECH FOCUS

EPC IMPACT



WE'RE EXPANDING!



Property Lettings

Floorplans
Photography
Video Walkthrough
Viewings



Property Certificates

Electrical Safety Inspections (EICR)
Gas Safety Certificate
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)



Aerial Drone Inspections

Aerial Photography
Aerial Video
Aerial Roof Inspection



Specialist Inspections

Asbestos Inspection
Drain Inspection
HMO Fire Risk Assessment
HMO Emergency Light Inspection

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There is an 'I' in everything

MARKET BOOM!



The lettings market continues to boom, with **HomeLet's** latest index showing average UK rents at a record high for the third month in succession.

The average rent is now **£1,053 pcm**, which is up **6.9%** on the same time last year, and up **2.3%** on August's figure.

Wales has seen the highest annual rise - up **12.8%** in a year, to **£723 pcm**. And there are signs of recovery in London, which appears to have stemmed the falls seen during the peak of the pandemic - annual rents in the capital are up **3.6%** to **£1,713 pcm**.

Every region of the UK saw an annual price rise and only Northern Ireland saw a monthly dip - the rent there remains flat in September at an average of £704 pcm.

Rob Wishart, head of business intelligence at HomeLet & Let Alliance, says:

“Typically, rents for new tenancies will rise in line with the rate of inflation, but that's not been the case in the past few months.”

The demand for housing and certain property types is outstripping supply in many areas, causing upward pressure on rental prices. We can expect the increase in rents to continue for the foreseeable future, with many regions now seeing unprecedented demand for housing stock and landlords.





PROPTech FOCUS



We are living in the **AGE OF INFORMATION**. Our working and personal lives are underpinned by software, data and technology to an extent that few could have envisaged even a decade ago.

Our industry is embracing technology and harnessing the power of data at speed – it has to, or we face being left behind or overtaken by disruptive challengers.

On average, Estate Agents have **11** different software suppliers on their books, the highest number being **30**.

This immediately rings alarm bells in terms of juggling maintenance across so many platforms – choosing cloud-based solutions, which also operates a one-stop shop style partner network, can certainly help to bring this under control.

How to cut through the noise

With so many options out there, it is little wonder that decision makers are struggling to narrow down what might be best for their business. We know the general benefits that technology can bring to help deal with challenges such as managing customer expectation, increased competition, evolving legislation and disruptive events.

Smart solutions can fill gaps, automate activities and create streamlined processes for you and your teams.

However, not all **PropTech** solutions are suited to all estate agent businesses. The first, and arguably most important step towards selecting your software involves developing a true understanding of what you actually need – sounds simple, but this is more difficult than you might think.

There are at least six key questions estate agency leaders should ask themselves:

1. What are your **BUSINESS PROBLEMS**?
2. What is your **BUSINESS STRATEGY**?
3. What is your **TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY**?
4. What **OTHER SYSTEMS** do you currently have in place?
5. How **IMPORTANT** are those systems and software to you?
6. What is your **OVERALL BUDGET**?



It is important to note that no one application or system can be your silver bullet – every agency has its own nuances, identity and bespoke requirements, and good technology providers will understand this.

FUNDAMENTAL to everything is the ability to integrate. This facilitates using the best software solution available for each facet of your business, but having everything connected and automated to reduce workload.



EPC IMPACT



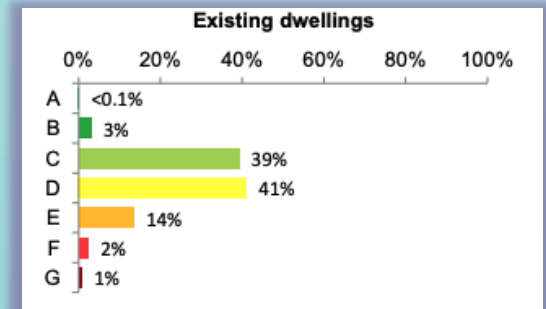
The UK government has recently proposed new (EPC) energy performance certification regulations that would change the minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals, from an E to C. These changes are planned to take effect as early as 2025 and will impact all the domestic rentals in England and Wales.

Key Takeaways to the New Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) requirements:

- New tenancies from 1 April 2025 and all tenancies by 1 April 2028 must meet **BAND C OR HIGHER** on an EPC.
- Increase the **MAXIMUM FINE LEVEL TO £30,000** per property for each breach.
- Landlords to provide an EPC **PRIOR TO ADVERTISING** and for a valid EPC to be in place at all times a property is let.
- Increasing the **COST CAP TO £10,000** inclusive of VAT per property.
- Updated affordability exemption regime to come into force on 1 April 2025
- Landlords to install 'fabric first' measures e.g. insulation.
- Private rented sector to support the uptake of smart meters.

How will these new EPC regulations impact landlords?

With approximately **57%** of existing properties at the beginning of 2021 given a **D RATING OR WORSE**, it is obvious that a lot of people will be affected by this change. Jumping from an E rating to a C rating could potentially cost landlords **£1000s**.



FIVE WAYS landlords can improve their EPC rating.

If you want to jump from an E up to a C, you will likely need to implement multiple changes. Changes that you could look at implementing include:

- 1. IMPROVING THE PROPERTY'S LIGHTING.** Old light bulbs and fixtures are notoriously inefficient and upgrading your lighting fixtures to LED bulbs can lower the overall energy consumption of a household
- 2. IMPROVING INSULATION.** Insulation is one of the simplest ways to reduce heating expenditures, and the requirements of a household to heat, perhaps all walls, floors and ceilings should be insulated properly for maximum effect.
- 3. IMPROVING WINDOWS.** For those properties where it's possible, upgrading to at least double glazing or preferably triple glazing can help retain heat within the property, allowing for a reduced carbon footprint and less energy required for heating,
- 4. INSTALLING AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT BOILER.** We've already mentioned that old school boilers are being phased out for more energy-efficient solutions. It's well worth doing some research to identify energy-efficient boilers that will be cheap to maintain on an ongoing basis. This will not only lower your tenants heating and water bills but also likely keep your own property maintenance bills down simultaneously.
- 5. USE A SMART METER.** Smart meter technology allows you to more easily and accurately control and monitor, the energy consumption of a household. This will allow you to identify areas where energy consumption is large so that you can implement specific changes to help improve your overall EPC rating.



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PROFESSIONAL & PREDICTABLE

PROACTIVE & PLAYFUL

