



Letting you relax

Contents

- 4 Letting – here's where to start
- 6 Service option levels
- 8 Setting the highest standards
- 9 Customer Service
- 10 Attracting more tenants
- 12 Letting with technology
- 13 Capturing company movers
- 14 Buy-to-let
- 16 What happens when a tenant has been found?
- 18 Safe as houses
- 20 Taxation on letting income
- 21 The Romans Group
- 22 Taking note...

Whether you're an experienced investor landlord or a private individual letting your home for the first time, letting a property is a serious business.

Research suggests that residential property is one of the safest and best performing long term investments, not just providing an excellent income but for many, a significant capital gain too.

Letting your property demands careful planning and you'll need a professional agent you know you can trust – one who will look after your interests and make your life as stress free as possible. At Romans, our experienced and qualified staff will use their knowledge and expertise to deliver a service that's second to none, giving you essential peace of mind.

Peter Fuller
Managing Director of Romans Lettings
E-mail: pfuller@romans.co.uk



Why let with Romans?

Case study

We would recommend Romans to any landlord

“We first used Romans in 2002. Shortly after our first meeting with Regional Lettings Director John Sumner, a tenant was quickly found for our vacant property and we have used Romans for all our other properties since then. We have found the team to be helpful, professional and always contactable, and would recommend Romans to any landlord!”

To find out about the Romans experience for yourself, drop into your local branch or visit romans.co.uk

Chris & Anthony



Letting



There are several key elements to think about when letting a property. In the first instance, we recommend you consider which service level would best meet your personal needs.

How to let in 3 easy steps

1

Initial appraisal

The first step is meeting with a Romans Lettings Agent for a valuation appointment at your property, where we'll discuss which Romans service level you'd like to use.

2

Advice from the experts

Properties vary, and so do the needs of each landlord. So before we meet, we'll be doing our homework, compiling comparable rental details, local prices and market trends. During the appointment, you'll be advised on issues that may affect the property's likely rental yield, including any action you can take to maximise its rental potential.

3

Property presentation

First impressions count! If your property is well presented, it will increase the marketability and the level of rental income we can achieve on your behalf – so your property should be presented to the highest standard possible, to secure an early tenancy. Romans' highly experienced Lettings team can advise you on all aspects of furnishings, fittings and decorations, and we can recommend contractors too.



Top tips for presentation

- Choose neutral colours for decoration, such as magnolia or cream
- Carpets, curtains and furnishings should be neutral or muted colours, and able to stand wear and tear
- Kitchens and bathrooms need to be well equipped – your Romans representative will advise you of the necessary appliances
- Lighting is important and in modern apartments the latest styles are usually appropriate
- Gardens should be neat and well maintained
- We recommend a professional clean, including all windows, prior to letting.

Service option levels you decide

Romans Lettings offers five levels of service to meet landlords' different needs, ranging from an Introductory Service to a Managed / Premier Service for complete peace of mind.

Introductory Service

For the Introductory Service, we will:

- Advertise the property until a suitable tenant is found
- Accompany prospective tenants on viewings if required
- Carry out a full credit search on any prospective tenant via an independent credit referencing company
- Obtain references from employers, previous landlords and bank, via an independent company
- Prepare the tenancy agreement
- Collect one month's rent in advance, together with a security deposit equal to one and a half month's rent.
- As stakeholders, Romans hold the tenant's deposit in an approved scheme.

Rent Collection Service

As well as the areas covered in the Introductory Service, the Rent Collection Service includes in addition:

- Submitting accounts to your accountant if requested
- Monthly statements
- Romans hold the tenant's deposit in an approved scheme.

Rent Collection Plus

To complement our Rent Collection service, Romans offers an upgraded service too. Under Rent Collection Plus, we will arrange rent protection on your behalf, guaranteeing the rent for the term of the tenancy, in addition to offering legal protection.*

Managed Service

The Managed Service ensures that every aspect of the lettings process is dealt with efficiently and cost effectively on your behalf. With this service, we will:

- Arrange for a detailed inventory of the property's contents and condition to be prepared by an independent inventory company – they will also check the tenant in and out of the property when the tenancy begins and ends
- Arrange for utilities to be registered in the tenant's name
- Visit the property three times annually to check and report on its condition
- Arrange maintenance and repairs – this includes obtaining estimates
- Process the return of the tenant's deposit, minus any charges for cleaning, item replacement and outstanding rent
- Provide monthly statements
- Hold the tenant's deposit in an approved scheme.

Premier Management Service

As with Rent Collection and Rent Collection Plus, Romans offers an upgrade to the Managed Service, known as Premier Management. Under this service, Romans will arrange rent protection on your behalf which will guarantee the rent for the term of tenancy, as well offering legal protection.*

(*Conditions do apply and you're advised to speak with your Romans representative.)

**Romans offers the very best service,
whether selling, letting or mortgaging
– or all three at once!**

Case study

Landlord Chris Reardon first encountered Romans in 2000 when he inherited a sum of money from his mother. "I felt it would be good to put the money into property, so I thought I should buy a house outright and let it," he says. "However, I was concerned about how I would get the rent – I'm not someone who would like to go knocking on doors each month!"

Chris contacted Romans, and eventually used the services of three Romans departments. The sales department introduced him to one of Romans' lettings experts, who guided him through the lettings process. He was then introduced to a former IFA mortgage adviser, also in the same office. "The former adviser suggested that it might not be the best idea to buy a property outright," says Chris, "but to use the money to provide deposits for several apartments instead, as these would be easier to rent out."

Once decided, Chris went back to the Romans sales department, and started looking for suitable properties.

"The sales department would give me details of available properties, and the lettings department would then advise me which ones would rent most quickly," he says. "They really worked well together – their guidance proved invaluable, and stopped me from making expensive mistakes. I now own five properties that are all let through Romans under their Managed Service, so there's no knocking on doors for me!"



Setting the highest standards

Commitment to excellence

Romans Lettings' biggest asset is their staff, who can offer you the benefit of their comprehensive local knowledge and lettings experience. This is enhanced by an ongoing investment in training that ensures the service you receive is always of the highest level.

Romans Lettings' staff are all trained in the legislation that affects the lettings industry. Our people undertake a comprehensive training programme that leads to an industry-recognised qualification, such as the Technical Award in Residential Lettings & Property Management from ARLA (the Association of Residential Lettings Agents). Romans Lettings has also just received licensing status from ARLA, as part of ARLA's new scheme to protect consumers' interests and establish the highest standards for lettings agents in the UK.

Licensed, qualified staff benefits both our landlords and tenants, and this highlights the need to choose a lettings agent with care. Regulated, highly experienced lettings agents such as Romans are legally required to employ at least one licensed member of ARLA per branch office. Unregulated lettings agents simply don't offer customers the same levels of qualified staff, reliable service and peace of mind.

What is ARLA?

ARLA is the only professional body that is solely concerned with the self-regulation of lettings agents and for nearly 25 years has actively promoted the highest standards across every aspect of residential lettings and management in the private rented sector.

Member agents who are regulated by ARLA must abide by its robust Code of Practice and its comprehensive membership conditions too, which include compliance with issues such as handling clients' money, Professional Indemnity insurance and disciplinary procedures. ARLA licensed agents also offer clients financial security through a unique monies protection scheme, for complete peace of mind.

TDS & the Lettings Ombudsman

Romans are members of TDS (The Dispute Service Ltd), an independent company established in 2003 and awarded one of the contracts to run the Government Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

We are also members of The Lettings Ombudsman, which provides a free, fair and independent advisory service for member agents, tenants and landlords.



Some members of our ARLA qualified lettings team



Customer service at the heart of our company

Meet our Customer Services department

Our trained and experienced Customer Services staff (based at our Head Office in Wokingham) are available to deal with calls and website enquiries until 9pm weekdays and all day Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays – the busiest and most convenient times for both tenants and landlords. No other local lettings agent provides this level of service to their customers.



ISO 9001

Romans Lettings' strong commitment to customer service is backed up by our ISO 9001 accreditation, an internationally recognised Quality Management Standard. This provides a robust framework for improving a company's customer service by adopting a range of quality management principles, including customer focus, leadership, documented processes and integrated systems.



Attracting more tenants



We estimate that our high profile marketing strategy generates between three and four times more enquiries than other lettings agents. More enquiries mean more tenants – and that should mean a quicker let, for a higher rent!

More media



Marketing your property

As soon as Romans Lettings receives your written instructions, our team will start looking for a suitable tenant by contacting all the prospective tenants registered on our extensive database. Romans will also prepare photographic details of the property, including internal images, room dimensions, floor plans and a location map, plus an Energy Performance Certificate.

More advertising – more tenants

No other local lettings agent invests more in advertising than Romans. Research shows that the visual aspect of marketing a property is of paramount importance, in order to generate more enquiries from prospective tenants.

Multi office coverage

Romans Lettings offers a network of lettings branches, all computer linked to enable the swift transfer of information, so properties receive maximum exposure as early as possible. Our offices work together to ensure that all prospective tenants are alerted to new properties quickly and efficiently.



Letting with technology



Romans was the first local lettings agent to recognise the importance of the Internet, and we will market properties on our award-winning website **romans.co.uk** as soon as they become available.

Website winner

The customer focus and ease of use of our website was recognised by the **Daily Mail's Residential Property Awards**, which named **romans.co.uk** as one of the best property websites in the UK. The website contains an abundance of information for landlords and tenants – from statistics and advice, to professionally drawn floor plans and location maps of properties.

Everyone's watching...

We have also produced several Lettings videos for our video channel **Romans TV**, available to view on the website, explaining our services to landlords and tenants in an easily accessible format, along with other videos containing useful information, testimonials and market updates.

Search on the go

The website is now available to everyone with an Internet enabled mobile phone. Designed to help tenants search for rental properties when they're out and about, the **Romans Mobile** service offers other helpful features, such as viewing property details, images, floor plans, maps to its location and more.

Your property will also be exposed to thousands of tenants via national property portals including **Rightmove.co.uk, Primelocation, Property Live and findaproperty.com**

Auto email

Our website updates several times throughout the day and updates the tenants' email accounts. Our auto email facility advises tenants automatically with properties that match their search criteria, without the need for them to keep visiting our site. This allows us to take a more active approach in securing tenants for your property.

Latest information

With the latest computer technology, Romans staff can provide landlords with instant information, covering such issues as maintenance or current rent status, at the touch of a button. Automated statements are available by email too, notifying landlords as soon as the rent comes in.



Capturing the company movers

Statistics show that one in five of every house moves in the UK is due to job relocation, and this is especially apparent in the South East. Many local companies retain a relocation agent to look after the housing needs of their employees.

Romans has links with the personnel departments of many local businesses, as well as with the UK's major relocation companies – including Cartus, one of the largest relocation companies in the world. These companies are tasked with moving thousands of employees in and out of the South East every year.

How can this help let your property?

Tenants on a company move are quite simply the best. They are highly motivated professional people, usually with the resources and backing of the company at their disposal. Most of Romans' branches have been selected as designated relocation centres by the Home Sale Network (owned by Cartus), giving Romans access to 750 associated branches across the UK.





Buy-to-let

One of the safest investment plans

The availability of tailored buy-to-let mortgages, along with the downturn in traditional investments, has contributed to the significant rise in property investment portfolios. We offer a 'one-stop shop' buy-to-let facility for investor landlords, where the whole process is conveniently managed by Romans under one roof.

Finding the right property

Romans can provide all the expertise you need to ensure you choose the right property that suits your budget and circumstances. We will advise you on location, demand and rental values, to help you achieve the most from your investment, as well as explaining legal, financial and tax issues. With a branch network and hundreds of properties listed for sale across Berkshire, Surrey and North Hampshire, Romans is ideally placed to help you find the perfect property for your investment needs.

Funding your purchase

flower IFA is part of the Romans Group, with a team of highly experienced, fully qualified independent financial advisers offering expert advice and guidance. Visit flowerifa.co.uk or call 01344 753170 for more information or to arrange an appointment with a flower mortgage adviser.

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE. THERE MAY BE A FEE FOR MORTGAGE ADVICE. THE PRECISE AMOUNT WILL DEPEND UPON YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES BUT WE ESTIMATE THAT IT WILL BE £299.

Case study

Landlords Mr and Mrs Hines are no strangers to the local lettings market. With a portfolio of six properties, the couple have been letting through Romans since 1995.

"We have used Romans to let our properties from the very beginning, and have built up fantastic relationships with the staff there," says Mr Hines. "It really makes a difference to know that we have people we can rely on. Other agents have approached us in the past, but we feel very comfortable with Romans and their high standards. Romans Lettings has been a key part of our investment strategy, and not only do we get great value for money, the personal service that we receive is second to none. We would not hesitate to recommend them."



What happens when a tenant has been found?

References

Once a tenant has been found for your property, we use strict referencing procedures, carried out by independent experts – so you'll receive a full understanding of the tenant's personal and financial circumstances, including a check on their employment history, credit worthiness and previous addresses.

Tenancy agreement

Only when you're satisfied with the tenant will we proceed with preparing the tenancy agreement. This is drawn up (in consultation with your lender, if appropriate) specifically to protect your possession rights, as well as your interests in relation to landlord/tenant responsibilities and the method of rent payment.

First payments

Before the tenant moves in, we ensure that all deposit monies and first rental payment are cleared by the bank and held in a client's account.

Inventory

If you have opted for the Managed or the Premier Management Service*, we will arrange for a professionally compiled inventory of contents and condition, via independent specialists – this process is vital to protect your investment. You can view a Lettings video explaining the inventory procedure in more detail at romans.co.uk/romanstv

Rent matters

Our computerised system logs the due date for the rent – when the rent is received, it's forwarded by BACS and a statement is emailed to you. Reminders are sent to tenants where necessary, to ensure you receive payments as quickly as possible.

Romans' support team

A dedicated Lettings Accounts and Administration team make the latest technology work for you, to ensure the smoothest possible transactions.

Property inspection & maintenance

Romans' prime concern is to ensure that the property is well maintained on your behalf, allowing for fair wear and tear, so we carry out in depth inspections every four months, using the inventory and taking photos at every visit. The detailed photographic inspection report produced at each visit provides landlords and tenants with a regular and accurate record of a property's condition, giving reassurance to landlords and helping reduce the risk of disputes. A Lettings video explaining more about the inspection process can be found at romans.co.uk/romanstv

We're always on hand to deal with any maintenance issues, overseeing any essential repairs and arranging payment of the contractor for the completed works. When appropriate, we will advise on any improvements that may be needed in order to attract new tenants.

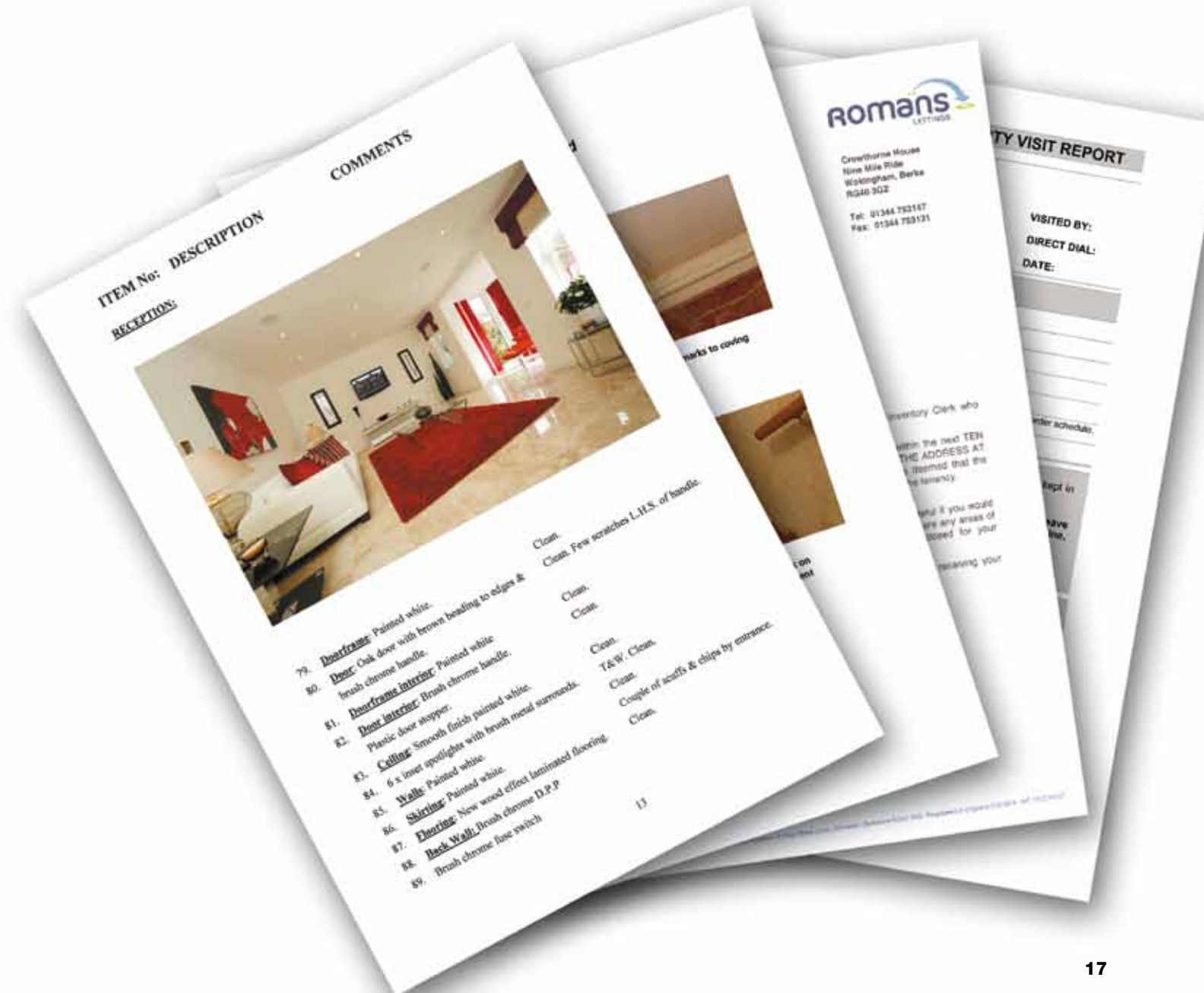
Renewing the tenancy

Many tenants renew their lease and in some cases stay for several years. Romans will carry out negotiations to ensure that the rent, terms and length of tenancy are adjusted as necessary and the paperwork completed accordingly.

When the tenant leaves or you move back

We will ensure that the tenancy is concluded with the minimum of fuss, that the appropriate notices for possession are issued and the inventory check out is arranged. Once both landlord and tenant are satisfied, deposits less any charges are returned.

(*For the full range of service level options, see page 7)





Safe as houses

The legal position

The 1996 and 2004 amendments to the Housing Act 1988 have brought fundamental changes to the law governing residential property letting. Many changes made letting more attractive for landlords, by making it easier to let at a market rent and recover possession if necessary.

The Act specifies the types of tenancy – there are several types, but it's most likely that the tenancy of your property will be either an Assured Shorthold Tenancy or a Company Let. Your Romans representative will be happy to advise you, and a full fact sheet entitled 'The Housing Act – A Short Guide for Landlords', is available from Romans on request.

Fire & Safety Regulations

The following information is only intended as a guide and shouldn't be viewed as a complete and detailed interpretation of the regulations. The regulations might appear stringent, but they're designed to ensure the safety of both the property and its tenants.

Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998

These cover all gas appliances, flues, meters and associated pipe work. They require landlords to ensure appliances remain safe at all times, and are checked and certified at least once every 12 months.

A record of checks carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer must be kept, and instruction booklets must be provided for each appliance supplied. This is a crucial regulation, so Romans reserves the right to arrange for an annual gas safety check of the property, at the landlord's expense, if the obligatory safety certificate is not made available.

Furniture & Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988. Amendment Regulations 1989 & 1993

This act covers all upholstery and upholstered furniture supplied by the landlord in a rented property, including: beds, footstools, pillows, headboards, mattresses, beanbags, sofa beds, futons etc.

Furniture manufactured between 1950 and 1990 must not be supplied to a tenant unless it has been professionally reupholstered with conforming materials. Fire retardant spray treatment is not acceptable by the DTI as it does not give effective protection to foam fittings.

The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, Part P of Building Regulations January 2005 and Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

These regulations apply to anyone who lets accommodation containing electrical equipment. If landlords are supplying the electrical installation and any connected appliances, it's essential that they are compliant. Trading Standards state that a landlord must be able to demonstrate that electrical appliances are safe before the property is let. If any piece of electrical equipment has a fault which results in injury or fatality, the person responsible for supplying the equipment could be prosecuted. Therefore, Romans Lettings strongly recommends an annual check of all electrical appliances by professionals, and a Periodic Wiring Inspection every five years.

Romans holds full details about all regulations and landlords are advised to seek further guidance from us. Failure to comply with these regulations may constitute a criminal offence under the Consumer Protection Act 1987. Landlords should note that the maximum penalty for non-compliance with these regulations is a fine of £5,000 or six months imprisonment.

Warning Signs:

- Green box: Filling material(s) and covering fabric(s) meet the requirements for resistance to cigarette and match ignition in the 1988 safety regulations. CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRE. RESISTANT.
- Red triangle: Meets the 1988 safety regulations by inclusion of a fire resistant interliner. CAUTION CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRE.
- Red triangle: All filling materials meet the 1988 safety regulations. CAUTION.
- Red triangle: Careless use of matches could set fire to this furniture. CAUTION.
- Red triangle: COVER FABRIC NOT MATCH RESISTANT.

LANDLORDS GAS-ELEC SAFETY RECORD

Brooklyn House
Money Lane
The Green
West Drayton
UB7 7PQ
TEL: 01895 420777
FAX: 01895 420776

APPLIANCE DETAILS

Location	Type	Make	Model	Flue Type R/S O/F	Requested to Test Yes/No	Safety Device Pass/Fail	Operating Pressure mbar	Ventilation Adequate Yes/No
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								

DETAILS OF ANY FAULTS FOUND AND RECTIFICATION WORK NECESSARY

Location	Type	Make	Serial No.	Plug	Flex	Body	Continuity
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

TEST RESULTS

Location	Type	Make	Serial No.	Plug	Flex	Body	Continuity
1							
2							
3							
4							

WORK NECESSARY

Number of appliances tested: _____

Sockets: 1

earth loop impedance Zs (Ω): 1

Polarity: 2

Flues: 3

This inspection purpose Safety Flues



Taxation on lettings income

Our own specialist Lettings accounts team are responsible for paying out over £25 million in rent annually to landlords, both in the UK and overseas.

Romans Lettings is independently audited to ensure impartiality for our clients. The details shown are only a guide and are correct at the time of printing. You should seek the advice of your professional adviser or tax office.

UK resident landlords

If you're a landlord resident in the UK, your net taxable profit from your rental business (rental income less tax allowable expenses) represents income received without deduction of tax at source. This income will need to be added to your other taxable income, in order to work out your overall tax liability for a particular tax year.

The normal method of reporting your taxable income to the Inland Revenue and calculating your tax liability is via a Self-Assessment Tax Return.

Non UK resident landlords

The non UK resident landlords (NRL) scheme is for taxing the UK rental income of persons whose 'usual place of abode' is outside the UK. If you're treated as a non-resident landlord, you still have to pay any UK income tax due to rents arising in the UK.

Unless the landlord can provide Romans with an exemption certificate from the Inland Revenue, we are obliged by law to deduct basic tax rate from rents received and account to the Inland Revenue on a quarterly basis. Landlords are responsible for obtaining their own exemption certificate, which is issued to the agent and is not transferable.

Exemption certificates are required by any person named on the agreement, when living overseas. Details on taxation are correct at the time of printing. Further information for non-residents and exemption application forms are available from Romans, or the Inland Revenue at: NRL Scheme, Fitzroy House, PO Box 46, Nottingham NG2 1BD. Tel: 0151 4726208.

Reducing tax liability

As a landlord, the Inland Revenue will view you in the same way as a business – so costs and expenses incurred may be offset against the rental income, which can substantially reduce or eliminate your tax liability. The letting income on which you're subject to tax is gross income less certain expenses incurred – these usually include:

- Loan interest (subject to conditions)
- Rent, rates and ground rent
- Cost of providing services included in the rent
- Professional fees, agents, accountancy and legal fees
- Cost of repairs
- Maintenance charges
- Water rates
- 10% wear & tear allowance (for furnished properties)

The Romans Group



Dale Norton, Founder

The Romans Group was established in 1987 by Dale Norton, who remains a central figure in the organisation and is very much 'hands on' in the day-to-day running of the company. The Group has now grown into a multi-faceted business offering a range of property services, including sales, lettings, building surveying & valuations, auctions, new homes, financial advice, architecture, town planning and land development.



flower IFA

As buy-to-let specialists with 20 plus years of experience, flower IFA can offer a fresh approach. They're not tied to any lender or financial company, so they can look at the whole range of mortgage options available and only give you impartial advice tailored to your individual needs.

Visit flowerifa.co.uk, call 01344 753170, or email advise@flowerifa.co.uk for more details.



Romans Estate Agents

With more than 20 years' experience of the local housing market, Romans Estate Agents are experts on all things property. If you're thinking of expanding your rental portfolio, their branch network across Berkshire, Surrey and North Hampshire is perfectly placed to find the properties that are right for you.

For your nearest branch, visit romans.co.uk



Romans Surveyors & Valuers

Romans Surveyors & Valuers are members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and can offer you many years of experience, as well as extensive local knowledge.

Visit romans.co.uk for more information, or call 01344 753 129 for a free, no obligation survey quote.



Romans New Homes

From chic, contemporary apartments and first time buyer properties to comfortable family houses and high-spec, prestigious luxury homes, built by leading national and local developers - whatever you're looking for, Romans New Homes can help you find your ideal new investment.

Call 01344 753110 for more details or visit romans.co.uk/newhomes



Romans Auctions

Romans Auctions helps clients take advantage of this fast and efficient means of buying or selling property and land – both residential and commercial. Their auctions regularly attract hundreds of people, with a sales success rate of 80%, well above the UK's national average of 73%.

Visit romans.co.uk/auctions or call 0800 093 9994 for more information, future auction dates and to request our latest auction catalogue.





Residential Lettings

Basingstoke

01256 318 150

basingstokelettings@romans.co.uk

Wokingham

0118 9743 510

wokinghamlettings@romans.co.uk

Bracknell

01344 404 710

bracknelllettings@romans.co.uk

Woodley

0118 944 3740

woodleylettings@romans.co.uk

Camberley

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farnboroughlettings@romans.co.uk

Fleet

01252 360 810

fleetlettings@romans.co.uk

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0118 9538 710

readinglettings@romans.co.uk

Tilehurst

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