

PRESS RELEASE

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Robert Allen Sales & Lettings offers enhanced protection to local landlords and tenants

Robert Allen Sales & Lettings is offering local landlords and tenants in **Folkestone** a new level of comprehensive protection to secure their rental payments - which goes beyond the legal requirements - in a move that has been praised by The Property Ombudsman scheme.

Explaining their decision to take out Client Money Protection, , Bob Galvin of Robert Allen Sales & Lettings , said: “ We believe that being members of The Property Ombudsman and complying with its Code of Conduct, as well as carrying Professional Indemnity and Client Money Protection Insurance provides complete peace of mind to our clients and customers alike”.

The Property Ombudsman (TPO) is the UK's largest government-approved redress scheme, which offers consumers a free, fair and impartial dispute resolution, which has seen a 37% increase in the number of disputes against letting agents over the last year. Under new legislation introduced this year, every letting agent must be registered with an approved redress scheme.

Gerry Fitzjohn, TPO's Vice Chairman, said: “While there is a legal requirement for agents to register a tenant's deposit into a government-backed protection scheme, many tenants are unaware of how the agent passes on their monthly rent to the landlord.

“With more than £23 billion paid annually in rent, of which £6 - £10 billion is collected by agents on behalf of landlords, it is essential that landlords and tenants only use agents that have CMP cover or a method that guarantees the rent collected by their agent is covered against fraud and unlawful use.

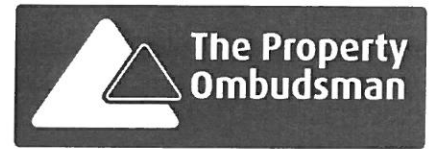
“New legislation will require letting agents to display whether they have CMP cover, which is a huge milestone for the industry but we would still urge landlords and tenants to always ask their agent how the rent will be protected.”

The new legislation, known as the Consumer Rights Bill, is currently at 'report stage' in the House of Lords, will also require letting agents to display all fees and charges to landlords and tenants, which can be a major source of disputes between agents and consumers.

Oliver Wharmby of Lonsdale Insurance Brokers Ltd, which manages the PI + CMP scheme used by Robert Allen Sales & Lettings said:

“Recent press headlines have really hit home how rental fraud can affect landlords and tenants. The media has covered several high-profile cases where landlords have lost thousands of pounds in rental income by dealing with an agent who did not have sufficient cover to protect consumers from rental fraud.

“Rather than choose to use an agent that charges the lowest fee, landlords must ask if the agent has a CMP policy in place to protect their rental income.”



Further information on the PI + CMP scheme can be found at <http://www.lonsdaleib.com/our-business/chartered-surveyors-property-professionals/>.

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Notes to the editor:

What is The Property Ombudsman (TPO)?

The Property Ombudsman scheme has been offering an independent and impartial dispute resolution service to consumers who are dissatisfied with the service provided by registered firms since 1990. The Ombudsman can provide redress to place the consumer back in the position they occupied before the complaint arose to achieve a full and final settlement of the dispute and all claims made by either party. Where appropriate, the Ombudsman can make compensatory awards in individual cases up to a maximum of £25,000 for actual and quantifiable loss and / or for aggravation, distress and inconvenience caused by the actions of a registered firm.

TPO is free to all consumers. Agents pay a single annual subscription covering them for sales, lettings, commercial, international and auction activities. TPO does not charge case fees.

The Property Ombudsman currently provides redress for consumers using 28,500 offices in the UK (inc. 12,367 residential sales estate agency branches and 11,259 residential lettings offices).

Independence

Whilst TPO charges registered firms an annual subscription, the Ombudsman is accountable to the TPO Council, the majority of which is made up of non-industry members. The Council appoints the Ombudsman and sets his Terms of Reference (i.e. how the complaint process operates). The Ombudsman is required to report to the Council on a regular basis.

The Ombudsman is not a regulator and does not have the authority to take regulatory or legal action against a registered firm. However, member firms can be referred to the TPO Disciplinary and Standards Committee, appointed by the Council, which has the power to expel firms from the scheme and / or report them to the Office of Fair Trading, which has the ability to ban firms from carrying out estate agency business.

Further information

The Ombudsman's Terms of Reference, the Codes of Practice, Consumer Guides and other documents about the operation of the scheme are available on our website (www.tpos.co.uk), together with previous annual and interim reports, further explanation of governance arrangements and a full list of registered firms.