

mashroom



Self-Managing vs. Letting Agent? The Real Costs and Benefits



Behind the Rent

Every landlord has to make a choice: manage the property themselves or hire a letting agent. On the surface, self-managing might seem cheaper and more flexible. But there's more behind the rent than just collecting payments. This guide explores what each option really costs you—in time, money, and peace of mind.

We'll walk you through each element of property management, breaking down the pros and cons of self-managing versus using an agent so you can make the best decision for your situation.

What Does Self-Managing Actually Involve?

Managing your own property means taking full control. That sounds empowering, but it comes with serious responsibilities.

Self-Management Tasks:

- Advertising your property
- Screening and referencing tenants
- Handling tenancy agreements, deposits, and legal compliance
- Managing maintenance and emergency repairs
- Collecting rent and chasing arrears
- Serving notices and managing evictions
- Keeping up-to-date with local and national laws (failure to do so will result in large fines)



Compare self-management with using an agent...

Self-Management vs. Using an Agent

Task	Self-Managing	Using an Agent
Tenant Find	You advertise, vet, and reference tenants	Agent handles all
Legal Compliance	You're 100% liable for keeping up-to-date with legal changes and actioning them	Ultimately, as the landlord, you remain liable, but the agent will keep on top of things
Repairs	You source and coordinate and organise inspections	Agent manages tradespeople and inspections
Rent Collection	You chase payments	Agent automates it
Evictions	You handle notices and court	Agent initiates process

✓ Best for landlords who are hands-on, local and have the time to invest.

⚠ Risky if you're not confident on legal or tenant issues, or do not have the time to spend on keeping up with local and national changes; as well as managing your tenants.



What Letting Agents Actually Do

A good agent doesn't just advertise your property, they take the load off your shoulders.

Typical Agent Services:

- Marketing the property on leading portals (e.g. Rightmove, Zoopla)
- Vetting tenants and conducting viewings
- Drafting tenancy agreements and registering deposits with a government-approved scheme
- Ensuring legal compliance under the Renters (Reform) Act 2025 and other regulations
- Managing ongoing tenant relationships and property issues

Compare self-management with using an agent...

The Pros and Cons of Letting Agents

Pros	Cons
Handles time-consuming admin	Comes with fees (usually 8–15%)
Access to marketing channels and pre-vetted tenants	Not all agents offer the same service quality
Stays up to date on legal changes	Less personal control
Takes the lead on disputes or rent issues	May charge extra for certain services

✓ Great for busy or first-time landlords, particularly if you live further away from your properties or have a day job.

⚠ Do your research – some agents cut corners. You are much better off with a larger, more well-known agent.

The Time Cost of Self-Managing

Time is one of your most valuable resources. Self-managing takes more than you think.

Estimated Time Commitment:

Activity	Self-Managing	Agent-Managed
Advertising and Viewings	6–10 hrs	0 hrs
Compliance and Paperwork	3–5 hrs	0–1 hrs
Maintenance Calls	2–4 hrs/month	0–1 hrs
Rent Collection and Admin	2–3 hrs/month	0.5 hrs

✓ Self-managing ONLY works if you have time and patience.

⚠ But the hours add up – and come at inconvenient times.

The Financial Cost Comparison

Saving on fees doesn't always mean saving money.

Cost Breakdown:

Expense	Self-Managed	Agent-Managed
Monthly Costs	£0 (your time)	£80-£150 in fees
Legal Fine Risk	High	Low
Void Period Risk	Higher	Lower, due to marketing reach
Bad Tenant Risk	Higher	Lower, due to screening

✓ Agent fees are predictable – mistakes aren't. You can manage your budget a lot more easily with an agent.

⚠ Self-managing might seem cheaper, but it often isn't if you haven't invested the time and research into what you're doing.

Risk and Responsibility

With greater control comes greater liability.

Risk Comparison:

Risk Area	Self-Managing	Using an Agent
Legal Compliance	100% on you	Shared responsibility
Deposit Handling	You must use a government-approved scheme (TDS, DPS, MyDeposits)	Agent handles registration
Renters' Reform Act	You must stay updated on 2025 regulations – and beyond	Agent ensures compliance
Tenant Disputes	You manage alone	Agent represents you

✓ Agents reduce legal stress because they are always on top of what is happening with legal changes on a national level, as well as updates to local licensing laws.

⚠ Going solo requires constant awareness and risk tolerance. This is trickier if you live quite far away from your lets.



SELF-MANAGEMENT IS IDEAL FOR LANDLORDS WHO:

- Live near the property
- Are experienced with lettings
- Have spare time and legal knowledge
- Want to maximise profits on tight margins

WORKING WITH AN AGENT IS IDEAL FOR LANDLORDS WHO:

- Work full-time or live far away
- Are new to property letting
- Want peace of mind
- Are expanding their portfolio



✓ For most landlords, especially those valuing time, protection, and professionalism.

⚠ It's worth paying for a service that protects your investment.

Choosing the Right Agent

A good agent adds value, so don't settle for less. If you decide to move away from self-management or change agents, here's what you need to look out for.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Transparent fees
- Good local knowledge
- Strong reviews and references
- Membership with ARLA Propertymark or another recognised professional body



RED FLAGS:

- Hidden fees
- Lack of communication
- No compliance support

Making the Final Decision

Now you've seen both sides, it's time to make the choice that suits your situation.

Quick Decision Checklist:

- Do I have the time to manage this well?
- Am I confident in my legal knowledge?
- Would I rather invest a bit more to protect my peace of mind?

Still unsure? Let's talk. [Fill out a quick form](#) and we'll connect you with a trusted local agent for a free, no-pressure consultation.
