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MAXIMISING YOUR RENTAL INCOME AND EPC RATING

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As a landlord, you'll no doubt want to get the best return possible on your investment. Whether they're in need of a little tlc, could do with a bit more space or you just want to add to their appeal, there are many good reasons why you might want to reconfigure, renovate, make alterations and generally upgrade the rental properties you own.



THE BENEFITS OF UPGRADING

Your rental property represents a sizeable investment in terms of capital alone, so it's important to make sure you protect and enhance its value. And that means making sure you not only keep it in good condition, but also make the most of its potential.

In the short term, that will enable you to increase your rental income; properties maintained to a high standard are more in demand, making it easier for you to find tenants and keeping the time your property's empty to a minimum. A modern, well-cared-for property that makes best use of space also reflects favourably on you as a landlord, as it shows you care about its condition and the tenants you rent to.

And in the longer term, making improvements means you'll obtain a higher price if you're planning to sell the property in the future.



THE BEST WAYS TO ADD VALUE TO YOUR PROPERTY

Whatever type of property you have, there are various ways you can maximise its potential. The important thing is to make sure you pick the ones that add most value, or make the biggest difference for the smallest investment.



An extension or loft conversion – while the most expensive improvement on the list, additional habitable space will always increase a property's value, and allow you to increase your rental income – in an HMO, it can mean an extra tenant, for example.

Update the kitchen – a modern kitchen is a big selling point, especially in HMOs where it's shared. It doesn't mean starting from scratch either – if the shell of the kitchen is good, you can just update worktops, doors and appliances for a fraction of the cost.

Refresh the bathroom – again, a smart bathroom with a powerful shower is very desirable and can be achieved with new tiles, flooring, updated fixtures and lighting. It's particularly crucial in HMOs – unless every room has an en-suite, tenants will share the bathroom.

Replace flooring – a relatively simple job that instantly smartens up any space and gives it a whole new look and feel. Best to consider hardwood, laminates or tile flooring for durability.

Add storage space – tenants always look for extra storage space, so consider adding built-in shelves or cupboards as part of your upgrades.

Improve kerb appeal – first impressions do count, so low maintenance landscaping, good lighting and painting the front door can make a big difference.

A place to park – if you have space, providing off-road parking adds convenience and security for tenants with cars (as well as lower motor insurance premiums!), so they're willing to pay more.

A fresh coat of paint – simple as it sounds, new paint throughout the property will instantly make it feel cleaner, brighter and more inviting – and it's a very affordable improvement. Go for neutral colours for universal appeal.

Make it lighter and brighter – a light and airy feel makes any property more inviting. So look at upgrading lighting to modern LEDs, and better still add roof windows in any extension or loft room to allow natural light to flood in.

Make it more energy efficient – as well as appealing to eco-conscious tenants, making your property more sustainable means lower energy bills. There's a range of ways to do this which we'll come to later, depending on your budget.

NEW RULES ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Picking up on that last point, energy efficiency has become a crucial area for landlords to consider.

Every residential rental property has to have an EPC rating, currently a minimum of E. The last Conservative Government planned to increase this to a minimum C rating by 2028, but later scrapped the changes. Now though, the new Labour Government plans to reintroduce measures to increase the energy efficiency of rental properties, albeit with an extended deadline of 2030.

Precise details haven't been revealed yet, but landlords need to start planning now to lift their EPC ratings.



WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR RATING

As we mentioned earlier, there are several ways to make a property more energy efficient.

The simplest options are draught proofing and switching inefficient lights to modern LEDs – according to the Energy Saving Trust, the latter alone could cut energy bills by £65 a year.

Up to 25% of heat is lost through the roof, so making sure you have the right level of insulation here and in cavity walls will make a big difference – and there may well be grants available to help with the cost.

Updating your heating system can really improve your rating too. Replacing an old boiler with a more efficient condensing model is a good place to start, or to really future-proof your property look at renewable options such as air source heat pumps and solar panels to provide electricity. Again, there are various financial incentives available for improvements depending on the circumstances.

And don't forget about the windows. Make sure you check with your local planning office first if your property's in a conservation area or is a listed building, but if you can replace old windows with double or triple glazing it can make an enormous difference to energy bills, the level of comfort and of course, your EPC rating.



THE RIGHT WINDOWS FOR THE RIGHT UPGRADE

If you want to add roof windows to your upgrades – for a loft conversion or extension, for example – not only will your property benefit from more natural light and ventilation, you needn't worry about how they'll affect your EPC rating either.

Dakea has a range of options available depending on your project and budget.

For example, if you're adding to the living space with a top-quality extension in a high-end property, the [Ultima Energy PVC](#) range is ideal – its triple glazing means low energy bills and consistent, reliable warmth, while its Noise Block technology reduces noise (including rain) by 50%, for a more comfortable environment.

On the other hand, our mid-range [Better Energy PVC roof windows](#) offer triple glazing for thermal efficiency combined with the easy maintenance and better moisture protection of PVC. They're an ideal choice in areas with high humidity such as kitchens or bathrooms, especially in HMOs or student properties.

If you need more help and guidance on the right choice for your property, simply speak to the expert [Dakea team](#).



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KEY TAKE OUTS

Modern, well-maintained rental properties are more in-demand, so can increase your rental income.

Maximising a property's potential and making improvements add value.

An extension or loft conversion can mean an extra tenant in an HMO.

A smart bathroom is a desirable upgrade, especially where tenants share the bathroom.

Updating the kitchen is a big selling point, and can be as simple as new doors, worktops and appliances.

Other simple, inexpensive ways to upgrade include replacing flooring, adding storage space, improving kerb appeal through low maintenance landscaping, adding a parking space and even just a fresh coat of paint.

A light and energy efficient environment is also very appealing.

Every rental property has an EPC rating, which must be a minimum E. The Government plans to increase that to a minimum C rating by 2030.

Ways to improve a property's energy efficiency include draught proofing, switching to modern LED lights, topping up roof and cavity wall insulation, updating the heating system and replacing old windows with double or triple glazing.

If adding roof windows to any upgrades – such as an extension or loft conversion – always choose high-efficiency triple glazed options with easy maintenance.

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