

Bidding: No Rent Bidding

Landlord FAQ

Q: What exactly is banned here?

A: Every advertisement or written offer for a letting must state a specific proposed rent - a precise figure, not a range or "offers over". Once that figure is advertised, you cannot invite, encourage, or accept an offer to pay more than it. This applies to property portals, agency websites, and social media listings, though it doesn't apply to a physical "To Let" board.

Q: What if a tenant offers more than the advertised rent without being asked to?

A: You still can't accept it. The advertised figure acts as a hard cap - it isn't just about not soliciting higher offers; an unsolicited higher offer can't be accepted either.

Q: Can I still negotiate the rent downwards?

A: Yes. The ban only works one way - reducing the rent below the advertised price isn't rental bidding, and there's nothing stopping you agreeing a lower figure with an applicant.

Q: Can I ask for "best and final offers" if there's a lot of interest in a property?

A: No. Asking applicants to improve their offer or suggesting that a higher bid will be looked on favourably, counts as inviting or encouraging bidding, even if it's done informally in conversation rather than in writing.

Q: Does this affect how I price a property to begin with?

A: No - you're free to set the advertised rent at whatever figure you consider to reflect the market. The restriction only bites once that figure is published; from that point, it's the ceiling.

Q: What if I have several similar units and want to advertise a price range?

A: Each unit needs its own specific stated rent - you can't advertise a range or a "from £X" figure across multiple properties or rooms.

Q: What happens if I breach these rules?

A: Your local authority can impose a civil penalty of up to £7,000, based on the balance of probabilities rather than a higher standard of proof, so it's a relatively easy breach for a council to establish. Keep clear records of your advertising and any offers received, so you can show the process was handled correctly if it's ever queried.

Q: What should I do to stay compliant?

A: Make sure every listing states a single, specific rent figure, and make sure anyone handling viewings and applications on your behalf - including any letting agent - understands they can't invite, encourage, or accept offers above that figure. Speak to your local Winkworth office if you're marketing a property in a high-demand area and are unsure how to handle strong interest.