

Q5. Do you have any other comments on topics not covered by the specific questions above? If so, the CMA requests that respondents structure their responses to separate out their views in relation to each of the Draft Guidance's chapters.

After speaking with other agencies, we have serious concerns about the proposal requiring agencies to disclose the full contact details of property owners when advertising properties.

This would allow guests to contact owners directly, which many owners prefer to avoid. Many property owners choose to rent through agencies to avoid direct communication with guests. For some, security is a major concern, as being accessible to unhappy guests could pose risks. When a property is managed by an agency, the agency handles any disputes, providing peace of mind to the owner.

Some owners also rely on agencies to vet guests before confirming bookings, particularly to avoid issues with large group bookings such as hen or stag parties. Allowing guests to directly contact owners would eliminate this important safeguard.

Providing contact details for owners would enable guests to bypass the agency and arrange bookings directly, undermining the agency's investment in advertising and operational systems, which would go unrewarded.

Additionally, disclosing owner email addresses could lead to increased spam and heighten the risk of scammers impersonating owners to fraudulently rent out properties.

If property addresses are made visible on websites, it would expose the location and availability of the property, making it vulnerable to break-ins and theft. This heightened risk would likely deter owners from listing their properties with agencies under such conditions.