

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so, the CMA requests that respondents structure their responses to separate out their views in relation to each of the Draft Guidance's chapters.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 are extremely concerned about the proposal that agencies should be required to disclose the full contact details of property owners when advertising their properties.

Such a practice would allow guests to contact owners directly, which undermines the purpose for many owners who choose to let their properties through agencies to avoid direct communication with guests. For some owners, there are significant concerns regarding security, as direct contact from guests could arise, particularly if there are issues during their stay. The involvement of the agency in handling disputes is a key reason many owners opt for agency management.

Additionally, some owners rely on agencies to vet guests and ensure their suitability before booking, which is particularly important for group bookings, such as hen and stag parties. Providing guests with direct access to property owners would remove this safeguard and increase the potential for issues arising.

Revealing owners' contact details would also allow guests to bypass agencies when arranging bookings, undermining the substantial investment agencies make in advertising and operational infrastructure. If owners' email addresses are made publicly available, this could lead to an increase in spam and expose them to the risk of scammers impersonating property owners to defraud guests.

Furthermore, if property addresses are publicly displayed on agency websites, it would provide anyone with the information to identify when a property is vacant, heightening the risk of break-ins and theft. As a result, many property owners may be unwilling to list their properties with agencies that require such disclosures.