

**The Guild of Property Professionals grows at pace during lockdown**

During the lockdown period 27 estate agencies have joined as Members of The Guild of Property Professionals, a remarkable number considering the property market was placed on hold.

Iain McKenzie, CEO of The Guild of Property Professionals, says that given the unprecedented situation we have all found ourselves in, it is encouraging to see how many estate and lettings agents have seen The Guild as an essential service throughout the lock down. “During a time when agents were looking for virtual tools and to streamline their businesses and cut costs, we saw many looking to join, recognising that The Guild would be able help them save money, remain compliant and help them to become stronger on the other side,” he says.

We interviewed a few of the newest Members to see why they decided to join the network during one of the most challenging times that the industry has faced in recent years.

Managing Director of Mr Green Homes in Southbourne, Simon Ward, says: “The lockdown was a short-term situation and we always try and look a little longer term on things.  We had considered joining several times over the years for various reasons, such as the magazines they produce and the offer of trialling the service was too good to turn down.  The help given by The Guild throughout the COVID-19 lockdown was great, so having that support and guidance was amazing.”

When asked what tools and services he has found most useful since joining, Ward says: “We’re still very early days, but the compliance and training are great tools to have along with a few of the other tools that we currently pay other providers for.”

According to Alex Sevinc, Branch Director of Filey Properties in Southgate, his office had been in discussion about joining The Guild prior to lock down, however, it was during lock down that they finally had the time to finalise things. “For some time, we had been looking a solution for compliance and for training our staff, The Guild provided the answer to both of those aspects under one roof,” says Sevinc. “The compliance guides and video help has been particularly useful to us as a business since we joined, and we are currently implementing changes to our processes based on the guidance we have received from Paul Offley, the Compliance Officer.”

Sevinc notes that being a part of The Guild community and network has also been helpful. “The Facebook group and Guild Live at One sessions have been very informative and have highlighted trending topics and aspects we need to be aware of,” he adds.

Director at Heather Lay in Penryn, Natalie Dunstan, agrees saying: “The daily Live at One sessions have been brilliant.” Talking about why they joined, she adds: “Our sales office has been a Member of The Guild for quite some time now, and we have always found it to be beneficial to our estate agency business but we felt like The Guild really upped their game when we went into lockdown with regards to updates, advice and tools to help us through such unprecedented times.  When we saw what was on offer, we felt that the time was right for our lettings office to come on board. We had been talking about it for a while, to bring some continuity to our marketing and brand but mostly to take advantage of the tools that The Guild have on offer.”

Speaking about the support and network community, Dunstan comments that it’s nice to have the backing of the largest network of independent agents and to hear from others in the industry about what they have been experiencing and how to overcome problems. “Equally, we feel like we have had good advice on a one to one basis, and from those agents in our area,” she says. “With regard to tools and services, the virtual viewing tool has been good. The turnaround on this was really good with The Guild obviously working very hard to get it up and running.  We have also got a lot of instructions from the iValuate [virtual valuation] service during lockdown.”

McKenzie says that The Guild of Property Professionals will continue to innovate and find ways to help Members save money, remain compliant and strengthen their brands. “The next three months will be a crucial time for agents as things settle into the new normal. We will continue to support our network provide and guidance where possible,” he concludes.

For more information about becoming a Member of The Guild of Property Professionals visit our [website](https://www.guildproperty.co.uk/join-the-guild).

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**Editors’ Notes**

**The Guild of Property Professionals (The Guild)**

The Guild is a network of 800 of the best independent estate agents from across the UK. The Guild is a sign of professional excellence that agents can use to differentiate themselves from their competitors and assure clients that they will act with knowledge and integrity to achieve results, the three core values of The Guild. To allow agents to perform a superior service, The Guild offers marketing, business and technology services to its members.