

# Ham&High Property

At your service: meet the private concierges who make luxury renting easy

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*London's private concierge services are primed to help HNWIs find their feet when relocating to north London*

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Renting nightmares? Not for north London's super rich tenants. Meet the private concierges who will be your ultimate fixer when it comes to renting prime property - for a fee.



*With a private concierge service helping you relocate you won't see so much as a hint of a cardboard box*

For London's itinerant renting population moving home regularly has become a fact of life. Rising rents, nightmare landlords or changes in living situations frequently herald a running of the gauntlet with tenancy agreements and tortuous days spent wrestling with cardboard boxes.

For High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) renting in north London the moving house headaches are still there, only they can afford to outsource them.

Private Concierge services more commonly known for their ability to bag you a seat at one of the capital's hottest new restaurant openings or book you a first class ticket to New York on a previously full flight also offer relocation services for wealthy clients moving in to Hampstead and Highgate.

The reasons HNWI's relocate to the area are just as varied as the rest of ours, although perhaps more glamorous. Families relocating for high profile jobs flock to north London for its schools, whilst those keen to try a slice of the Hampstead lifestyle might opt to rent for a year or two before taking the purchasing plunge.



*Bishops Avenue is proving a little too busy for discerning HNWI's tastes*

“At a moment there’s an increase in footballers looking for rental properties in the area until the transfer window closes at the end of the month,” explains Arron Bart, head of lettings for Hampstead and Primrose Hill Savills.

He won’t of course name any names. “If I told you I’d have to kill you!” he laughs.

“We’re seeing more and more use of concierge services, particularly when clients are moving from abroad. There are a lot of great ones on offer,” says Bart.

Said footballers frequently employ the services of private concierge services to help shortlist properties before they sign on the dotted line. Homes with pools are always top of the list, always in modern houses and with a sleek kitchen and slick bathrooms.

Timmy Coles-Liddle is the CEO of private concierge club NINE, who specialise in providing tailored travel and lifestyle solutions for their members.

“Our international clients often have fully staffed homes but look to us to ensure the house runs like clockwork,” says Coles-Liddle. “Whether instructing and negotiating rates with an interior designer or gardener, overseeing the installation of an alarm system or ensuring there is a freshly prepared chef’s meal ready for the clients’ arrival, we’ve got it covered.”

Once safely installed in the luxury home the staff at NINE are on hand to fulfil every wish or whim, no matter how outrageous or difficult to obtain. Restaurant reservations, sold out tickets and gift buying are all par for the course for a high end concierge.

“Our expertise and knowledge extends to introducing philanthropic consultants and sourcing private jets,” explains Coles-Liddle.

“Because we know each client and their family inside out, we’re also fully equipped to handle their logistical travel and lifestyle demands, such as carefully planning a week at Madagascar’s new private island Miavana to observe the foundation being set up to preserve the lemurs, or a long weekend at the revamped The Ritz in Paris.”

Luxury travels aside, moving house across countries and sometimes continents is not without its significant stresses and strains. This is where Katie Shapley comes in.

Shapley founded The Organisers 18 years ago, combining her experience working front of house at luxury hotels and organising events in emerging markets for brands such as *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

“I was taught to deliver seven star service at the knee of masters,” she says. Now she holds her clients’ hands through the arduous process of moving their lives from locations as far flung as Sao Paolo, Brazil, to Hampstead.

Finding the perfect property is paramount. Shapley’s international clients tend to prefer more modern properties to the period properties that dyed in the wool Londoners tend to hanker after.

“Our clients tend to find older properties more challenging,” says Shapley, who always adapts her search to her clients’ tastes. “For example, if I had a German client coming in I wouldn’t dream of giving them sash windows.”

The new developments in Highgate are particularly popular, with luxury facilities understood to come as standard. Wine fridges are an absolute must, as are swimming pools and gyms.

Amit Soni, associate director at Glentree is au fait with the expectations of international prime renters. “Their key requirements are modern, large and brand new – preferably never lived in,” he says.

“If they want to furnish the place they’ll have their interior designers come in. We’ve had families who’ve spent two months just designing their furniture.”

Favourite locations for rental properties include all the usual avenues, including Ingram Avenue, Sheldon Avenue and of course Bishops Avenue, although the latter has become a victim of its own success. “People are finding it very busy over there. There’s a lot of development and trucks coming in and out,” explains Soni.

Interestingly a location close to a tube station is always important. Not that the HNWIs will be taking public transport themselves – they have drivers for that – but to make life a little more convenient for their staff.

Like all true Londoners, the one things these HNWIs often find themselves having to compromise on is space. “Often they’re quite taken aback by the cost per sq ft,” says Shapley.

Bypassing landlords from hell also falls under Shapley’s remit. “We always recommend agent managed properties over individual landlords,” explains Shapley. If your boiler is broken The Organisers are there to ensure your handyman will be of the highest calibre. “We’re really fussy,” says Shapley, “we vet all our services.”

“We look after people’s to-do lists,” she says. “It’s not just the home, it’s the whole package. The school places, the nanny, right down to ordering the name tapes for the school uniforms.”

Excellent schools are one of the biggest draws for expat families renting a home in Highgate.

Even the Russians and Chinese who prefer the glitzy attractions of Chelsea and Mayfair move north when it comes to putting their children through school.

But the British system can be tricky to navigate in its mother tongue, leaving foreign nationals who want to get their children places in a tight spot. The Organisers has an entire education department dedicated to solving these dilemmas and Shapley prides herself on their ability to obtain places at schools, sometimes for multiple children in the same family and often at only a few months' notice.

"We've never failed to get a child a place," she says. "We have good contacts at the local schools and generally we can get someone to squeeze us in somewhere."

For families renting with young children recreating their lifestyle from back home is an important part of helping clients to settle in quickly.

The Organisers hand picked removal teams photograph the family home in situ, carefully recording everything down to the arrangement of objects on a shelf before cataloguing and painstakingly packing them away to be shipped over to the UK. Upon arrival everything is unpacked and repositioned exactly the way it was, allowing for a seamless transition.

"We ensure that when the family moves in, their beds are made, food is in the fridge and there's not a cardboard box in sight," says Shapley. The attention to detail is razor sharp. Everything from colour coding the shirts in the wardrobe to ensuring the chef has made their favourite meal in preparation is seen to by Shapley's team.

"Really they want what everybody wants. Things that work, a clear path to fix them if they don't, and a timely response."

Retaining a private fixer and problem-solver is as expensive as one might imagine. Prices for The Organisers start at £95 an hour plus VAT, and an entire relocation package with all the trimmings can easily run into the tens of thousands.

NINE is accessible on a membership basis that can be individually tailored based on a client's needs, but prices start at £6,000 for an individual member

and range up to £55,000 for a family looking to make unlimited hourly requests.

Of course, with super prime properties often going to international occupants, the questions raised by the now ever-present spectre of Brexit are playing on letting agents' minds.

“There's been a noticeable slowdown in the number of people renting properties upwards of £5,000,” notes Bart. Post-referendum jitters have seen the ultra prime rental market, where properties can cost between £5,000 to £10,000 a week, cool significantly. Meanwhile the market has become saturated with accidental landlords who are forced to rent their homes due to a dearth of buyers.

Issues of demand and supply aside, however, Shapley is confident that international clients in need of rented accommodation of a super prime standard will always look to London – and its private concierge services of course.

“It's just a different opportunity [post referendum]” she says. “We're such a melting pot. I've always been terribly proud of how we welcome internationalism with open arms.

“We've always been a welcoming nation and long may that continue.”

However large your bank account may be, when it comes to moving into a rented house being made to feel at home is the ultimate luxury.