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# Welcome to the 18th Edition of

11 2011

the London Landlord 



## Inside this issue



- ▶ *Forward by Dave Princep*
- ▶ *The Olympics great opportunity or Curate's egg?*
- ▶ *Can Landlords act in person in repossession claims?– Tessa-Solicitor*
- ▶ *Survivors of domestic violence living within the Private Rented Sector*
- ▶ *Agent who stole tenants deposits deserved jail*
- ▶ *Cannabis Farming Warning*
- ▶ *Squatters' in Your Home*
- ▶ *Confessions of a landlord*

## Welcome to the latest edition of the London Landlord

We are pleased to announce that the scheme will be having an award ceremony on **1 March 2012 at the Thistle Hotel at Marble Arch London W1H 7EH** to celebrate the scheme's successes and to reward excellence amongst all members. Nominations are now open and more information and details can be found in this newsletter.

The private rented sector has much to celebrate and nationally the increased demand for rented accommodation has seen rents rise and void periods fall. An article from Zoopla.co.uk however shows that during last year the price of a house in Britain dropped an average of £23 per day

This is almost exactly the same amount as the average PRS rent making for an interesting economic situation. Homeowners would have been better off renting (when interest from their capital is taken into account), but for landlords the rental income on average balanced capital losses. The position in London and the South East is slightly better as house prices actually rose by 1.1% and rental income is higher, but landlords must keep an eye on their business plan regularly in these "interesting times".

The Energy Act has just received Royal Assent and the Government is still on track to introduce the Green Deal in October 2012. The Department of Energy and Climate Change are soon to undertake a major consultation exercise on its implementation and you may wish to take part. Check [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk) for details

One thing that is certain is that the cheap deals funded by the energy providers for cavity wall and loft insulation will end next year. The subsidy will then go towards more expensive works such as solid wall insulation. If you have any properties which have not had the loft or cavity insulated you have a few months to get the subsidized cheap deals otherwise if you wait the price will rise significantly. Remember the Energy Act will force landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their premises, especially the lowest performing so you may wish to act now and save money at the same time. For details of what incentives are available see [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

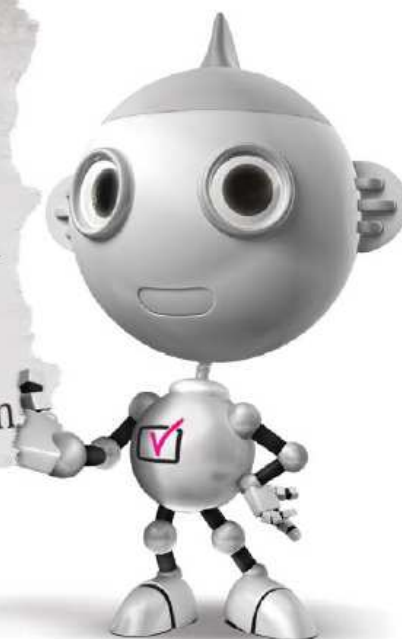
**Dave Princep**

**Chair of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme**

# Does your property stand out for the wrong reasons?

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## The Future of Housing in the Private Rented Sector Conference and Award Ceremony

The LLAS has been operating since August 2004 and since its launch has proved to be one of the most popular and successful schemes in the Country with **10000 accredited landlords and agents**. The UKLAP is proud to announce that LLAS will be hosting the **Future of Housing in the Private Rented Sector Conference & Award Ceremony** to celebrate the achievements of LLAS as well as acknowledge the work of the private rented sector professionals.

We are delighted to bring you details of the UKLAP “ The Future of Housing in the Private Rented Sector Conference & Award Ceremony which will take place at the prestigious

**Thistle Hotel Marble, Arch Bryanston Street, London W1H 7EH**

**On Thursday 1 March 2012, from 6pm**

The conference will gather some of the industry professionals and will focus on inspiring, informing and awarding those landlords and agents who have over the years sought to provide some of the Capitals’ vital housing stock. The event will consist of talks on *Green Deal*, the effects of the economy on the private rented sector, Future of Regulation in the private rented sector, Focus on Best Practice on building stronger bridges between local authorities and private rented sector landlords & Legacy of the Olympics. The event will also be used as a platform to launch the UKLAP Green Landlords Scheme (GLS) following a successful pilot completed in March 2011.

The best of the Private Rented Sector will be celebrated at a glamorous *Awards Ceremony, which includes a champagne reception and 3 course dinner*. These awards recognise excellence across eleven categories and also present a prize for the most outstanding achievement in the private rented housing sector as a whole. The Awards are free to enter and entries are invited from landlords, letting agents, local government, Universities and landlord services sector. Entrants will be judged by an independent panel of industry experts. **The deadline for all nominations entry is Monday 30 January 2012** and you can submit your entry at [www.llas-conference.org.uk](http://www.llas-conference.org.uk)

We hope to have yearly events of this kind in the future and we hope that you will give us your support in organizing our 1<sup>st</sup> event by joining us as sponsors or purchasing tickets for the event. I have attached sponsorship commitment along with this Newsletter with details of the different sponsorship packages that you can choose from and hope the attached information clearly explains to you the kind of participation we want in this event.

For further info, please email us at [LLAS@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LLAS@camden.gov.uk) or tel: 020 7974 1970 or 020 7974 6975

### Advertising opportunity With the LLAS

Landlords and Agents can advertise their services with the LLAS at discounted rates in the LLAS Newsletter and on the LLAS website.

For further information, please email [LLAS@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LLAS@camden.gov.uk)

Visit the website: [www.londonlandlords.org.uk](http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk)

or Telephone: 020 7974 1970/020 7974 6975

## The Olympics. Great Opportunity or Curate's Egg?

For years now we have been assailed with tales of what a great opportunity the Olympics are going to be for London, prestige, tourism, increased jobs, earning opportunities and for us in the housing world nobody can have failed to have missed the growing and glowing reports of what high rents will be available for the month of the event and a couple of weeks either side.

The way things seem to be going is causing as much concern as the white elephant of a stadium itself.

So far there are a range of websites, agents and intermediaries gearing up for the blip in the rental market that will allegedly be thrown up by the games predicting a rare gold rush for landlords. Most hotels are already fully booked for the event as a variety of Olympic officials, athletes and support staff cram into the capital and some agents are predicting up to £3,000 a week rent for 1 or 2 bed flats in commuting distance of Stratford. But is it going to be as plain sailing as this?

Chelsea based estate agents Henry & James reported no significant enquiries on this front, hoping it will improve nearer the time and suggested that a landlord might expect maybe around £150 per week extra. Hardly a gold rush.

Holiday renting agency HomeAway however reported a massive surge in interest and is predicting property prices @ £4,500 a week. I can understand people not being quite sure how things will work but with figures as widely varied as £150 - £4,500 you have to worry how it is going to pan out.

The internet is awash with a variety of guides on how to rent out for the games, advising that landlords be aware of the various tax, mortgage and legal implications of doing so.

Westminster council have thrown a serious spanner in the works too with their announcement that they will be searching out properties in their borough that have been let out in this way and seeking to levy fines of £20,000 for offenders. Westminster bans short lets of less than 90 days without planning permission. The council told the BBC that it is important to preserve the longer term rental market for its residents. I agree that long term lets need preserving but I also think that Westminster looking to fill its coffers has more to do with it than their tenants rights.

I phoned my council and their view was that we would take a common sense approach to it. Which effectively means no prosecutions. So things will be a mixed bag. Not least of which is going to be an open season for fraudsters and scam artists.

Currently the most common type of property scam I encounter as Tenancy Relations Officer is the person who rents out a property themselves, advertises it, pretending to be the landlord and takes rent in advance and deposits off of several prospective tenants who all turn up on the same day to move in. The tenant/landlord is nowhere to be seen at this point. At a recent meeting of the Woolwich county court user's group the judges told us that they are seeing more of these cases lately, and the Olympics are still 10 months away.

The problem with that kind of property scam is it is so easy to pull off. People with credible but fake documentation who pass the referencing checks. Enticing too, as they may offer you that £4,500 a week up front, knowing that they only have to pass it on to 2 tenants to double their money, most likely it will be 10.

For people travelling from abroad how are they going to know what goes on in the London rental market if the website looks all above board?

Various online property websites (mentioning no names but Koala's live on them) carry adverts for properties for people travelling from abroad that don't match up. Photos of swish flats with Bayswater addresses and rents of £1,000 a month don't add up but how would you know if you were coming here from Latvia or Cairo?



And what about the other side of the coin?

Tenants looking to move into new properties around the time of the Olympics, whose previous tenancy ran out and the landlord wanted to make a few quid extra will be hard pressed to even find a place during that month.

ARLA recently reported that there is a shortage of properties in the PRS anyway as demand is currently far outstripping supply. The luckless tenants with children will have to go to the homelessness unit. I know of no London authority that is prepared for the possible fallout from this.

So it isn't going to be as smooth as some estate agents are predicting.

If you are planning to take advantage of what might or might not be a chance to earn more money be very, very careful before you sign on the dotted line, or to be more precise before you allow someone else to sign on the dotted line. Where there is a quick money to be made there will be scammers out to take advantage of you.

Trust me, ID cards for anywhere in the world can be bought online for £15, you need special optical equipment to see if they are genuine and passports can be faked with no more than a microwave and a freezer.

Maybe it is my job that makes me a bit cynical but I think, once over, the Olympic rental gold rush will be more memorable for its tears than its bonuses.

By Ben Reeve-Lewisham Council



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## **Solicitor Tessa Shepperson answers landlords FAQ, This issue: Can landlords act in person in repossession claims?**

If tenants are failing to pay rent, generally you will need to bring proceedings for possession to stop the arrears increasing further and put a paying tenant into the property. Often landlords are short of cash at this time (after all they are not getting rent!) so would prefer to avoid the costs of using solicitors for the eviction work.

### **Can this be done?**

The answer is yes, but you need to be careful. Here are some tips to help you.

### **You need to have a mandatory ground for possession**

Landlords can only evict if they have a legal reason or 'ground'. These can be mandatory or discretionary.

Discretionary grounds are bad news, as any defence put forward by the tenants will have to be taken seriously by the Judge. This could mean a long drawn out case with no guarantee of success at the end of it. However if your ground for possession is a mandatory ground, provided you can prove it at court, the Judge has no alternative - he MUST make your order for possession.

The two main mandatory grounds used are section 21 and the serious rent arrears ground.

### **Your notice must be right**

It is sometimes possible to get an order for possession without a notice or where the notice has problems, but don't count on it!

In particular, defective section 21 grounds are likely to prove fatal. Many a landlord has been left confused by having his claim for possession rejected by the court because he put the wrong date on his notice.

It is best to use a professionally drafted notice and not cobble one together yourself. This is particularly important for the rent arrears notice (or any section 8 notice) as the form of this is prescribed by statute and it will be invalid if you leave bits out.

However even though section 21 notices are not prescribed, it is most unwise to use anything other than a professionally drafted form. In particular, just sending a letter asking the tenant to leave will have no legal effect whatsoever, so far as eviction rights are concerned.

### **If you are not experienced in court work (or even if you are) do some research first?**

Many landlords have brought successful eviction claims. Many more have been infuriated to have their claim refused for what seem like petty and ridiculous reasons. However the courts are very strict with possession claims. Judges take the view that if they are to deprive someone of their home (a very serious matter) the landlord MUST get his paperwork right.

If you do not know what you are doing it is all too easy to make a mistake. Once this happens it can take a long time to get a case back on track and often it is better to withdraw the claim and start again. This can delay things by several months - not a good idea if your tenant is not paying rent!

If you want to 'do it yourself' you may be interested in my repossession kits. There are two, one for the accelerated procedure and one for bringing a claim for possession based on rent arrears. They are available free of charge to annual members of my Landlord Law service.

### **If you decide to use solicitors, choose a specialist firm**

Many landlords decide, reluctantly, that it might be better to get a solicitor to act, or simply don't have the time to deal with things themselves. However be careful which solicitors you use.

Residential landlord and tenant law is a bit of a specialist area. Asking the solicitor who did your conveyance or divorce is not a good idea. This is not work that they will be familiar with, and there may be no-one in their firm who is.

However there are many excellent firms offering a reasonable price service. One good sign will be that they offer a fixed fee - in fact you should be suspicious of anyone who does not. Will they be charging you for their time in looking up how to do it?

A good place to find a suitable firm is the Landlord Zone website. Another good place is your local Landlords Association, who will know which solicitors in your area is good value for this work. Or you can just use the Landlord Law service!

### **Don't even consider trying to evict without going to court**

Evicting a tenant without a court order is both a criminal offence and a civil wrong. This means that you can be prosecuted by your Local Authority if the tenant complains about your action to them.

Having a housing related criminal offence on your record can make life difficult for you as a landlord, particularly if any of your properties are HMOs needing a license.

Your tenants can also bring a claim against you for an injunction to let them back and for financial compensation. There have been cases where tenants have been awarded substantial sums where landlords have evicted them and destroyed their possessions.

So always do things by the book and follow the legal procedures. Then you will be safe.

© Tessa Shepperson 2011

Tessa Shepperson is a solicitor and author, and runs the popular Landlord Law site at [www.landlordlaw.co.uk](http://www.landlordlaw.co.uk). She also blogs at [www.landlordlawblog.co.uk](http://www.landlordlawblog.co.uk).



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*Yvette Newbury, landlord: "Your website gives me the courage to do things by myself"*



## Digital TV switchover

### What is digital changeover?

Between 2008 and 2012 the current analogue television signal will be changed, region by region, to a digital signal. The changeover in London is scheduled for early 2012. After the changeover, unless the television is adjusted to receive a digital signal it will not be able to receive television signal at all.

### Who is responsible for adjusting television sets?

If you, the landlord, are providing a television as part of the tenancy then you will be responsible for ensuring that it can pick up a digital signal after the switchover.

Tenants are responsible for upgrading their own personal TVs and recording equipment. However, it is worth finding out when the switchover is happening in your area so you can keep your tenant informed of the change (and remind them that it is their responsibility to adjust their TV).

The tenancy agreement should indicate whether the landlord or tenant is responsible for paying the TV licence and any subscriptions to cable or satellite TV. The inventory should include the make, model and serial number of any TV sets that are provided.

Method of receiving signal	Equipment required
Through an aerial	Digital set top box or a new television with built in digital adapter. Some aerials may need to be replaced. Most aerials will be able to get digital channels. If, however, signal strength is poor or the aerial is corroded or damaged you may need to replace it. You will be able to tell that you need to replace it if your set-top box does not work. Alternatively a qualified engineer can test your aerial.
Through a satellite dish	Satellite dish and receiver provided by satellite broadcaster.
Through a cable	A connection to a cable system and indoor decoder box provided by the cable company.

### Where to go for more information?

The government has given the task of managing the switchover to a not-for-profit body called Digital UK. Call 0845 6 505050 or visit [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)

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## The Future of Housing in the Private Rented Sector Conference and Award Ceremony

champagne reception plus 3 course dinner.

Nominations for the awards are now open  
**Thursday 1 March 2012 -Thistle Hotel at Marble Arch London W1H 7EH from 6pm. For more info**  
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Visit the website: [www.londonlandlords.org.uk](http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk)

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## Tenant Accreditation

Most tenants in the private sector are happy with their rental - more than in social housing, according to the English Housing Condition report. So the problem lies with a minority. And the evidence from licensing HMOs has shown that however much regulation is applied it will be the compliant majority who pay the cost, while those who seek to avoid regulation will continue to drag down the reputation of the majority.

The answer lies with empowering and educating tenants to know what they are renting. They take more trouble buying a car than they do checking the quality of a property or landlords' credentials. Finding a home to rent is about more than location, beds, pay the rent and move in. If tenants knew about landlord accreditation schemes, deposits, ASTs, gas and electrical certificates, furniture safety, ventilation and condensation, HHSRS and all the rest of the regulations, good landlords would have good tenants queuing up.

The UK Landlord Accreditation Partnership (UKLAP) is therefore taking the lead to educate tenants. We are happy to announce that we will be piloting a **Tenant Accreditation Scheme (TAS) in November 2011**, with a view to offering the tenant training in both their rights and responsibilities as tenants. This training is designed to help dispel some of the myths and common assumptions that are often quoted by Tenants as the reason that the Landlord Tenant relationship has failed or have led to the involvement of third parties, be that from the Local Authority or an Advice Agency.

The Tenant would become Accredited through a separate body to the UKLAP but the names of the accredited Tenant will appear on the UKLAP webpage, allowing accredited members and the general public to check. The intention is for this accreditation to last for up to two years renewable. The tenant will be required to pay a fee to cover administrative costs associated with their accreditation.

It is hoped that, over time, this project can stand shoulder to shoulder with the UKLAP and partners and offer a bridge between Landlords and Tenant groups. The concept of a Tenant Accreditation Scheme is not a new one and striking the right balance between rights and responsibilities will be necessary.

In the past there have been those that may have felt that the old saying of 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' applies in terms of offering Training to Tenants however, from the experience of members to date, 'a little ignorance is a far more costly thing' applies, especially in the current economic climate. As ever the views of members, be they Landlords, Local Authorities, Managing Agents or Associations are welcome and encouraged.

## London Borough of Newham Proposes Licensing Private Rented Properties

Newham Council has started formal consultation regarding the introduction of a scheme to license private rented properties. Properties owned by landlords who do not operate in a professional way and fail to comply with the law are often associated with issues relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB), extremely poor and dangerous housing conditions and abuse of planning regulations.

If Newham introduce this trail blazing scheme, landlords will need to demonstrate that they comply with the council's licensing conditions and that their rental property conforms to legal requirements and it is not overcrowded. Landlords will also be required to formalise a legal tenancy agreement with their tenants that will cover deposit protection and anti-social behaviour, amongst other things.

The proposals are backed by national housing charity Shelter which has urged other councils to follow Newham's lead.

Cllr Andrew Baikie, executive member for housing at Newham Council said: "Our residents deserve good housing conditions. We have already piloted a similar initiative on a small scale in the borough's Little Ilford Neighbourhood Improvement Zone (NIZ), which has shown that our approach to tackling this issue works. By licensing private accommodation we can raise the standards of housing across the borough." Details of the proposal and the consultation questionnaire are at [www.ors.org.uk/survey/newham](http://www.ors.org.uk/survey/newham)

## Single Tenants -Changes Brought Forward

Landlords who accommodate single tenants aged up to 35 on housing benefit should be aware of a change that kicks in next January. From then, the tenants will only be able to claim enough for a room in a shared house, and will no longer be able to claim for their own self-contained accommodation. The change of age limit from 25 to 35 had already been announced, but it had been due to take effect from April 2012.

But welfare reform minister Lord Freud has now announced that the change is being brought forward to January. The Government says this will mean that some 88,000 people aged 25 to 34 will now have to look for shared accommodation, expected to be almost entirely in the private rented sector.

According to the Residential Landlords Association, this is likely to be a gross under-estimate given that, according to the latest English Housing Survey, there are some 1.16 million tenants in that age group.

The RLA's policy director, Richard Jones, said:

"This move comes at a time when because of a power granted to them by the Government; many councils are restricting the amount of shared accommodation available, particularly in our large cities where most young people want or need to live."

Over 25 local authorities are so far either considering or have implemented planning powers to prevent single-household properties being changed into small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Jones said: "We find it illogical that whilst the Government increases the number of people who will be forced into shared housing, councils across the country are looking to use new planning powers to restrict its availability, resulting in many young people struggling to find somewhere to live."

The Government is simply failing to practice joined-up thinking.

"We therefore call on the Government to suspend the planning powers and remove restrictions on creating the increase in shared accommodation that is going to be required." For more info please visit [www.ria.org.uk](http://www.ria.org.uk)



## Property licensing - what do you think?

Whether you are a private tenant or landlord, or a Newham resident or business we want your views on Newham Council's proposals to license private rented properties.

The proposed scheme aims to reduce anti-social behaviour in properties owned by landlords who do not operate in a professional way and fail to comply with the law.

**We need to hear from you.**  
You can view details of this consultation, which runs until 4 December 2011, and respond at [www.ors.org.uk/survey/newham](http://www.ors.org.uk/survey/newham)



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## Survivors of Domestic Violence living within the Private Rented Sector

The government definition of domestic violence as “ Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality” This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called ‘ honour based violence’ , female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM).

Domestic violence cuts across all levels of society regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation and accounts for one quarter of all violent crime. However research indicates that domestic violence ( Intimate Partner Violence as it's sometimes referred to ) is a gender crime: on average just over 90% of victims are woman and just over 90% perpetrators are men. Woman are much more likely than men to experience multiple incidents of violence ( 89% of those suffering 4 or more incidents are woman) and on average two woman a week are killed in the UK by a partner ( 76% of domestic violence murders in London occurred after the victim ended the relationship )

At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence and national data indicates that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of children subject to child protection conferences live in households where domestic violence occurs ( Department of Health 2002). About half of the children in such families have themselves been badly hit or beaten (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2004 )

In Greater London, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) attended around 300 domestic violence incidents every 24 hours. The total cost of domestic violence to services (Criminal Justice System, Health, Social Services, Housing, Civil Legal) amounts to £3.1 billion, while the loss to the economy is £2.7 billion. This amounts to over £5.7 billion a year ( Walby, Women & Equality Unit 2004 ). The single most quoted reason for becoming homeless is domestic violence ( Shelter 2002 )

The number of victims and survivors of domestic violence who are living within the private rented sector is on the increase. So, what can be done to make victims and survivors of domestic violence feel safe and secure in their own homes? Sanctuary Schemes are a victim centred initiative offering an innovative approach to homeless prevention. Sanctuary Schemes are designed to enable victims of domestic violence and abuse to remain in their own accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. Each Sanctuary Scheme that operates throughout the 32

London Boroughs is tailored to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the individuals involved. However, the security recommendations are made by the local police crime prevention design advisors after an inspection of the property is made. Sanctuary works are normally funded through local authority and/or police / crime and disorder partnership funding. Because of the nature of the works being specified, landlord's consent is required before the works can commence. Due to the nature of this offence and the social stigma involved, victims will have been suffering for some time before a Sanctuary referral is made.

Domestic violence victims are very reluctant to engage with landlords for fear of affecting their tenancy agreements. Landlords are requested to treat Domestic Violence victims sympathetically and if approached to give consent for Sanctuary works. Landlords should be aware that all security works will comply with current fire safety and means-of-escape fire regulations. By its very nature Sanctuary is meant to provide protection for vulnerable victims at immediate risk of violence, so the sooner that Landlord consent is granted, the quicker that target-hardening can be carried out.

**David Cunningham**  
**Burglary Reduction Project Manager**  
**RBKC Community Safety Team**  
**Oct. 2011**

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## West Drayton

15-17 High Street  
West Drayton UB7 7QG  
Tel: 01895 456 500

## Slough

256 High Street  
Slough SL1 1JU  
Tel: 01753 511 113

## Staines

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Staines TW18 4LG  
Tel: 01784 464 246

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\* Full terms and conditions apply, available on request



CL-LLN-10/11

## Agent who stole tenants deposits deserved jail

A letting agent who helped himself to tenants' deposits has escaped prison, to much criticism.

Worcester News reports the case of local estate agent owner Brandon Weston, and his accountant Chris Williams, who were found guilty of a fraud which saw Mr. Weston remove thousands of pounds from specially designated deposit safe-keeping accounts.

Mr. Weston received a sentence of 12 months in jail, suspended for 2 years. Mr. Williams' sentence for forging an accountant's signature was 8 months, suspended for 2 years. None of the tenants involved lost out as the losses of £63,000 were covered by the Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

Steve Harriot, the Chief Executive of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme, was unimpressed with what he considered to be the lenient sentences handed down to the fraudsters:

"Not only were their actions fraudulent they served to undermine the excellent work of properly self-regulated agents." Criminals like this should go to jail, not have their sentences suspended.

"They have defrauded private individuals and brought disrepute to the private rented sector."

"The law requires deposits to be protected through authorised tenancy deposit schemes and this case highlights once again the need for regulation of the private rented sector and for the courts to take these frauds and the protection of consumers more seriously." For further info please visit

<http://www.housingandpropertylawdaily.co.uk>

# Training for Professionals



## Certainty When Serving Notices!

Are you aware that up to 7 out of 10 Section 21 notices are thrown out of court because they are wrong\*? Maybe you've experienced the pain of explaining to a landlord there will be a further delay of over two months before the property can be recovered and the frustration of dealing with a difficult (and possibly non-paying) tenant. A wrongly dated notice could lose time, cause embarrassment and risk litigation with the landlord, all costing you money.

There is a solution that will guarantee the integrity of a Section 21 notice and therefore provide certainty at court. [LettingsToolbox.com](http://LettingsToolbox.com) provides that solution and therefore removes any doubt. [LettingsToolbox.com](http://LettingsToolbox.com) is the only system currently available that can reliably *predict the correct Section 21 expiry date!* In fact, we believe there are no lettings management systems in the market that are able to do so (PC-based systems such as CARL and CFP don't currently have the ability, nor do any web solutions we have come across). If you use a software system to merge landlord and property data for notices, you can still use [LettingsToolbox.com](http://LettingsToolbox.com) to check the date for accuracy.

[LettingsToolbox.com](http://LettingsToolbox.com) stores copies of your notices for you to print off again (should you need to) and it even remembers your landlords and properties to make completion next time even easier. You simply fill out a series of factual questions (all of which have help and guidance attached to them). Questions like when the tenancy started and when the rent is next due.

In any situation, where the fully automated system detects a possibility of ambiguity, it will let you know it cannot complete the request (no charge is incurred) and offer you the "Bespoke" service. The Bespoke service will cope with any section 21 service situation, including actually delivering or serving the notice for you! In addition, you can opt for the Bespoke service in preference to the automated service if you require.

Register now with [LettingsToolbox.com](http://LettingsToolbox.com)! It's free to set up an account and you will be ready to go when you next need to produce a Section 21. The process takes a matter of minutes to create your fully completed notice. Completed notices cost just £14.97 [www.lettingstoolbox.com](http://www.lettingstoolbox.com)

"If only all lettings systems were as clever!"

David d'Orton Gibson, Director of Training for Professionals and Lettings Toolbox Ltd

\*Source: London Association of District Judges

## Advertising opportunity With the LLAS

Landlords and Agents can advertise their services with the LLAS at discounted rates in the LLAS Newsletter and on the LLAS website.

For further information, please email [LLAS@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LLAS@camden.gov.uk)

Visit the website: [www.londonlandlords.org.uk](http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk)

or Telephone: 020 7974 1970/020 7974 6975



## CANNABIS FARMING- WARNING



Landlords should be super-vigilant about what their tenants get up to, after a 30% increase in insurance claims related to cannabis farming in rental properties.

Matthew Gordon, underwriting manager at insurers Aviva, said: "We settled 92 cannabis farming claims last year, which is the highest number Aviva has ever recorded "Cannabis farming comes with serious risks for landlords. Properties can be completely ruined inside to make space for plants, water damage can occur, and fire is a risk due to interference with electrics or strong lighting left on for a long time.

"There are some simple steps that can be taken. We would advise thorough checks on tenants and regular visits to properties" both internal and external inspections.

Permanently closed curtains, blacked-out windows and strong smells are all signs that there may be a cannabis factory on the premises." Aviva automatically covers damage caused by cannabis farming as long as a number of procedures are in place.

These include obtaining written employers' references and verified records of a bank account for new tenants, as well as a log of property inspections.

Gordon said: "It's important that property owners have adequate insurance and that they take 'reasonable precautions' to prevent any damage occurring. "Employing a letting agent to manage the tenant-vetting process and provide an inspection service on the landlord's behalf is a good option, as insurers could refuse a claim if a landlord has been found to neglect their responsibilities. For more info [www.rla.org.uk](http://www.rla.org.uk)

## Green Deal for Landlords

After a few cold snaps this winter many people will be hoping the change of season will mean their fuel bills will drop. And while it may seem this "age of austerity" is all about cut backs and gloom, there are lots of ways of spending a little on properties which could secure a cheaper future for tenants and more sustained tenancies for landlords.

In last year's Energy Bill, the Green Deal was proposed. It aims to help households and businesses make energy efficiency improvements without having to "front up" the cash. The full financial incentives of the Green Deal are still to be announced, but the idea is that the costs of installing energy efficiency measures will be paid for by the savings on a householder's fuel bill. It is not therefore a conventional personal loan as the charge is attached to the meter and paid back through the fuel bill. If someone moves out, the idea is that the new occupant will pick up the charge while also benefitting from a more energy efficient property.

For the Green Deal to achieve a complete transformation of British properties, it is acknowledged it cannot be limited to owner-occupiers. As it will involve no upfront costs for energy efficiency measures it will be available to landlords. The Government expects that landlords will respond positively to this opportunity however, the Energy Bill proposes powers for the Secretary of State to regulate in the future to require that they make such improvements.

It is important that the sector has the opportunity to make voluntary improvements first, and that regulation is only deployed if necessary to improve the energy efficiency of private rented properties, and without negative impact on supply. Therefore, such powers would only be enacted subject to the outcome of a review ahead of secondary legislation. The earliest date regulations could come into force is April 2015

The Government is proposing powers to require landlords to honour reasonable requests from their tenants for energy efficiency improvements, where financial support is available so there are no upfront costs to the landlord. They also intend to enable local authorities to insist landlords of the worst performing properties (with an EPC rating of F or G) to make all energy efficiency improvements for which there is financial support available.

The Green Deal is due to be launched in 2012, which coincides with a government backed nationwide rollout of smart meters. The Energy Savings Trust estimates that around 26 million households will be fitted with a smart meter by 2020. It is expected the near real time data and single hub electronic monitoring that smart meters will provide is going to be very beneficial in helping consumers track household energy consumption, as well as helping identify areas where the climate change battle can best be fought.

Further information about the Green Deal can be found on the Department of Energy and Climate Change website. ([http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what\\_we\\_do/consumers/green\\_deal/green\\_deal.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/consumers/green_deal/green_deal.aspx))

## Do you have a property to let?

**Kingston Council** has two **FREE** property letting schemes and urgently requires properties of all sizes to let via the **Tenant Finder Service** and the **Private Leasing Scheme**.

### The Tenant Finder Service offers:

- An attractive incentive package including cash payment up to £750
- Competitive rent levels
- Advance rent and deposit (or deposit guarantee)
- 0% commission fees
- Free agreements, renewals, re-lets and check-out

### The Private Leasing Scheme offers:

- Guaranteed rent
- 0% commission fees
- 12 month lease agreement
- Certainty of getting your property back in the same condition you gave it to us (with an allowance made for fair wear and tear in line with an agreed schedule of condition.)



To find out more call us now

020 8547 5491



To find out more call us now 020 8547 5491

**The Future of Housing in the Private Rented Sector Conference and Award Ceremony. Champagne reception plus 3 course dinner.**

Nominations for awards now open please visit [www.llas-conference.org.uk](http://www.llas-conference.org.uk)

**Thursday 1 March 2012 -Thistle Hotel at Marble Arch London W1H 7EH from 6pm. For more info Email [llas@camden.gov.uk](mailto:llas@camden.gov.uk) or tel: 020 7974 1970 or 6975**

## Dates for Your Dairy

### London Borough of Hillingdon Private Landlord Forum

**Date:** Tuesday 13th December  
2011

**Venue:** Committee Room The Civic  
Centre, High Street Uxbridge,  
UB8 1UW

**Time:** 6pm-9pm

To register your interest, please  
email your details to email

[Findersfee@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:Findersfee@hillingdon.gov.uk) or

**Tel:** 01895 277600.

### London Borough of Hackney Private Landlord Forum

**Date** Thursday 24th November  
2011

**Venue:** City Edge ( Morley Hall),  
125 - 127 Mare Street, London E8  
3RH

**Time:** 2pm - 5pm

To register your interest please  
email: [helen.burke@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:helen.burke@hackney.gov.uk)  
or Tel: 020 8356 4026

## LHA changes? A brief update

The LHA changes announced in the Emergency Budget on 22nd June 2010 include the following

- From April 2011, LHA rates will be capped at £250.00 per week for a 1 bed, £290 for a 2 bed, £340 for a 3 bed and £400 for a 4 bedroom property
- From April 2011, the £15 excess that some customers can receive under the LHA arrangements will be removed.
- From April 2011, the removal of the five bedroom LHA rate so that the maximum LHA rate is the four bedroom rate
- From October 2011, LHA rates will be set at the 30th percentile of local rents rather than the median (50th percentile)
- From 2013/14, LHA rates will be updated on the basis of the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- From 2011-14 there will be staged increases in non-dependent deductions to bring them up to the level they would have been had they been fully updated since 2001
- From 2013/14, working age people in social housing will no longer be able to claim HB on a property deemed bigger than their needs
- From 2013/14, HB award will be reduced to 90% after 12 months for claimants of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)

The discretionary housing payment (DHP) budget will rise in 2011-12 by £10 million and in subsequent years the Government will treble its allocation to £60 million per year. This will provide local authorities with substantial support in helping customers through the transition period and help avoid evictions. For more info please visit [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

## Help2Let Landlord Conference

**Date:** Tuesday 29 November 2011

**Venue:** Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Harrow Civic Centre, Station Road,  
Harrow, HA1 2XY

**Time:** 9.30 am Coffee & Registration **10.00 am** Conference Begins



Keynote speaker from the National Landlords Association. Update on Housing Benefit Changes. Information on Grants available. Opportunity to network with other landlords and for the Help2Let Team to answer your questions.

For more information and to register your interest

**Contact :** Marie O'Shea 020 8424 1862

**Email :** [Landlords@help2let.co.uk](mailto:Landlords@help2let.co.uk)

Harrow COUNCIL  
LONDON



# મકાનમાલિકો ધ્યાન આપો

તમારું મકાન અમારી સાથે ભાડે ચડાવવા માટેનાં 5 વાજબી કારણો

- 1 ભાડું મળવાની ખાતરી મકાન ખાલી પડ્યું હોય ત્યારે પણ
- 2 ત્રણ મહિનાનું ભાડું અગાઉથી સીધું જ તમારા બેન્ક અકાઉન્ટમાં ચૂકવાશે
- 3 મકાનનો વહીવટ તમારા મકાનને લગતી બધી જ બાબતોને આવરી લેવાશે
- 4 નિયમિત નિરીક્ષણો તમારા મકાનમાં રહેનારાં લોકો તેનું ધ્યાન રાખે છે તેની ખાતરી કરવા મા
- 5 ખાલી મકાનનો કબજો ભાડાની એગ્રીમેન્ટના અંતમાં

અમે તમને માત્ર મકાનના વહીવટની સેવા અથવા ભાડૂઆત શોધી આપતી અમારી સેવા પણ પ્રદાન કરી શકીએ છ

## અમે તમને શું આપી શકીએ તેમ છીએ?

તમારું મકાન ભાડે ચડાવવાને લગતી અને તમારા મકાનના વહીવટની લગતી દરેક બાબત પર સતત રીતે સલાહ અને માર્ગદર્શન પૂરાં પાડવા માટે નિષ્ણાતોની અમારી ટુકડી હાજર હોય।

## આજે ફોન કરો.. કાલે મકાન ભાડે ચડાવો

અમને ફોન કરો 020 8424 1605

ઈમેઈલ [landlords@help2let.co.uk](mailto:landlords@help2let.co.uk)

વેબ [www.help2let.co.uk](http://www.help2let.co.uk)



**HarroU**COUNCIL  
LONDON

## Failure to get licence costs landlord

A company that rented out substandard rooms to the public was, fined £27,750 and ordered to pay the Council's full costs of £6,228.00 at West London Magistrates' Court.

Centrepont Investments Limited of 8 Vine Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2, the landlord of a six-storey Victorian house at 106 Gloucester Road SW7, let out rooms in poor repair with inadequate cooking facilities and broken fire doors and had failed to licence the property as a House in Multiple Occupation.

Council officers first inspected the property in November 2009 to investigate whether it needed to be licensed or not and concluded that not only did it require a licence but that the conditions were extremely dangerous to the health and safety of the occupants.

Councillor Timothy Coleridge, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "These rooms were in a very poor condition and should not have been rented out to the public. We expect all landlords in the borough to make sure that their property is in good repair and fit to let to people looking for accommodation. Clearly Centrepont Investments Limited fell below an acceptable standard and I am very pleased that the court has handed down this large fine."

The court heard that the landlord had had no contact with the Council or the court since the summons was lodged against them in December 2010 and this was taken into account when deciding the level of fine to impose.



## Landlords, managers, and their employees can benefit from safety at work and fire safety courses

Levels 1 to 3 Awards in Health and Safety at Work, Level 2 in the Principles of Risk Assessment, Level 1 in Fire Safety Awareness, and Level 2 Award in Fire Safety courses are now available.

Courses may be run at the Council's training centre near Earls Court, or subject to certain criteria anywhere across London. Visit our website for more details about the above courses and our food safety training programmes.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
Public Health Training Service  
Environmental Health Department  
Council Offices  
37 Pembroke Road  
London W8 6PW

Bookings, payments and enquiries: 020 7361 3002  
Email: [publichealth.training@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth.training@rbkc.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.rbkc.gov.uk/publichealthtraining](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/publichealthtraining)



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## Squatters in your Home

Squatters can often cause misery to homeowners or other residents by committing criminal offences or by causing a nuisance. As a result, the Government is considering the options for strengthening the law in this area. In the meantime the Department for Communities and Local Government and Ministry of Justice have published revised advice on dealing with squatters in your home. This guidance is aimed at homeowners, to make them aware of their rights if their property has been unlawfully occupied.

The advice makes it clear that it is an offence for a squatter to fail to leave a residential property when required to do so by or on behalf of either a displaced residential occupier or certain other occupiers whose interest in the premises is protected under legislation. It also provides information on what you could do if your property has been taken over by squatters or on how you could evict a tenant who won't leave. It is important to remember to ensure that your property is properly secured when it is left unoccupied as this may prevent squatters from occupying it. You could also let your neighbours know if your home will be vacant for a long period so they can alert the police if they see anything suspicious. To download the advice goes to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/advisesquatters>

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0207 974 5801 or e-mail [hodt@camden.gov.uk](mailto:hodt@camden.gov.uk).

We look forward to hearing from you

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- 3 عمارت کی دیکھ بھال آپ کی جائیداد کے ہر مسئلے کے متعلق
- 4 باقاعدگی کے ساتھ جانچ تاکہ کرائے دار آپ کی جائیداد کا خیال رکھیں
- 5 عمارت خالی کروانا کرایہ نامہ کی مدت کے اختتام پر

ہم صرف انتظام کی خدمت یا صرف کرایہ دار ڈھونڈنے کی خدمت بھی پیش کر سکتے ہیں۔

ہم آپ کو کیا پیش کر سکتے ہیں؟

آپ کی جائیداد کو کرائے پر چڑھانے اور اس کے انتظام کے سلسلے میں مستقل بنیادوں پر مشورے اور رہنمائی فراہم کرنے کے لیے ہمارے ماہرین کی ٹیم حاضر ہے۔

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020 8424 1605 [www.help2let.co.uk](http://www.help2let.co.uk)

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ای میل [landlords@help2let.co.uk](mailto:landlords@help2let.co.uk)

ویب [www.help2let.co.uk](http://www.help2let.co.uk)



# CONFESSIONS OF A LANDLORD

## *Take the Rough with the Smooth*

I decided to take August off to catch up on accounts, general admin maintenance and take the kids out which would have been great, apart from my business partner and I deciding to Part Company, amicably I might add. He decided property was not for him long-term and couldn't commit the hours that were required. It's always difficult when a friendship is involved but I'm pleased to say it's intact and we will slowly sell off the properties we own jointly. As a result I have now moved offices to Putney sharing with another property friend where the office rent is £200 cheaper and I actually prefer the location so with hindsight everyone is better off. As I result of this parting I took over all projects, including the one in Doncaster. You may remember we were using my business partner's tenant to refurbish it at £5k; well it turned out my 3yr old daughter could've done a better job. We ended up sacking him, bringing in our London builders where the refurbishment came in at £23k, £4k of which was fixing the tenant's mistakes. Sadly, the tenant was served notice as he was missing payments and wouldn't communicate with my BP. What could have been a lovely ending turned very sour. In the future I will endeavour to send my own builders to do the job, even though the cost will be higher, but I'll know the finish will be high quality. The property was on the market for a week, received 3 offers where an offer of £103k was accepted from a first time buyer (they do exist). So the profit will be £23k split 50/50.

The other project I took over was our deal in St Austell which didn't sell at auction, which was a surprise, so we decided to send our builders down to carry out a full refurbishment. When my builder arrived I warned him about the reception he might receive from local traders and lo and behold he had a nightmare – tradesmen not turning up, £200 stolen by a painter and generally unreliable and incompetent workers (CAVEAT – this was my personal experience which I'm sure was an exception) . £23k later the house is finished, just the garden to do which will be done by myself and 2 of my reluctant builders who never want to visit St Austell again. The sad point about this refurbishment was the 3 quotes from local builders - £45k, £40k and £30k which I knew was a complete rip off even for a home owner quote. Even the garden quotes were coming in at £15k and all we're doing is putting down shingle and some fencing. I got it down to £3400! However, the house is beautiful and has some wonderful period features which will help to sell it for between £215k-£220k making £17k - £22k profits. Even though I will be glad to see this one go I have enjoyed the journeys down where I get guaranteed uninterrupted sleep!

So while the above was happening, 3 of my tenants gave notice where the properties needed repainting and carpeting to re-let, a new boiler required for an Epsom house, dealing with a violent tenant, new windows in Thornton Heath and 2 lease extensions amounting to £10k to pay. So you can imagine the capital outlay and time spent was slightly taxing. It's just as well my portfolio provides a healthy income! Annoyingly, my business partner didn't have the money to contribute to the Doncaster and Cornwall refurbishment so I had to front it, though as I write it should be cleared in a week's time. Luckily, I have a good balance of cash-flow and capital which enabled me to pay the invoices, however I was becoming very time poor which is where my PA will come in.

I just want to expand on the aggressive tenant scenario. I will keep it brief as the whole episode would take another thousand words to explain. The tenants are a family of three where the husband had violently abused the mother and daughter and attempted to break into the house with a chainsaw! The husband had always been polite and courteous with me, so I was shocked when the Police arrested him leaving behind a wrecked family. Not only had the husband abused them violently but he had left them with no financial support as he had gone to great lengths to siphon off any monies due to them. As a result I walked with the family to the Housing Benefit office to ascertain their benefit availability. After a few visits and some suspicious looks from the staff (they never see landlords accompanying tenants and believed I must be having a 'ladies and gentlemen' liaison with the mother!) In short, she now has £850pm in housing benefit and requires a further £350pm which we hope will come from further benefits and from her parents. I really don't want to be put in a position to serve any notice on them so will attempt to cover all options with them; we can't all be heartless.

I'm in the process of putting together a spreadsheet of my portfolio with tasks for my PA to manage it. This will start to release some of my time and enable me to develop other projects. To date she has developed a website for me and will soon be starting another one and she's even doing some research for me on the new Govt green initiatives.

Other news, sadly the boardroom efforts of buying at auction came to a halt at the first hurdle, no surprise there. There are too many chiefs who have different priorities so we all agreed to keep the boardroom as it was intended for, a consulting forum with a few bottles of fine wine.

Deal wise I have secured two. The first one was bought from Executors of an estate in Lewes for £110k, a 3 bed semi valued in good condition with conservatory at £270k-£280k. The house has an occupier with no rights to stay so we had to buy with cash with no idea on possible condition, considering the location a worthwhile risk. The occupier was the son of the deceased father who had 4 sisters and the 'will' instructed the house had to be sold but the son fell out with the sisters and refused to leave even on favourable cash incentive terms. I teamed up with 2 friends who were to front up the cash and the profits would be 50/50. We completed the purchase at £110k and decided to put it up for auction for a guide of £140k which, not surprisingly, received a lot of interest but surprisingly no bids! We approached the 'trespasser' to open up a communication channel before we considered the legal route but this fell on deaf ears. As soon as we instructed our solicitors to serve court papers we received an offer of £150k from a local developer which we pushed up to £168500. We will exchange contracts in the next few hours with a profit of £58500 minus auction and legal fees.

The second deal is a 1 bed flat above a takeaway shop with a 65 yr lease. Again I invited the same friends on the premise they put up the cash. We secured a purchase of £47k with an OMV of £82k and hope to complete in a few days. We will put this straight to auction with the hope of achieving £60-65k.

It's definitely been challenging since my last article and not just for me. The riots, 2<sup>nd</sup> dip recession, Spain, Italy downgrade, Greek debt default and sit down protests in financial centres have made a Global economic recovery less certain in the short term. But for me a smooth ride is on the horizon, let's hope the Global economy has the same.

**Tim Hodges**  
**Private Landlord**

Calling all Landlords

# Attention Landlords

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*Harro***ur**COUNCIL  
LONDON

# Do you have a property to let in or around Croydon?



## Properties urgently required for our Landlord Bond Scheme - good quality studios, 1, 2, and 3 bedroom properties

### Our free service includes:

- rent payments directly to the landlord
- professional independent inventory
- property inspection
- assistance with all necessary paperwork
- bond guarantee in excess of 1 months rent
- ongoing sustainment support

Properties must be ready to let and will be managed by the landlord or agent.

### For more information:

visit: [www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/privatehousing/empty/](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/privatehousing/empty/)

call: 020 8726 6100 ext 61870

email: [hsg-landlordlettings@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:hsg-landlordlettings@croydon.gov.uk)

**CROYDON**  
[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)



# DO YOU OWN AN **EMPTY** **PROPERTY** IN BRENT?

## Ask about **GRANTS**

to bring your empty property back in to use and how you can receive **generous rental income.**



Why not

## **CONVERT**

your empty property into ££££?



Call 020 8937 2535/2539/2777

Visit [www.brent.gov.uk/emptyproperties](http://www.brent.gov.uk/emptyproperties)

Email [empty.property@brent.gov.uk](mailto:empty.property@brent.gov.uk)



# Calling all landlords!!!

We want your one, two or three bedroom properties.

## Benefits include:

- We find a tenant for you
- Incentive payments
- Free membership of Brent Landlord Group
- Deposit / rent guarantee scheme available



Contact 020 8937 2777

Visit [www.brent.gov.uk/rwb](http://www.brent.gov.uk/rwb)



# Calling all landlords

We want to be your first choice  
for renting your property

We are looking for private landlords, agencies and anyone with good quality property wanting to let to us

In the last 3 years we have helped over 2000 clients to move into quality accommodation in the private rented sector.

We offer:

- Support – housing related support for your tenant
- Housing Benefit – a dedicated fast track Housing Benefit service with rent direct
- Advice – environmental health advice and support
- Rent advance – four weeks rent in advance
- Insurance – landlords contents insurance cover up to £5000
- Accreditation – landlords accreditation scheme.
- Leasing Scheme
- Tenancy agreement



To find out more please contact:

tel: 02083594865 or 020 8359 3142

or you can email: [PSTS@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:PSTS@barnet.gov.uk)

## Do you manage, or are thinking about managing a House in Multiple Occupation in LB of Redbridge?

Changing economic situations and demographics mean that more people than ever before are looking to rent out properties in Multiple

Occupation London Borough of Redbridge are looking to develop their information services for landlords, particularly with regard to this developing sector of the market. We would like to know what landlords would like to know about general management and fire risk assessment in HMO's. So if you are a landlord, and are operating in Redbridge, or thinking of doing so, and are unclear about requirements and good practice

**Email Philip Smith at**  
[philip.smith@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:philip.smith@redbridge.gov.uk)  
 with your query. There is no need to give any property address.

Thanking you in advance for all those who wish to reply.


## Who is a landlord?

In relation to domestic gas under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GS(IU)R 98), a landlord is anyone who rents out a property that they own under a lease that is shorter than 7 years or under a licence. Regardless of whether you are a landlord under GS(IU)R 98 you may be considered a landlord under other related legislation.

Landlords' duties apply to a wide range of accommodation, occupied under a lease or licence, which includes, but not exclusively:


- residential premises provided for rent by local authorities, housing associations, private sector landlords, housing co-operatives, hostels
- rooms let in bed-sit accommodation, private households, bed and breakfast accommodation and hotels
- rented holiday accommodation such as chalets, cottages, flats, caravans and narrow boats on inland waterways. .

## **What are my duties as a landlord in relation to gas safety?**



You have duties under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to arrange maintenance by a Gas Safe Registered engineer  for all pipework, appliances and flues, which you own and have provided for your tenants use. You must also arrange for an annual gas safety check to be carried out every 12 months by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. You must keep a record of the safety check for 2 years and issue a copy to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed and issue a copy to any new tenants before they move in.

## **What are my duties as a letting/ management agent in relation to gas safety?**


Landlords who use agents to manage properties need to ensure that the management contract clearly specifies who is responsible for carrying out the maintenance and safety check duties, and keeping associated records. If the contract specifies that the agent has responsibility then the same duties under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 that apply to a landlord apply to you.

In this situation an agent must arrange maintenance by a Gas Safe Registered engineer  for all pipework, appliances and flues, which the landlord owns and provides for the tenants use. You must also arrange for an annual gas safety check to be carried out every 12 months by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. You must keep a record of the safety check for 2 years and issue a copy to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed and issue a copy to any new tenants before they move in.


## **Do I have to use a Gas Safe Registered engineer to complete gas work?**

Yes. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations state that landlords must only use a Gas Safe Registered engineer  for maintenance and safety checks on gas equipment they own and provide for tenants use in domestic premises. HSE advises that you check that the Gas Safe Registered engineer is competent to work in that specific area of gas. This is clearly marked on the back of the engineer's Gas Safe Register registration card .

## **Should I provide my tenants with a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm?**

HSE strongly recommends the use of CO alarms as one useful precaution to give tenants advance warning of CO in the property. Importantly alarms should not be regarded as a replacement for regular maintenance and safety checks by a Gas Safe Registered engineer . CO alarms cost between £20-£30 and can be purchased in most hardware shops. Before purchasing a CO alarm, always ensure it complies with British Standard EN 50291 and carries a British or European approval mark, such as a Kitemark. CO alarms should be installed and maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions .

## **What checks should be done between tenancies?**

You must visually check the property to see if the departing tenant has either removed appliances unsafely, or alternatively left behind their own appliance, which should either be removed or checked for safety by a Gas Safe Registered engineer . The opportunity should be taken to clarify appliance ownership prior to renting the property again.

If you suspect that an appliance could have been tampered with, or there is the possibility of vandalism while a property remains empty, then HSE recommends you arrange for another gas safety check to be completed by a Gas Safe Registered engineer before giving access to new tenants.

Before you re-let the property you need to ensure that all appliances are safe and have an up to date landlord's gas safety record (a copy of which needs to be given to the new tenant); it is also good practice to arrange for the pipework to be inspected and tested for soundness.

## **What if I break the regulations?**

You are putting lives at risk and breaking the law. HSE gives gas safety a high priority and will take the appropriate action to ensure compliance with the regulations; this could result in a substantial fine and/or a custodial sentence.

For more info, please visit [www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/faqlandlord.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/faqlandlord.htm)



# Got a property to let in Lewisham?

Earn reliable fixed-term rent from your property



If it's a two or three-bedroom property we offer:

- guaranteed rent 52 weeks of the year
- no voids or bad debts
- professional housing management services
- regular property inspection
- minor repair service up to a fixed sum.

For more information call:  
020 8314 7086 / 9772 / 6299  
or email [\\_psl@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:_psl@lewisham.gov.uk)

Terms and conditions apply.



# Do you have a property to let?

**The Finders Fee Team are here to help and assist you in letting your property.**

For further information and free impartial advice please call the Finders Fee Team on **01895 277600** or **250399**.

Alternatively email them on **findersfee@hillingdon.gov.uk**

We have clients waiting to move into property **now!**

## We offer:

- competitive rents
- no fees
- good rental demand
- free advice and assistance
- tenancy support service



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

[www.hillingdon.gov.uk](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk)

## Useful Links

**LLAS:** [www.londonlandlords.org.uk](http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk)

**RLA** [www.rla.org.uk](http://www.rla.org.uk)

**SLA** [www.southernlandlords.org](http://www.southernlandlords.org)

**LHA** <https://lha-direct.therentservice.gov.uk/Secure/Default.aspx>

**Landlord Law:** [www.landlordlaw.co.uk](http://www.landlordlaw.co.uk)

**NLA** <http://www.landlords.org.uk/>

**TDP (Tenancy Deposit)**  
<http://www.depositprotection.com/Default.aspx>

**Landlordzone** <http://www.landlordzone.co.uk>

**Accreditation Network UK (ANUK)**  
<http://www.anuk.org.uk/>

**Landlords UK Links, guides, forums and information** <http://www.landlords-uk.net/>

**Fire Protection Centre**  
<http://www.fireprotectioncentre.com/>

**DCLG:** <http://www.communities.co.uk>

**Direct.gov.uk**  
Advice for tenants/ landlords on various issues  
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/HomeAndCommunity/fs/en>

**Gas Safe Register:** [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

**National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Consulting (N.I.C.E.I.C)**  
[www.niceic.org.uk](http://www.niceic.org.uk)

**Online planning and building regulations Resource** [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

**The Residential Property Tribunal (RPTS)**  
[www.rpts.gov.uk](http://www.rpts.gov.uk)

**Health and Safety Executive**  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

**Office of Fair Trading** [www.offt.gov.uk](http://www.offt.gov.uk)

## Advertising opportunity With the LLAS

Landlords and Agents can advertise their services with the LLAS at discounted rates in the LLAS Newsletter and on the LLAS website: [www.londonlandlords.org.uk](http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk)

For further information, please email [LLAS@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LLAS@camden.gov.uk) or Tel: 020 7974 1970