



Landlords Update

Newsletter of Tower Hamlets Landlords Forum. Building a better future for both landlords and tenants!

Forum Report 30 January 2008

Our thanks to all the landlords and specialists who attended the Forum.

Local Housing Allowance

With the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) on the horizon, many landlords heard from Sharon Brown and Lee Fearon who explained how housing benefit will be calculated and paid from 7 April 2008.

One of the major changes is that LHA will be paid direct to the tenants.

However, there will be circumstances where a Local Authority will pay housing benefit to the landlord. The amount paid will depend on the tenants' circumstances.

The actual levels of Local Housing Allowance will be published at the start of each month. They will be available in all the Tower Hamlets One Stop Shops,

the local press, and on the Tower Hamlets website www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Arrears Recovery

Toyin Davidson, from the Rent Arrears Recovery Service gave useful tips about debt recovery, litigation, enforcement action, tracing and investigation.

Landlords were reminded of their duties and responsibilities. If you need help, Toyin can be contacted by email: info@davidson.co.uk

Legislation Update

from Jeremy Hall (NLA)
(National Landlord Association)

6th April 2007

Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS)

1st June 2007

Home Information Packs (HIPs)

1st July 2007

All HMO's require a Periodic Electrical Report (PIR) for a maximum of every 5 years

7th April 2008

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

1st October 2008

Energy Performance Certificate available for a new tenancy

1st October 2008

Private Rented Sector Review by Government

The National Landlords Association protects and promotes the interests of private sector, residential, landlords throughout the UK.

NLA has recently launched E-Learning and Jeremy will introduce the scheme at the next Forum. For more information visit:

www.landlords.org.uk

www.mydeposits.co.uk

www.landlorddevelopment.org.uk

See you all at the next Forum on **29 May 2008 at 1pm**

USEFUL CONTACTS

National Grid

(Gas leak)

0800 111 999

www.nationalgrid.com/uk

British Gas

08459 668 866

www.britishgas.co.uk

PowerGen

0800 363 363

www.powergen.co.uk

Energy Watch Gas

08459 060 708

Energy Watch Electric

08456 013 131

www.energywatch.org.uk

Or visit

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Where is the private rented sector going? Government calls for a review

Housing minister, Yvette Cooper, has recently announced a major review of the private rented sector. The review will look at the problems that tenants and landlords face, what works well, the quality of homes and who are the main users of private sector housing.

Most of us have rented a flat or house at some stage in our lives and the private rented sector is, at its best, a vital provider of good housing. Many tenants as well as landlords are not aware of their rights and responsibilities.



Many tenants are dissatisfied with the quality of repairs carried out by their landlord and fear retaliatory action if they complain. On the other hand, landlords can face problems with poor tenants not paying rent and anti-social behaviour.

This review also aims to examine the impact of

recent social changes on future supply and demand in the private rented sector.

The final report will be completed by the end of October and will be covered in a future Landlords Update. More information can be found at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/doc/672051



It's a Bug's Life

Pests such as insects or rodents don't pay rent, move in uninvited and may force your tenants to leave unless you take action. They are also a health risk to your tenants. Tower Hamlets Pest Control Unit offers advice to residents and businesses about how to get rid of insects and rodents. For further information call the Pest Control administration team on **020 7364 6695**



CONTACT DETAILS

Landlords Update
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62 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 OPG

Telephone: 020 7364 3558
e-mail: housingadvice@towerhamlets.gov.uk
you will also find us on the web at:
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

BE IN THE KNOW GET ACCREDITED

Thirteen landlords attended an accreditation course on the 20th February 2008. Those attending said that they would definitely recommend this course to other landlords and agents. Tower Hamlets is running two further courses on the 25th June and 29th October 2008 at 62 Roman Road London E2 0PG.

We will refund your fees when you are accredited and register your property with the Rent

Deposit Team. If you are interested in the scheme, please contact Jessica Alomankeh for LLAS on **020 7974 1970**.

If you would like to register for



the Rent Deposit Scheme, call **020 7364 7331**.

More Information about LLAS and course dates can be found on www.londonlandlord.org.uk

Homelink...Linking landlords with tenants

Homelink is a charitable project based in East London. They aim to provide an all-round service to local people seeking private tenancies. They provide rent in advance, guarantees against damage and arrears and give

support to tenants during their tenancies. **Homelink** will help to ensure that landlords are not disadvantaged by accepting tenants on benefits.

Call **Homelink** on:
020 7729 7573
or email:
homelink@qsa.org.uk



Here are some satisfied customers:
Clifford, Michael and Hephzibah, who were housed through **Homelink**

GRANTS

Are you a landlord of HMOs or are your properties let to Rent Act registered tenants (*tenancies before 1988*)? You might be eligible for an improvement grant. There are also grants available for landlords to bring empty properties back into use. Please speak to the **Private Housing Improvement Team**.

Tel: **020 7364 2531**
Email: privatesector@towerhamlets.gov.uk
or visit
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Cover up against the Worst – Discount on insurance for accredited Landlords



Remember! If you let a property, it is vital to have the correct landlord insurance. Your insurance should cover you for accidental and malicious damages, rent loss, buildings, landlords' contents, Legal protection, etc. Many landlords have found to their cost that not having the

correct insurance can be costly and is not good business practice.

You can obtain advice by contacting the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) www.arla.co.uk or the National Landlords Association www.landlords.org.uk

Going Green is easy in Tower Hamlets

The council provides a weekly collection of recyclables – paper, card, glass, cans, aerosols, plastic bottles and Tetra Pak cartons. There is no need to separate the different materials and you will be provided with purple recycling bins or pink sacks. Most properties have now been set up with a collection and we are working hard to extend the service to all remaining properties this year.

If you don't yet have recycling facilities please contact us on **020 7364 5004**. This will help speed up the introduction of recycling to your property.

Two new exciting schemes to help you save energy

Landlords can now make use of two new schemes to make their properties more energy efficient.

The Warm Front Grant - which is available to private residents on means tested benefit.

The East End Energy Savers scheme - where you can have an interest free loan to upgrade the energy efficiency of your

home, (subject to status).

For more information on these schemes and many other energy saving ideas visit their website at the Energy Saving Trust www.est.org.uk

The aim of the trust is to reduce domestic energy consumption and to extend access to affordable warmth and combat fuel

poverty. The Service is able to provide one-to-one energy advice in a resident's home using qualified surveyors/advisors with many years of frontline experience.

For phone information call the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on free phone:

0800 512 012

PLAN BEFORE YOU BUILD

If you want to carry out development work in Tower Hamlets, such as building a new construction or altering an existing building, you will probably need to make a planning application. For a fee, you can get a formal

decision as to whether the work needs planning permission. This is known as a determination. If you do not need permission, you can obtain a certificate that confirms this and which protects you from any potential legal action in the future.

If the works relate to a conservation area such as Spitalfields or Wapping or a listed build-

ing, you may need to apply for a special type of permission. The law can be very complex.

Before undertaking any building work you should check with both the Planning Service and the Building Control Service. The Planning & Building Control hotline can be reached on: **020 7364 5009**