

FORUM REPORT



Our special thanks to all the landlords and speakers who attended the Tower Hamlets Landlords Forum last month.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

Sharon Brown and Lee Fearon explained how new housing benefit claims dated from 7 April 2008 were calculated. Housing Benefit Section is coping well with the new scheme.

All their Officers are trained and are able to deal with questions landlords may have. One of the main concerns for landlords is that LHA will be paid to the tenants and no longer to landlords, however since the introduction of the scheme only one request was received for LHA to be paid to the landlord.

National Landlord Association (NLA)

Eugene Song spoke about the online training for landlords. The online service provides both development and information through a unique learning experience. Information is directly available through the comprehensive online service covering every aspect of the private sector. Landlords can test their knowledge through quizzes.

Tom Hawkins and Olabode Ayanuwyi from Primrose Associates spoke about the instability of buy-to-let finance. Mirroring the advice of the Royal Institute of the Chartered Surveyors, they informed the Forum

of the difficulties new landlords in accessing cheap finances. Primrose Associates offer all landlords a free, independent review of their portfolios. Primrose Associates can be contacted on: **0845 355 455**

USEFUL NUMBERS

Electricity emergency
0800 096 9000

Gas emergency
0800 111 999

Water emergency
08459 200 800

PEST control & Noise nuisance:
020 7364 5007

Environmental Health
020 7364 5008

Housing Benefit
020 7364 5001

Council Tax
020 7364 5002

Anti Social Behaviour
0800 917 5918



Landlords Update

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

Credit crunch bites hard into the buy-to-let market

The Guardian reported in March 2008 that according to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, access to the buy-to-let market has become harder for would-be landlords.

The buy-to-let property boom looks to have become the latest victim of the global credit crunch as new lending to landlords dries up. Mortgage approvals are down about a third from a year ago.

There are an estimated 2.5m buy-to-let homes in England being rented from more than half a million private landlords.

Buy-to-let lenders have limited cheap credit for landlords and the number of attractive mortgage deals is declining.



CONTACT DETAILS



Landlords Update
Noella Ling, Housing Advice, Albert Jacob House
62 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 OPG

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

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Landlords – you must be ready for 1st October 2008!

From 1st October 2008, all private properties let to a new tenants in England and Wales will be required to have an **Energy Performance Certificate**.

EPCs are valid for ten years and look similar to the energy labels found on domestic appliances such as fridges and washing machines. Current running costs for heating, hot water and lighting are shown on the certificate, together with a list of recommended energy saving improvements. From 1st October 2008 or sooner you must get an EPC to ensure that you comply with the law when it comes in. If you don't have one after that date you could be fined £200 for non compliance.

You can get an Energy Performance Certificate from an accredited

ited Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA). They will visit your property to assess the age, construction and location of the property as well as its current fittings such as heating systems, insulation, double glazing etc. DEAs can be found in local directories or via www.hcrregister.com/FindAssessorInspector

The average costs range between £40 - £120, so it's worth shopping around. There are several grants available that can cut your costs by half or even to zero!

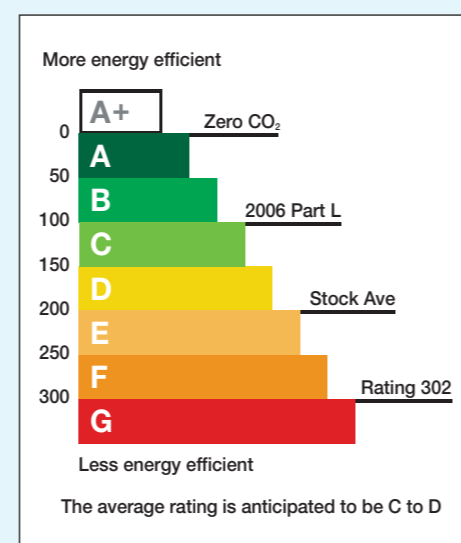
Visit: www.est.org.uk/myhome/gid to see if you are eligible.

If your tenants are in receipt of certain benefits you may be able to get your property insulated at a significant discount or even for free. Visit: www.warmfront.co.uk for further information.

If you have insulated your properties you can also reduce your income tax by claiming under the Landlords Energy Saving Allowance.

Visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk/budget2004/revbn31.htm

for further information. If you would like to find out how energy efficient your properties are, The Energy Saving Trust will provide you with a personalised Home Energy Check report on each of your properties for free. *Available online at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/proxy/view/full/165/homeenergycheck



Further information

www.homeinformationpack.gov.uk
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
www.hipassociation.co.uk
www.communities.gov.uk/epbd

Energy Performance Certificate Helpline: 0845 365 2468

A successful day

14 keen landlords successfully completed the Accreditation course on the 25 May 2008. Those attending not only spoke highly of the course, but also of the venue and the food. They said that they will recommend the day to other landlords.



LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Many people try to set themselves up as landlords without having a clue about their legal obligations to their tenants, and how they should manage their property which can leave them exposed. By attending a one day Development course, you would learn how to run a successful business and provide your tenants with safe and high quality accommodation.

There is no fee for accreditation, but there is a charge for the development course, which you must attend to become

accredited. The fee for the training course is £79.90 (inc VAT) for online registrations or £110 (inc VAT) for postal applications.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is now offering to reimburse the total course fee to Landlords who register their property with Tower Hamlets Rent Deposit Scheme.

Joining the scheme

For further information, or to apply please visit the LLAS website at:

<http://www.londonlandlords.org.uk/accreditation/home>

or contact Jessica Alomankeh LLAS Co-ordinator:
Tel: 020 7974 1970
Email: LLAS@camden.gov.uk

or contact
Noella Ling / Jamie Jackson
Housing Advice Service
Tel: 020 7364 3558

Email:
noella.ling@towerhamlets.gov.uk
jamie.jackson@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Carbon Monoxide is a killer

Carbon Monoxide is still a killer and many people do not realise they are in danger.

The highly poisonous gas has no taste, no smell and no colour and kills around 50 people every year. News stories about tragic deaths due to CO are quite common throughout the year, but for those renting there is often no way of knowing if the place is safe. You are putting your tenants life at risk.

Symptoms of poisoning include: recurring headaches, nausea, sickness, chest and/or stomach pains and general tiredness.

Carbon Monoxide detectors can be fitted which make audible sound when they

detect dangerous levels of the gas. These are more effective than the old-style indicator strips, which can often go unnoticed or fade with age.

So make sure that your property is safe. Get it checked by an approved Corgi Engineer every twelve months or before you re-let. Email enquiries@trustcorgi.com

Leave simple but clear instructions for your tenants on what to look for and what do if they suspect CO leakage, make sure they know to:

- Open doors and windows immediately.
- Call the Transco 24 hour emergency line on **0800 111 999**.

Further information can be found at:

www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/faqlandlord.htm
www.trustcorgi.com

