

# Landlords Forum Newsletter – December 2019 - Issue No 24

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## Wishing all our landlords a very Happy Christmas

Welcome to the latest edition of Huntingdonshire Landlords Forum Newsletter. You have received a copy because you elected to join the landlord's forum. I would encourage you to make use of our services by attending meetings, advertising properties on our web pages and communicating with us regarding issues you would like to be discussed. There is no charge for this all we ask in return is that you work with us to improve the quality and management of private rented accommodation in the district. Please note however, we cannot take on the management of your property but what we can do is give you accurate and timely information and offer advice and support to prevent problems arising. And help you to deal with any problems or situations as they occur in connection to your rented property.

For more information go to our website or even better come along to our next landlord's forum to be held in Huntingdon on **18 March 2020 (6:30 – 8pm)**. Save the date and come along to meet other landlords to discuss common issues and listen to useful presentations. We will also try to do our best to answer any questions and research information for you which can then be shared with all landlords registered with the forum.

Please let me know if there is a subject you wish to raise or if you require information that can be shared at the forum.

I hope to see you at our next Landlords Forum on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020. In the meantime, I hope you have a good Christmas and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

## **A ban on "unfair" fees charged by lettings agents to tenants in England has started, two-and-a-half years after the plan was first announced.**

This means tenants will no longer face fees for services including viewings, credit checks, references and setting up a tenancy. Citizens Advice claims people renting privately in England have collectively been paying £13m a month in these fees.

The ban in England was first announced by Chancellor Philip Hammond in November 2016, when the government said it would become law "as soon as possible". The detail of the new rules has been fiercely debated by all sides ever since.

"The new law means families and other renters don't have to hand over hundreds of pounds every time they move home," said Gillian Guy, chief executive at Citizens Advice.

A ban has been in place in Scotland since 2012, while Wales is set to implement its own rules in September, but the picture is more complicated in Northern Ireland, where a potential ban requires a sitting assembly to pass it.

### **What does the ban mean for tenants?**

It has been the case that England's five million private tenants faced various unavoidable fees every time they moved or renewed a tenancy. With renting becoming more widespread, including among middle-aged people, more people were caught up by these mostly upfront costs.

The level of fees had to be clearly displayed but varied significantly, with tenants in big cities facing the highest charges. Typically, this cost tenants £200 to £300 each time, although campaigners claimed the average was higher.

Fees may have been charged for administration, references from tenants' employers, inventory checks and so on.

Agents, and ultimately landlords, will now have to pick up the cost of this work for new and renewed tenancies under the Tenant Fees Act. The new rules prevent them from simply charging a higher rent for the first month to cover the cost.

### **What fees can tenants still face?**

The new law does not mean tenants will not have to pay any upfront fees at all. They will still be expected to pay the first month's rent, and a deposit.

Following debate, the government settled on a rule that means security deposits will be limited to five weeks' worth of rent for properties costing less than £50,000 annually to rent, or six weeks for higher-value renting. Holding deposits are capped at one week's rent.

Additionally, there can be a charge for a lost key replacement, at close to the cost to the landlords themselves. If rent is outstanding for more than 14 days, then agencies can impose a penalty limited to 3% higher than the Bank of England's base rate, which is 0.75% at present.

There might also be a fee of about £50 if a tenant requests a change to the tenancy, and one if a tenant wants to leave the contract early. Those who signed a tenancy agreement before 1 June may still face fees in their contract for the next 12 months, including renewal fees.

### **What do landlords and agents think?**

An impact assessment from the government last year suggested the first year of the policy would collectively cost landlords nearly £83m, while letting agents would take a hit of £157m.

An agents' trade body has described the new law as "the biggest change to hit the lettings industry in decades". Agents would have to cover their cost and pass this on to the landlords. This could then be handed on to tenants in higher rent. Housing charity Shelter argued that experience from the ban in Scotland suggested otherwise, saying that rises in rent had been "small and short-lived", despite expectations that rents would increase.

Other tax changes, such as the Insurance Premium Tax, has hit landlords - meaning that they are already facing tough cost pressures. All but the biggest companies could

decide to self-manage their property or sell up if it no longer means it's a feasible business.

Many agents are unhappy that they are facing higher costs as a result of overcharging by the unscrupulous few in the past.

### **Will this make renting more affordable?**

This is a matter of debate, as the cost of renting a property has been rising on average in the UK. The lower upfront costs will be a benefit, but there remains stiff competition for good-quality rented homes in some parts of the UK

### **Can my landlord kick me out?**

Millions of people pay monthly rent to a landlord for a room or a home, but many will be unclear about their rights as a tenant.

### **Can a landlord kick me out without a reason, and how much notice should I be given?**

Your landlord can't evict you during the fixed term of a tenancy unless you breach a term in the tenancy agreement, such as not paying rent or damaging the property, unless there is a break clause in your agreement.

If you stay in the home beyond the fixed term and your landlord wants possession without a reason, they must give you at least two months' notice, often called a section 21 notice. There are several rules the landlord must follow for the notice to be valid. The landlord must apply to court for possession of the property if you don't leave when the notice expires.

### **Can a landlord increase rent at any time, and how much notice should I be given?**

Your rent cannot normally be increased unless you agree, or the tenancy agreement allows it. A rent review clause in a fixed-term tenancy will not apply after the fixed term ends, if your tenancy becomes "statutory periodic". This is when your fixed term ends and your tenancy automatically continues month-by-month or week-by-week - usually based on your rent payment period - until you or your landlord gives notice.

Landlords of periodic tenants can use special procedures to raise rents by giving you a formal notice, details of which are set down in law. This can be appealed against in England to the first-tier property tribunal, or to the rent assessment committee in Wales, which will determine a "market rent" for the property.

### **What can I do if my landlord fails to do basic repairs, deal with pests etc?**

First, ensure you are not responsible for the repairs. Tenants are usually expected to do small maintenance jobs such as changing a light bulb or repairing damage they have caused.

If the landlord is not doing repairs, they are responsible for, speak to them first to make sure they understand your concerns. If this does not help you can make a formal complaint by writing a letter to your landlord, explaining the problem, what you want them to do and including any evidence you have.

If this does not solve your problem you can go to your council, which can help with complaints about repairs that cause a risk to health and safety. Your council can look at your home and order the landlord to do the repairs if they think it is harmful to your health or safety.

Some landlords may try to evict a tenant who complains about repairs - so-called "retaliatory eviction". There is some legal protection for tenants in this position but talk to Citizens Advice if you're worried about this risk. You should not withhold rent because of repair issues because your landlord may then have reason to evict you.

Eviction by coercion may be an illegal eviction in Scotland, which is a criminal offence.

### **When can a landlord withhold my deposit after I move out?**

Most deposits should be protected in a tenancy deposit scheme and a landlord cannot take money from your deposit without either your agreement or arbitration by the scheme.

A landlord who has failed to protect a deposit may have to pay a penalty to the tenant and face restrictions on serving notice.

You might not get the full amount of your deposit back if, for example, you owe rent, you have damaged the property, or you have lost or broken items on the inventory.

Landlords should not take money for reasonable wear and tear, such as a carpet that has gradually worn out over time, or to fix repairs that were their responsibility.

### **How long does he or she have to return my deposit?**

If your deposit is in a tenancy deposit scheme, you should get your deposit back within 10 days of agreeing any deductions with your landlord. If you cannot reach agreement, you will need to check how to access arbitration with your scheme.

If your deposit has not been protected, seek help from Citizens Advice about recovering your deposit through the court. Your landlord may also have to pay you a penalty for failing to protect your deposit.

### **If we are in dispute, can a landlord seize my belongings?**

Your landlord has a legal obligation to look after any of your belongings left in a property after you have moved out or been evicted.

They must make reasonable efforts to trace you, and serve you with notice - usually 28 days, but three months if you owe them money - stating how you can collect the goods, and that they will be disposed of if they have not been collected by the expiry of the notice.

If the goods remain uncollected, the landlord may sell or dispose of them and make a deduction from any proceeds for expenses reasonably incurred in storage or disposal. The balance will belong to the tenant.

### **If a housemate moves out, whose responsibility is it to find a replacement?**

If you have a joint tenancy with your housemate - each tenant is legally liable for the whole of the rent. This means, for example, that if they don't pay the landlord could pursue you, and any other joint tenants, for the money.

If your housemate is a joint tenant and wants to leave during the fixed term, they could find a replacement agreed by you and the landlord. It is a good idea to put the agreement in writing, so everyone knows where they stand.

Without finding a replacement, your housemate either must continue paying rent in order not to breach the tenancy or come to an agreement for them to pay you to make up the shortfall.

In each case, the landlord must agree to the change before you can go ahead as they need to agree to the surrender of the existing joint tenancy and the creation of a new tenancy.

### **What is the procedure if I lose my keys?**

If you do not have a spare set of keys, then you should check if your landlord or their agent has a spare set of keys you can use to get a new set cut. Your tenancy agreement might also give details about how you can do this and any fees you will be charged for a replacement.

If there is not a spare set you can contact a locksmith to get the locks changed but you will have to pay for this and will also be responsible for any damage caused, for example, to the door or doorframe. Check your tenancy agreement to see if you must tell your landlord if you change the locks.

### **What should the landlord do if I am harassed by a housemate?**

You should try to speak to your housemate first to see if you can find a way forward, but only do this if you feel able to do so.

Your landlord may be able to help you by speaking to the housemate but there is no duty for them to do so. Your landlord may be able to take action to evict the housemate if they have breached the tenancy agreement in some way, but this can take time. If you're a joint tenant and your housemate is evicted this would also end your tenancy, so it is worth getting advice first.

If you are in fear of violence or if you are being racially or sexually harassed, you should contact the police.

### **Can a landlord come into the property whenever they want?**

The landlord has a right to reasonable access to carry out repairs for which they are responsible and to inspect the property, but usually they must give 24 hours' notice in writing.

In most cases, a landlord does not have the right to demand access without notice, or to enter the property without permission when the tenant is not there.

### **I have a disability. Can I demand the landlord make a property suitably accessible?**

If you have a disability and are having accessibility trouble in your home, you can ask your landlord to either make adaptations or let you make the changes. If your landlord refuses, seek advice from an experienced adviser, like Citizens Advice.

### **Can a landlord refuse someone receiving housing benefits, or Universal Credit?**

Not all landlords and letting agents allow housing benefit or housing costs payments through Universal Credit, but you only need to say you receive them if they ask.

You might be able to get a landlord or letting agent to accept you by giving extra references or you could also get a guarantor (someone who agrees to pay the rent if you don't).

### **Can I be charged for wear and tear, and how does the landlord decide on the amount?**

Check your tenancy agreement to see if you have agreed to leave the property in a certain condition. In general, you shouldn't be charged for wear and tear, but the landlord might ask you to pay for damage beyond that. If you've paid a deposit, the landlord might ask for that payment to be deducted from the deposit. If you can't agree, you can ask the tenancy deposit scheme that holds your deposit to decide.

### **Can a landlord check my credit rating to see if I am at risk of failing to pay my rent?**

Yes, they can, but they must ask for your permission first.

If you plan to rent through a letting agent and have bad credit history, tell them before they take any fees as you may not get these back.

If the landlord refuses you because he thinks there is a risk of you not paying the rent, you could offer rent in advance if you can afford it, or a guarantor - if one is available - to secure the property.

### **How much can a lettings agent charge for administration fees?**

Most lettings agents will charge you to check your references and credit - the amount you can be asked to pay can vary a lot between agents. You might also be asked to pay fees if you renew your tenancy.

Ask about your letting agent's fees before taking the property and before you pay any money. Their fees must be displayed on their website and in their offices. They must give you details of their fees before you agree to rent.

It is against the law in England for your letting agent to charge you for registering with them and giving information or lists of properties available for rent.

### **Can a landlord prevent me from having friends or family to stay overnight?**

You are entitled to "quiet enjoyment" of your home, which includes having the occasional overnight visitor. In some cases, tenants will be held responsible for the behaviour of their visitors that could lead to renters breaching their tenancy agreement.

Any term in a tenancy agreement that says you can't have overnight guests without permission from the landlord or that you must pay a fee is likely to be "unfair" and unenforceable.

You should bear in mind the risk of eviction if you are outside a fixed term and you antagonise your landlord. Be clear your guest is a visitor and you're not sub-letting. Most tenancy agreements say that you are not allowed to sub-let all or part of your property without your landlord's agreement. If your guest pays money to stay it's likely to be sub-let.

### **What can I do if I think I'm being discriminated against for ethnicity, religion or nationality?**

If you think you are being discriminated against because of your disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, you may be able to take legal action. You should get advice from an experienced adviser, like Citizens Advice.

### **If I'm evicted at short notice, where can I go?**

You should seek help immediately from an independent adviser, like Citizens Advice. An adviser will be able to check whether your landlord has followed the correct procedure to evict you and whether you have rights to be allowed back into your property. They should also be able to help you with finding alternative accommodation. Also, if you are homeless, your local council may have to help find you somewhere to live. Depending on your circumstances, they might also provide you with emergency accommodation. Again, an independent adviser will be able to help you with this application.

### **What should I do if I am struggling to pay the rent on time?**

If you need help to pay your rent, you may be able to apply for housing benefit or for help with your housing costs from Universal Credit. You may also be entitled to other benefits if you are unemployed or on a low income. If you are struggling with debt, seek help from an independent adviser, like Citizens Advice.

Source - Citizens Advice Bureau

### **New guidance on spent convictions and underlying conduct in applying 'fit and proper person' test?**

The Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) has held that local authorities may – consistent with the protections in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and when determining applications for property licences under the Housing Act 2004 – consider evidence of conduct underlying spent convictions, and that they are in principle entitled to consider evidence of the spent convictions themselves if justice requires it. In doing so, the Tribunal has declined to follow the High Court's controversial decision in the case *R (YA) v Hammersmith and Fulham LBC* [2016].

This case update will be of interest to all local housing authorities, private landlords, and those who advise them. It will also be of wider interest to licensing authorities and those carrying out licensable activities as it relates to the interaction between the criminal law and the "fit and proper person" test, and in particular the application of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ("ROA 1974").

This was a case involving the refusal or revocation by Waltham Forest LBC ("the Council") of licences within the meaning of Parts 2-3 Housing Act 2004 ("HA 2004") for 36 properties owned or managed by the Applicants. The Council refused and revoked

licences in each case because Mrs Hussain and her husband (not a named party to the proceedings) had been convicted for housing-related offences in respect of some of the subject properties.

Mrs Hussain had pleaded guilty to four charges under s.238 HA 2004 for knowingly or recklessly supplying false information: she had falsely asserted that four properties did not contain gas appliances. Her husband pleaded guilty to four charges under s.1 Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 for his part in fraudulently backdating the gas certificates that were ultimately supplied to the Council. Those convictions became spent on 12 May 2018 and 29 June 2019 respectively.

The Council asserted that those convictions and/or the conduct underlying them was relevant to its statutory duty under ss.64(3), 88(3) HA 2004 to determine whether the Applicants were "fit and proper" people to hold a licence. The Applicants complained that s.4(1) ROA 1974, particularly when read in light of the decision in R (YA) v Hammersmith and Fulham LBC [2016], precluded the Council, and on appeal the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) ("FTT"), from considering any evidence regarding anything underlying a conviction that had become spent under the ROA 1974.

The Applicants brought appeals to the FTT against the Council's determinations. The Council responded by way of statements of case and evidence that included details of the spent convictions and the conduct comprised therein. The Applicants applied to strike out those parts of the statements of case and the evidence. The Council invited the FTT to transfer the strikeout application to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) for determination, particularly because of a concern that the FTT would consider itself bound by YA, which the Council sought to criticise. The strikeout application was heard and determined by the then-President of the Upper Tribunal, Sir David Holgate, and by the President of the FTT, Judge Siobhan McGrath.

The argument was in two main parts: first the effect of a conviction becoming spent and second the effect of the "safety valve" justice exemption.

In relation to the first, the Applicants submitted that the effect of a conviction becoming spent is that it and (following YA) the conduct underlying it could not thereafter be relied upon. The Council submitted that (i) the decision in YA was clearly wrong and there was no basis for the purposive interpretation adopted by the Deputy Judge in that case, (ii) there is no prohibition on the conduct underlying a spent conviction

being referred to, and (iii) any decision to the contrary, such as that in YA, leads to absurd consequences such that for example the criminality by a person who is not convicted can, whereas the criminality by a person who is convicted cannot, be relied upon.

The Upper Tribunal held that s.4(1) was to be read in three parts: first the part preceding s.4(1)(a), then s.4(1)(a), and then s.4(1)(b). The effect is that (i) a rehabilitated person is to be treated for all purposes in law as not having committed, been charged with, prosecuted for, or convicted of the offence, but (ii) that does not mean that the underlying conduct must be disregarded, and (iii) in proceedings before a judicial authority a person may not be asked questions which would reveal a spent conviction. **Put another way, although the conviction becomes "legally irrelevant", the underlying conduct will not.** To the extent that the Deputy Judge decided to the contrary in YA, his decision was criticised.

Accordingly, the application to strike out any material relating to the conduct underlying a spent conviction was dismissed. In relation to the justice exemption, the Applicants submitted that:

(i) A local authority determining an application for a licence does not amount to "proceedings before a judicial authority" such that the justice exemption could not be relied upon.

(ii) The fact that the hearing before the FTT may involve consideration of "matters of which the authority was unaware" does not mean that it can receive evidence which would have been inadmissible before the Council.

(iii) The threshold for permitting reliance on spent convictions (or conduct underlying them) under the justice exemption is so high that there was no basis on which to conclude that a properly directed FTT should apply it.

The Council submitted that:

(i) Its determination and that of the FTT amounted to proceedings before a judicial authority because refusing/revoking a licence affected the "rights, privileges, obligations or liabilities of [a] person".

(ii) It was therefore permissible for the Council to consider the evidence of the convictions themselves (rather than the underlying conduct).

(iii) Justice could not be done without admitting evidence of the convictions and the underlying conduct.

**The Upper Tribunal held obiter that the determination by a local authority whether to revoke or refuse a licence amounted to proceedings before a judicial authority. The effect is that the Council was, in principle, entitled to introduce otherwise inadmissible evidence of spent convictions (that is, as opposed to just the underlying conduct). It also held that the question whether justice required the convictions to be admitted before the FTT was a matter for it, the burden for justifying reliance being on the Council. It provided some guidance as to the application of that test.**

Accordingly, it was not appropriate for the Upper Tribunal to determine whether the evidence of the convictions themselves should be struck out; that was a matter for the FTT upon the substantive appeals being remitted there for determination.

**In summary, Councils can rely upon the conduct underlying criminal convictions in considering the fit and proper person tests and, if they consider it is necessary in the interests of justice to do so, can also rely on the convictions themselves.**

James Findlay QC and Riccardo Calzavara, instructed by Kim Travis of Waltham Forest LBC, appeared for the successful local authority.

Source- Environmental Health via Cornerstone Barristers.

## **The Housing Health and Safety Rating System**

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS or the Rating System) is the Government's approach to the evaluation of the potential risks to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. The HHSRS, although not in itself a standard, was introduced as a replacement for the Housing Fitness Standards.

The HHSRS allows the options for enforcement following an HHSRS assessment.

The HHSRS is founded on the logical evaluation of both the likelihood of an occurrence that could cause harm, and the probable severity of the outcomes of such an occurrence. It relies on the informed professional judgements of both to provide a simple means of representing the severity of any dangers present in a dwelling.

The Rating System is concerned with the assessment of hazards, that is the potential effect of conditions. While the HHSRS can be used to judge the effectiveness of remedial action, it cannot determine or suggest that action – that is a matter for judgement depending on the circumstances, including the design and construction of the dwelling.

The HHSRS is evidence-based. It is supported by extensive reviews of the literature and by detailed analyses of statistical data on the impact of housing conditions on health. This evidence is summarised in the Hazard Profiles section of this Guidance and these are intended to inform professional judgement.

The assessment using the HHSRS is made based on the condition of the whole dwelling. This means that, before such an assessment can be made, a thorough inspection of the dwelling must be carried out to collect the evidence of the condition. While this does not involve a new approach to the inspection of dwellings, it does require an understanding and appreciation of the potential effects that could result from conditions and deficiencies which should have been identified during the inspection.

The HHSRS concentrates on threats to health and safety. It is generally not concerned with matters of quality, comfort and convenience. However, in some cases, such matters could also have an impact on a person's physical or mental health or safety and so can be considered. Also, as the Rating System is about the assessment of hazards (the potential effect of conditions), the form of construction and the type and age of the dwelling do not directly affect an assessment. However, these matters will be relevant to determining the cause of any problem and so indicate the nature of any remedial action.

### **Landlord's Responsibility**

For enforcement purposes, the Rating System is concerned with those matters which can be considered the responsibility of the owner or landlord.

Generally, the landlord (or owner) is responsible for the provision, state and proper working order of the following:

(a) the exterior and structural elements of the dwelling; and

(b) the installations within and associated with the dwelling for:

- the supply and use of water, gas and electricity;
- personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage;
- food safety;
- ventilation;
- space heating; and
- heating water.

The landlord (or owner), however, is not responsible for the state of any fixtures or fittings provided by the occupier unless they have been adopted by the landlord (or owner) and are not removable. Adoption by the landlord (or owner) can occur on the change of tenancy where fixtures or fittings provided by the previous occupier remain at the commencement of the new tenancy.

Although not intended to be an interpretation of the law, the following guidance is given as an explanation of the landlord's (or owner's) responsibilities.

### **Provision, State and Proper Working Order**

The term "provision, state and proper working order" includes:

A. the provision of the materials and the proper construction of the element;

B. the provision of the facilities and equipment and their proper installation and connection;

C. the maintenance of the elements and installation, in a proper state of repair and in proper working order; and

D. where necessary, the replacement of obsolete, defective or ineffective elements or installations.

The Rating System has been developed to allow assessment of all the main potential housing related hazards. By focusing on potential hazards, it places the emphasis directly on the risk to health or safety.

As the range of potential housing hazards have differing characteristics, the Rating System uses a formula to generate a numerical score which allows comparison of the full range of hazards. This, together with the simple but logical approach of assessing both the likelihood and harm outcome allows the comparison of highly likely minor hazards and very unlikely major ones. Whatever the hazard, the higher the score, the greater the risk.

Development of the HHSRS was carried out over several years. As well as those directly involved with the development, there was considerable input, advice and evaluation of the underlying principles of the Rating System from a wide range of experts, including experts in risk assessment, housing, environmental health, and risks in buildings. This development involved wide ranging testing of both the theory and the practical application.

The concept was originally proposed in 1998. Over the following years several options for the approach to assessment and scoring were tried and tested, and the most consistent and robust was finalized and released in July 2000 as Version 13. During this time, the underlying principles and the assessment formula were shown to be sound. Between July 2000 and January 2003, the statistical evidence which supports the Rating System and informs judgments was refined and updated, the reaction of practitioners to Version 1 was evaluated, and the application of the system in dwellings in multioccupied buildings reviewed<sup>4</sup>. Version 2 was published in November 2004.

The principles and approach developed remain unchanged. However, this statutory guidance uses the refined and updated statistical evidence and takes account of the findings from the evaluation and multi-occupied buildings studies.

The underlying principle of the HHSRS is that –

**Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor.**

## **Domestic abuse in the PRS: A matter of life and death!**

At the last Landlords Forum, a presentation was given by

For more information visit:

[dahalliance](#)

[National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline](#) - [0808 2000247](#) (24 hours a day 365 365 days a year)

## **Next landlord's forum 18 March 2020**

I hope to provide more information on Community Safety at the Forum in March including a presentation from Community Support and the local Police Superintendent.

## **Rent Deposit Scheme**

Please find enclosed with this newsletter a letter from our Housing Options Team about the Rent Deposit Scheme as well as an application pack.

## **Useful Contact Numbers**

Keith Tayler, Private Sector Housing, HDC - [01480 388 237](#)

Sue Questier, Housing Environmental Health Officer, HDC - [01480 388 286](#)

Housing Assistants, preventing homelessness - [01480 388227](#)

Rent Solutions – **Abigail:** [07710 075 034](#) / **Dan:** [07710 075 037](#)

Julia Blackwell, Energy & Efficiency Officer, HDC - [01480 388 288](#)

John Ingmire, Assistant Benefit Manager, HDC - [01480 388 092](#)

Council Tax, HDC - [01480 388388](#)

Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) - [0845 345 5752](#)

National Landlords Association (NLA) - [020 7840 8937](tel:02078408937)

Eastern Landlords Association (ELA) - [01603 767 101](tel:01603767101)

Tenancy Deposit Protection Team - [0207 944 4400](tel:02079444400)

Energy Saving Advice Service - [0300 123 1234](tel:03001231234)

Valuation Office Agency – [03000 501 501](tel:03000501501)

Ground Floor Ferrers House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1AB

The Landlords Forum is organised and delivered by the Council's Private Housing Section which is a division of Planning and Strategic Housing Services. The section may be contacted by private landlords and tenants seeking general advice on landlord and tenant law. The opinions and views expressed in the landlord's newsletter are not necessarily those of the Huntingdonshire District Council and all information is accepted in good faith at the time of going to press.

The Huntingdonshire Landlords' Forum is a central part of the housing service the Council provides to private sector landlords. The Forum exists so that landlords can meet Officers and other landlords to share their experiences. The Council is there to arrange the meetings, invite along guest speakers, listen to what landlords have to say and, where it is needed, offer support and advice.

What do we get in return? We get good feedback about what landlords think of the services the Council provides and landlords use: Housing Benefits; Environmental Health Services, Landlord and Tenant Advice and Housing Grants. We also get good information about how an important group of local housing providers run their businesses. All this helps us to plan services to the private sector that are rooted in an understanding of what the key issues are for landlords, their tenants and prospective private tenants. Hopefully this will help us to raise our standards and in so doing help raise standards across the local lettings industry.

The Forum is not a Council-sponsored talking shop. Landlords' views are canvassed and considered when we come to review and producing our policies and we can sometimes introduce suggested changes.

If you are a landlord or a prospective landlord, the Forum is for you. Join our mailing list by phoning [01480 388237](tel:01480388237) or email [keith.tayler@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:keith.tayler@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

We will let you know about our programme of meetings and send you a copy of our free newsletter. If you are new to the industry, we will also send you a copy of our landlord pack which is full of the information you will need to help you make a success of your business.

This department may also be contacted for information about;

- Landlord and Tenant Law
- Tenancy Agreements
- Finding a suitable tenant for your accommodation
- Advertising available property for rent
- Registered Rents and Local Housing Allowance
- Tenancy Deposit scheme
- How to set up and end a tenancy

For information or advice please call Keith Tayler, Private Sector Housing Officer - [01480 388237](tel:01480388237)

**The next landlord's forum will be held 18 March 2010 at Pathfinder House  
Huntingdon 6.30 pm – 8 pm**

If you wish to have an item included onto the agenda, please contact us on the number above.

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