

## Landlords' Forum

# ACTION BRIEF

August 2010

ISSUE 19

## Hello to you all from the Private Sector Housing team

In April, Harrogate Borough Council provided 16 FREE places at a National Landlords' Foundation course at Harrogate Fire Station; the price for the course would have been £85 for members or £110 for non-members, so this represented a great deal for landlords. Paul Gott, regional representative for Yorkshire's National Landlords' Association

(NLA), presented the course. The response from landlords was encouraging initially but on the day the attendance figures were low, which was disappointing. From those who did attend the feedback was very positive.

Harrogate Borough Council is intending to hold another trade fair in November.

There will be a host of stands for you to browse and workshops for you to attend. It will also provide an ideal opportunity for you to network with other landlords.

The Fair will be widely publicised and flyers will be sent out, so please come along and support it and make use of the specialist

knowledge, which is being made available for you.

Since the last Harrogate Landlords' Trade Fair held in September 2009, a similar format of trade fairs was rolled out across North Yorkshire, and West Yorkshire has followed suit.



### The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The HSE now has a one stop shop gas safety website for landlords and this can be accessed by clicking on the following link,

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/landlords/index.htm>

### Norwich landlord jailed for near-fatal fire

A Norwich landlord has been jailed for two-and-a-half years and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs after a fire in one of his properties left a teenage tenant so badly burned she was given less than one per cent chance of survival.

Source: LACORS: April 2010

### Planning Consent for HMOs

The Government has published new planning orders, which came into force on the 6th April 2010 and new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) now need planning consent.

The first order (SI 653/2010) will create a new class C4 (HMOs).

The Government has also published a new general permitted development order (SI 654/2010), which will enable properties within use class C4 (HMOs) to automatically revert to use class C3 (dwelling houses) without needing planning consent.

To obtain further guidance on these changes to planning follow the link: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi\\_20100653\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100653_en_1)

Source: LACORS, 17 March 2010

The news from the Credit Union 10 months on is that it now has:

- 2,800 members from an initial membership of 1,000
- 500 members now using paypoint cards
- member savings of over £800,000
- over £1.5m of loans made since launch

**SERVICES:**

- PayPoint - access at Post Offices and PayPoint outlets
- 10 payroll savings schemes with 260 members
- 6 new collection points in Scarborough and Selby
- 1 new collection point in York
- 5 library collection points
- 5 Scarborough Borough Council collection points

**EDUCATION:**

- 5 Schools' Savings Clubs and Y-Save Junior account
- 800+ school pupils have received money skills classes
- 6 adult money skills courses delivered

If you would like further information from the Credit Union then follow this link, <http://www.nycu.org.uk/>

*Source: North Yorkshire Credit Union, 2010*

## Landlords' Forum Webpage



Don't forget to check out the webpage for updates and health alerts at

[www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-5043](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-5043)



## Landlords - Protect your property from fire

Dangers of using foreign electrical appliances in the UK:

- Plug/socket could overheat and start a fire
- Appliance cable could overheat and start a fire
- Danger of electric shock
- No fuse protection increases risk of fire.

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service can provide tenants with FREE EU conversion plugs where premises have been identified and where occupiers are using non-standard European plugs and appliances in UK sockets.

Benefits of using an EU conversion plug:

- It will make electrical appliance safe for use in UK sockets
- Reduce the risk of fire
- Reduce risk of electric shock
- Protect your property from fire



Contact Harrogate Fire Safety on 01423 504082 for more information.

*Source: The Electrical Safety Council, Information leaflet and Harrogate Fire Safety*



## Summer Property Repairs

The National Landlords' Association is advising landlords that the summer months are a perfect time to schedule routine maintenance and to carry out improvements to their properties. Devising a simple checklist and carrying out a visual inspection of the property will give you an opportunity to prepare and plan ahead.

## Landlords' Repair Responsibilities

All landlords have a legal responsibility to keep their properties in a good state of repair. These are legal requirements as well as best practice for the safe and effective letting of a property. It also makes good business sense to protect your investments and ensure that small problems don't lead to big repair bills.

*Source: National Landlords' Association, July 2010*

## Identity Cards for Foreign Nationals

### USEFUL INFORMATION

On **25 November 2008**, the UK Border Agency changed the way it issues permission to stay (grants of leave to remain) in the United Kingdom. Identity cards for foreign nationals are a form of residence permit and replace the stickers previously placed in passports.

The programme is rolling out incrementally by immigration application type over three years and will require all new applicants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) coming to, or extending leave in the UK for more than six months, to have a card within three years. Ninety percent of foreign nationals will have an identity card by 2014/15.

All those applying for further leave to remain under the rollout categories are required to enrol their biometric details (fingerprints and digital facial image) as part of the application process.

Successful applicants are then sent the card by secure delivery.

As well as showing the holder's photo, name, date of birth, nationality and immigration status, the credit-card sized document has a secure electronic chip for biometric details.



The card will help to confirm a person's immigration status and eligibility to entitlements in the UK. It will also help employers, educational establishments and other public service providers to understand a migrant's immigration status via a single document.

For further information about identity cards for foreign nationals and guidance on checking the card as well as information for employers and sponsors, see the website: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

**Source: Home Office, UK Border Agency website, July 2010**

York and  
North Yorkshire  
Probation Trust



## Harrogate Probation Service

The Probation Service is looking to work with landlords in the Harrogate district by way of offering accommodation with full support to landlords.

Harrogate's Probation Service works with people who have been convicted of a crime. Often offending behaviour is fuelled by a lack of stable accommodation, but some offenders can make good tenants. They have support from the Probation Service and other organisations to enable them to integrate into society and lead law-abiding lives. If they get into difficulty with a tenancy there are people available to help them.

Local landlords who work with the Probation Service to offer accommodation to clients can specify if they do not want tenants who have committed particular crimes. Working with the Probation Service allows a landlord to access details about a prospective tenant before they confirm accommodation, and Probation Housing Officers can work with the tenant while they are in the house to ensure that they are managing the property and that housing benefit is paid direct to the landlord. Roughly one in four people in Great Britain has a criminal conviction. Working with the Probation Service means that a landlord knows about their tenant's conviction.

**For further information please contact Teresa Dcaccia, Housing Officer at Harrogate Probation on 01423 566764.**

## Hassle-free letting for landlords

York Housing Association, on behalf of the Golden Triangle Partnership (Harrogate, Leeds and York councils), is looking for one and two bedroom flats and houses in Harrogate for the new Private Sector Access Scheme. This is designed to help would-be first time buyers, by subsidising their rents and helping them save the deposit for a new home, while offering a guaranteed income and hassle-free management service for landlords.

Landlords are invited to lease their properties for 18 months, extendable up to two years. Although York Housing Association will sub-let the properties at a discount, landlords will receive the current market rent for the property (based on local housing allowance), less a management fee that will cover any void periods. Landlords can opt for a full management service covering the cost of repairs as well, or for a lower-cost service that just covers management and voids. There are no advertising costs, no set-up fees and no hidden extras – once you have signed the lease, if you have signed up for the full service, you can forget about the property for at least 18 months and the rent is guaranteed.

Properties do not need to be furnished but should be carpeted or have floor covering fitted throughout.

For further information contact Katie Wharfedale  
York Housing Association

Tel: 01904 636061  
Fax: 01904 612623

email: [katiwharfedale@yorkha.org.uk](mailto:katiwharfedale@yorkha.org.uk)



## Digital Switchover



In the second half of 2011 the analogue television signal for the Yorkshire TV region will be switched off and replaced with digital services. Tyne Tees will go digital in 2012. This will mean that your tenants will be able to watch TV only if they have equipment capable of receiving a digital signal such as Freeview, satellite or cable. Depending on the age and quality of the existing aerial it may need to be upgraded to receive a digital signal through a Freeview box or TV.

The role of the landlord will vary depending on the type of property. For most communal aerials the landlord will have the responsibility of making sure that the aerial can receive a digital signal. Where the aerial serves only one property the terms of the tenancy agreement will determine responsibility; if nothing is specified in the agreement, the landlord may need to give the tenant permission to upgrade an aerial or install a satellite dish. In all cases landlords must ensure they adhere to any planning permission in relation to listed buildings. Tenants are usually responsible for providing and paying for the in-house equipment such as a Freeview or satellite box or TV.

Remember that if your property cannot receive a digital signal this will put off many prospective tenants and may leave your existing tenants feeling dissatisfied.

For more information please contact Digital UK on 08456 505050 or [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)



*Source: Frances Kneller, Digital Switchover, July 2010*

## HMO Prosecutions

Many local authorities nationally have carried out prosecutions against landlords for failing to licence their Houses In Multiple Occupation (HMO) and for breaching the Management of Houses In Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations. There have been fines as high as £14,000 for breaching licence conditions, such as a non-working fire alarm system and also for breaching the permitted numbers stated on the licence.

*Sourced from Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS): April 2010*

## NEXT EVENT

The next Landlords' Trade Fair is likely to be at Conyngham Hall, Bond End, Knaresborough in November 2010 (date to be confirmed).