

Landlord Hub Newsletter

Welcome to the 17th edition of the landlord hub newsletter

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The last Landlord Hub was held on 16th October 2019 at Greenmeadow Gof Club, with over 40 in attendance.

Thank you to everyone who attended.

As always, we as Local Authority have an administrative role within the Hub but you as landlords are the key to its success, please let us know of any guests or topics that you would like to see covered at future events.

Together we can make the private rented sector an attractive place in which to grow and protect your business and a viable and affordable housing option of choice for tenants.

The speakers for the evening were:

- Douglas Haig, Residential Landlord Association - Vice Chairman and Director for Wales, provided an update and briefing Landlords on increasing the minimum notice period for a 'no fault eviction'.
- Anne Rowland from Rent Smart Wales gave a presentation on current and upcoming changes.

Are you complying with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards?

Domestic Private Rented Property in Wales are regulated by the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. An EPC rating of E or above is required on these property in order to comply with the law.

If you let out a property under a domestic shorthold, regulated or assured shorthold tenancy, you should be aware of two dates.

1st of April 2018: Tenancy agreements which started or renewed after this date were required to meet the new minimum levels immediately.

1st April 2020: The legislation will extend to cover existing tenancies too.

Any domestic rental property that falls foul of the minimum requirements will be deemed unlawful and the landlord may be subject to a civil penalty of up to £5000.

In-depth guidance relating to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards has also been produced by UK government and is available via this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669587/Domestic Private Rented Landlord Guidance - Updated Version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669587/Domestic_Private_Rented_Landlord_Guidance_-_Updated_Version.pdf)



THE DOMESTIC PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY MINIMUM STANDARD

Guidance for landlords and Local Authorities on the minimum level of energy efficiency required to let domestic property under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015



October 2017

Wales regulations revoked after RLA campaign

New regulations demanding landlords in Wales give comprehensive information packs to prospective tenants before accepting holding deposits have been pulled.

Landlords were told that from Friday (December 13) they would have to provide a list of data to prospective tenants, despite the regulations only being confirmed just weeks earlier on November 15.

However, the Welsh Government has now pulled the plans following the intervention of the RLA.

Information

Landlords had been told they needed to provide the following information – in writing – to a prospective tenant, in accordance with The Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Specified Information) (Wales) Regulations 2019:

- amount of holding deposit;
- identify the dwelling in respect of which the deposit is paid;
- name, address, telephone number and any email address of the landlord (and if instructed, the letting agent);
- nature and duration of the contract;
- proposed occupation date;
- amount of rent or other consideration;
- rental period;
- any proposed additional contract terms or proposed modifications or exclusions to fundamental or supplementary terms;
- amount of any security deposit;
- whether a guarantor is required and, if so, any relevant conditions;
- reference checks the landlord (or letting agent) will undertake; and
- information the landlord or letting agent requires from the prospective contract-holder.

The RLA was particularly concerned about point c – the need for a landlord to provide a personal address at this stage in the process – and wrote to the Minister for Housing and Local Government to convey those worries. The Welsh Government said the Minister considered the concerns carefully, and decided to address them by revoking the Regulations and replacing them under The Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Holding Deposit) (Specified Information) (Wales) Regulations 2019 (the “Replacement Regulations”).

The Welsh Government said it still believes the tenant should be provided with details of the contract to give an informed decision.

Amendment

However, it has agreed to amend the regulations to prevent a landlord from having to provide a home address to a prospective tenant before a holding deposit is taken.

The regulations have been changed to specify that “contact details” will be required to be provided by the landlord and/or agent, and where their property is being managed by an agent, only the agent’s contact details will be required. Contact details are not defined and therefore a business address could be provided rather than a home address. It also recognised landlords and agents need more time to make the changes and has delayed implementation of replacement regulations until February 28th, 2020.

Following a request for clarification from the Welsh Government, RLA Wales has ascertained that “there is no requirement for the landlord’s home address to be supplied at any stage should an alternative contact address be given.”

Renting Homes (Fees Etc.) (Wales) Act 2019 Guidance for landlords and agents

What the Act provides:

Sections 2 and 3 of the Renting Homes (Fees Etc.) (Wales) Act 2019 (“the Act”) create offences for a landlord or agent to require a person to make a payment which is prohibited, or to enter into a contract for services, or to require the grant of a loan in consideration of the grant, renewal or continuance of a standard occupation contract, or pursuant to a term of a standard occupation contract.

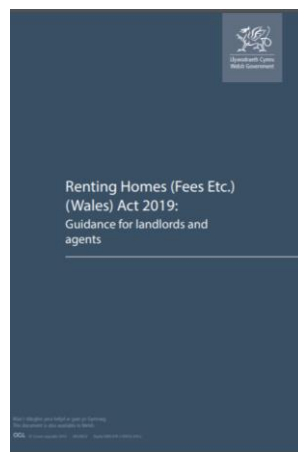
What does this mean?

- Any payment a tenant is required to pay in relation to an assured shorthold tenancy, unless permitted by the Act, is banned and is a “prohibited payment”. This is referred to in this guidance as “the ban”.
- Landlords and agents can’t require the grant of a loan to them, or require a person to enter into a contract for services with them as a condition of a tenancy. When does the ban start? The ban starts when the Act comes into force, on 1st September 2019.

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To view the full letting fees guidance document, please click on the below link:



https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/letting-fees-guidance-for-landlords-and-letting-agents_1.pdf

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

If your home (rented or owner-occupied) is energy inefficient, and you either spend more than 10% of your income on fuel or are vulnerable to the cold, you may be entitled to a grant towards home energy efficiency measures involving heating upgrades and insulation. **Unfortunately, the scheme does not apply to Social Housing tenants.**

The aim of the scheme is to install energy efficiency measures in properties that are currently energy inefficient, which in turn will reduce household fuel bills. This is the opportunity, if your home qualifies, for potential improvements such as new central heating systems, upgrades to the existing heating system and/or insulation measures.

Grants are administered by agents working on behalf of energy companies. Agents collect client details, perform home energy surveys and arrange works for successful applicants.

Torfaen County Borough Council are holding a drop in event for energy efficiency improvement grants on Wednesday 12th February 2020 between 2:00pm and 5:00pm at Greenmeadow Golf Club, Treherbert Road, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP44 2BZ

THERE WILL ALSO BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS TORFAEN COUNCIL CURRENT LOAN PRODUCTS AT THE DROP IN EVENT

Agents for the companies who are offering Local Authority eco flex in Torfaen will be present to discuss the grant and how to make an application at the event.

Home Energy Service and Eco flex Scheme

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to supporting residents vulnerable to fuel poverty and cold homes. Working with the South East Wales Energy Agency, a local fuel poverty charity, the Council has developed the Home Energy Service that acts as a one-stop-shop for all home energy and warmth needs. The service provides advice, support and access to funding aimed at assisting those residents who own their own home or rent privately and are at risk of fuel poverty, or impaired health as a result of living in a cold and/or damp home.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding is a requirement placed on energy companies over a certain size to help improve domestic energy performance in the homes of the vulnerable. 'Flexible Eligibility' allows the Council to set their own criteria to extend the funding outside of the normal rules of ECO that are usually based on qualifying benefits and intends to use it to help reduce fuel poverty in the area.

Please contact the South East Wales Energy Advice Agency on 01633 223111 or email advice@sewenergy.org.uk for further information.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING REFURBISHMENT LOANS

New criteria, terms and conditions have been introduced on loan products available to owner occupiers, empty property owners and landlords/developers who wish to refurbish houses in Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

For further information please contact the following officers:

For Torfaen residents contact Hayley Gray

E-mail: hayley.gray@torfaen.gov.uk

Telephone: 01495 742629

For Monmouthshire residents contact Steve Griffiths

E-mail: stephengriffiths@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01633 644455



OVER TO YOU!

We are always happy to receive suggestions and feedback concerning the Landlord Hub. We invite Landlords and Agents to make suggestions on what topics you would like us to cover in future forums.

- What would you like to be updated on?
- Is there any information you require?

Please let us know and we will make every effort to include your chosen topics. Send us your requests to Hayley.gray@torfaen.gov.uk or StephenGriffiths@Monmouthshire.gov.uk

Monmouthshire County Council

Your local authority officer:

Stephen Griffiths

Tel: 01633 644455

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@Landlord_Hub

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Landlord Hub

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY -

THE DATE FOR THE NEXT LANDLORD FORUM IS **WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2020**