



## Next Landlord Forum

The next forum will be held on Tuesday 28th September 2010 at 2pm in the Gateway on Sankey Street, Warrington (please note that this is a change from the previously advertised date). Presentations will include an update on housing benefit and details of the new Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme. A formal invitation will be sent out in August but if you want to reserve your place now, please e-mail [jhigson@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:jhigson@warrington.gov.uk) or telephone 01925-442458.

## New Government abandons proposed changes to the private rented sector

Housing Minister, Grant Shapps, has confirmed that the Government will not implement a national register of landlords, arguing that a register could discourage investment in the private rented sector. Other measures for the private rented sector proposed by the last Government will also be scrapped. These included the proposed compulsory written tenancy agreements, a housing 'hotline' and advice website and additional regulation of letting and management agents.

Mr Shapps said: 'The vast majority of England's 3 million private tenants are happy with the service they receive, I am happy that the current system strikes the right balance between the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords. The Government has no plans to create any burdensome red tape and bureaucracy.'



He added: 'For the bad landlords, I am putting Councils on alert to use the range of powers already at their disposal to make sure tenants are properly protected.'



## Accreditation Scheme

A new Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme will be launched in September 2010. The scheme is voluntary and free to join. Whilst Warrington's former scheme accredited individual properties, the new Cheshire scheme will accredit landlords for their whole portfolio, with them applying to the authority where they own the most rented properties. Accreditation status would last for 3 years and promotes landlords who have good quality accommodation which is well managed.

We are currently consulting on the scheme and you should have received some information from us very recently about this. If you haven't received this information, please contact us using the details given overleaf.



# Home Information Packs

The requirement for the unpopular Home Information Packs (HIPs) has been suspended. Homes marketed for sale on / after 21st May 2010 will no longer require a HIP. However, the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be retained and sellers will need to commission (but not necessarily receive) an EPC before marketing their property.

## Falls on stairs

Falls on stairs account for about 25% of home falls (both fatal and non-fatal). Although fewer falls occur on the stairs than on the level, stair falls are much more likely to lead to serious injury.

When inspecting a property, officers from Private Sector Housing carry out an assessment of health and safety risks from 29 hazards, one of which is falls on stairs. The most vulnerable group for this hazard is the over 60s.

In order to minimise the chance of someone falling on stairs and to reduce the effect should a fall occur, the following advice is given:-

- Ensure adequate artificial light is provided
- Ensure the stairs are in good repair, including securely fitted handrails and carpets.
- Remove any furniture or radiators from the area at the bottom of the stairs. Should a fall down the stairs arise, hitting such objects exacerbates the injuries sustained. Carpeting the floor at the foot of the stairs will help to cushion any fall.
- Varnishing stair treads will increase the risk of slipping; slip resistant finishes should be chosen.
- Watch out for windows and glazed doors at the foot of the stairs. Consider the need for safety glass or perhaps replace a glazed door with a solid one.



## Changes to Planning Legislation

From 6th April 2010, planning permission will be required to set up a new house in multiple occupation (HMO) with any number of occupants (previously permission was only required where there were 6 or more occupants).

The definition of an HMO under these new requirements is the same as under the Housing Act 2004, Section 254. However, it is anticipated that changes will be made in October so that planning permission will only be required in circumstances where the Planning Authority has removed 'permitted development rights'.

## Contact details

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