Landlords Newsletter

Issue 21

July 2020

Accelerated Possessions (Section 8)
There is now a new claim form – N5B – for accelerated possession proceedings, bringing the form up to date with various restrictions, including the Tenant Fees Act 2019.

Tenant Fees Act 2019
Originally this Act covered only new tenancies. However, from 1 June 2020 it covers all tenancies. Landlords and agents can no longer charge fees other than rent, deposits, holding deposits and charges for defaulting on the contract. This means that fees for extras such as cleaning, pets, references, inventories and administration are now banned.

A breach of the Act could result in a fine of up to £5,000 and would also prevent a Section 21 (no fault eviction) being valid until those fees were refunded.

Can I inspect my property during the Coronavirus lockdown?
Yes as long as you maintain social distancing. However, if the tenant is shielding or self-isolating due to the track and trace system you should postpone routine inspections.

Contact details
Private Sector Housing:
Housingplus,
The Gateway,
85-101 Sankey St,
Warrington
WA1 1SR

Reception is accessed from Springfield Street and is open 9am - 12 noon and 2pm - 5pm Monday to Friday.

Phone:
01925 246909 for Private Sector Housing and 01925 246868 for Housing Advice.

Email: privatesector@warrington.gov.uk

Landlord forum
The last planned meeting (on 17 March 2020) had to be cancelled at short notice following Government advice relating to the spread of COVID 19.

The next scheduled meeting is 22 September 2020 but this may also have to be cancelled; a decision will be made in August but if you hear nothing further don’t turn up without checking first.

Do you receive this newsletter by post?
If the answer is yes but you have an email address, we would be grateful if you would allow us send landlord newsletters and forum invitations by email in the future. Please contact us with your email address so that we can amend our records.
First time central heating grants for Landlords

The Government backed ECO3 scheme includes first time central heating (FTCH) for private landlords and homeowners whose properties have never had gas central heating system before and where the occupier is on certain benefits. The installers will assist with connecting the gas pipeline (free within 23 metres of the gas main) and gas meter and will install for free:

- An A rated Worcester Bosch combi boiler with 2 year parts and labour guarantee
- Radiators with Thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's) and pipework throughout the property.
- Remote control thermostat

The qualifying benefits are:

- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer’s Allowance
- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Guarantee Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Income Support
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Universal Credit
- War Pensions Mobility Supplement
- Working Tax Credit

Please ask your tenants / homeowner if they receive any of the above benefits.

To arrange a survey or for further information please contact:

David Dickson
ECO3 Lead Generator
Mobile: 07305 596080
Email: davedickson55@hotmail.com

Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regs 2020

These came into force on 1 June 2020 and require landlords to have the electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested at least every 5 years by a person who is qualified and competent. The electrical safety report must be given to their tenants, and if requested to their local authority. The regulations apply to all new tenancies from 1 June 2020 and to existing tenancies from 1 April 2021. The regulations cover assured shorthold tenancies and licences to occupy as long as it is the tenant’s main residence and they are required to pay rent.

Where the report shows that further investigation or remedial work is necessary, this should be completed within 28 days or a shorter period if deemed urgent. Confirmation is needed in writing to the tenant and local authority within 28 days of completion. If the report shows a code C1, C2 or F1 then further action is needed. The C3 classification does not require works, it just recommends improvement.

Where the local authority believes the landlord hasn't complied with their duties under the Regs, notice must be served within 21 days, giving 28 days to do the work. If urgent action is needed, the authority may (with the tenant’s consent) arrange for a qualified person to do the work and recover the costs from the landlord. The authority can also carry out works and recover costs if a Remedial Action notice isn't complied with. The authority must give the tenant 48 hours notice of works. Landlords can appeal notices or remedial action taken.

Penalties of up to £30,000 can also be levied where landlords have breached their duties. However, landlords are not in breach of their duties if they can demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to comply.

If you already have an electrical report that doesn't require remedial action then no further report is needed until its fifth anniversary.