

Landlord Newsletter - January 2021

New 'How to Rent Guide'

The Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) released a new version of the 'How to Rent Guide' on 10 December 2020. For any post 1 October 2015 assured shorthold tenancy or renewal tenancy, the tenant must be provided with the most recent version of the guide at the time the tenancy started or renewed. Failure to do so prevents a Section 21 notice to quit from being served. A hard copy must be provided unless the tenant expressly agrees to being emailed a PDF version. Sending a link is not enough. The revised guide includes information on the new electrical safety regulations.

Green Homes Voucher Scheme

Home owners and residential landlords can apply for a Green Homes Grant voucher towards the cost of installing energy efficient improvements to their properties. Vouchers will cover two thirds of the eligible cost up to £5,000 maximum. Measures have to include at least one primary measure such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, solid wall insulation (internal / external), under floor insulation, flat roof insulation, room in roof insulation or low carbon heating measures such as air source heat pumps and solar thermal.

Secondary measures can be claimed up to the value of the primary measures for replacing single glazing, insulating hot water tanks and providing heating controls etc. The vouchers cover the cost of materials, labour and VAT. All work must be carried out by a Trust Mark registered installer. Vouchers must be redeemed within three months of issue and the scheme is currently open until March 2022.

For more information go to: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>

Landlord Forum

Unfortunately the landlord forum had to be cancelled in March and September 2020 due to the pandemic. No date has been set for the next forum but we do plan to hold another forum once it is safe to do so.

Contact Details:

Private Sector Housing
Housingplus
The Gateway
85 -101 Sankey Street
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 246868 for Housing Advice.

Email: privatesector@warrington.gov.uk

Successful Prosecutions

Landlords Letting Unsafe Accommodation Successfully Convicted

Two Warrington landlords were prosecuted as their properties did not meet fire safety requirements.

Kristian Johnstone, 28, of Suffolk Road, Altrincham, Director of Easylet Residential, Bridge Street, Warrington and Relocate NW Ltd, owns a property on Evelyn Street in Sankey Bridges, and rents out properties on Goulden Street in Bewsey, and Algernon Street in Fairfield and Howley. The properties were functioning as houses in multiple occupation (HMO's). He was convicted for offences relating to the fire safety requirements of the three properties under the HMO Management Regulations and also failure to license an HMO.

Mr Johnstone attended Chester Magistrates Court on 22 October 2020 and pleaded guilty to 38 offences. He was fined £19,000, plus £1,000 in legal costs and was ordered to pay a £181 victim surcharge.

The sentencing judge said: "Offences show a complete failure to grapple with the regulatory regime" there were "multiple failings in this case to provide safe accommodation for a large number of tenants" and there was a "significant number of people exposed to serious risk of death".

In another case, David Cooper, 70, of Thorneycroft Drive, Fairfield and Howley, was letting out his home to three other tenants without meeting HMO regulations.

He was prosecuted for offences relating to fire safety, in addition to offences relating to the production of appropriate gas and electrical safety documentation. He was also prosecuted for a further offence under the Housing Act for failure to provide other documentation required by the council.

Mr Cooper attended Warrington Combined Crown and Magistrates Court Centre on 30 October 2020 and pleaded not guilty to six offences. He was found guilty on all charges and fined a total of £1,895, some credit was given to the fact he had since completed some works.

Electrical Certificates required for all rented properties

Whilst satisfactory electrical safety certificates have had to be provided for all new assured shorthold tenancies and licences to occupy since June 2020, they will need to be provided for all existing tenancies from 1 April 2021. Any remedial work must be carried out within 28 days (or such shorter time as specified) and confirmation sent to the tenant and local authority that the work has been completed. New electrical safety certificates are required every 5 years.

Do you receive this newsletter by post?

If yes but you have an email address, we would be grateful if you would allow us to contact you electronically in future with landlord newsletters / forum invitations. Please contact us with your email address so that we can amend our records and save the Council money on postage.