

# inside letting

EDINBURGH'S LINK WITH LANDLORDS

ISSUE 21 WINTER 2009



## The Scottish Government has announced that it intends to introduce a mandatory Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

It believes that it is time to take strong action to protect tenants, and support the many landlords who do deal with deposits fairly.

After consulting on the issues, it is intended to launch a scheme which will:

- reduce the number of wrongly withheld deposits
- speed up deposit returns
- ensure funds are available at the end of the tenancy
- when there is a dispute, ensure that the amount returned is determined in a fair way.

Alex Neil, Housing and Communities Minister, said "We have worked with a wide range of stakeholders to maximise consensus on this issue. We will continue to work with them over the next few months to put in place a practical rent deposit scheme that will offer real protection for tenants.

"The scheme will strengthen the reputation of the private rented sector in Scotland, which makes a vital contribution to meeting housing needs".

This announcement has been welcomed by groups who have first hand experience of supporting tenants who have had problems with getting their deposits returned. Liam Burns, President of the National Union of Students (NUS) said "Students across Scotland are delighted that the Scottish

## Government announces Tenancy Deposit Scheme

Government is acting to protect their tenancy deposits. Unfairly withheld deposits are one of the biggest issues for students living in the private rented sector."

Shelter has also backed the Government in its announcement of the scheme. "Shelter Scotland has long campaigned for a tenancy deposit protection scheme in Scotland that also offers a speedy service to resolve any disputes," said Graeme Brown, Director of Shelter Scotland.

**"The scheme will strengthen the reputation of the private rented sector in Scotland, which makes a vital contribution to meeting housing needs."**

However, a mandatory tenancy deposit scheme is not universally popular. A number of organisations have expressed their disappointment that, despite opposition from their organisations, the Scottish Government has decided to proceed with developing a scheme.

John Blackwood, Director of Scottish Association of Landlords, said in response to the announcement, "We continue to feel that the introduction of a scheme is disproportionate to the level of problem which exists. We are not denying that tenancy deposits are unlawfully withheld in some cases, just as in some cases the deposit does not cover the costs of repairing damage caused by the tenant. We have maintained our opposition to the introduction of the scheme throughout the working group discussions, and

although we tried hard to get other members to consider alternative methods of addressing the problem, we acknowledge we were fighting a losing battle."

The Government will now work with stakeholders in the coming months to develop a practical rent deposit scheme, and will also explore the options for some form of dispute resolution process to deal with tenancy deposit disputes.

As Tenancy Deposit legislation is contained in part 4 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, ministers have the ability to act quickly. Inside Letting will keep you up to date with how the proposals for the scheme develop.

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# welcome



Lindsay Souter  
EDITOR

Welcome to Issue 21 of Inside Letting. Earlier this year the City of Edinburgh Council commissioned a range of new services that aim to prevent homelessness. In this issue, you can find out more about some of the services which private landlords and agents may be able to benefit from.

On page 2 you will find information about the Cyrenians Homeless Prevention Service which enables landlords and tenants to access specialist mediation and support.

On Page 5 you can find out about the Edinburgh Housing Advice Partnership which can offer support to private tenants in difficult situations. Both of these services aim to help resolve problems which might be threatening the tenancy.

Also in this issue, we bring you details of the Energy Assistance Package and Home Insulation Scheme which landlords can tap into to help achieve a better rating on their Energy Performance Certificates.

As ever, Inside Letting aims to keep landlords and agents in Edinburgh fully up to date on developments in private renting. With the announcement that there will be a Tenancy Deposit Scheme in Scotland, landlords and agents have even more to think about. Rest assured, Inside Letting will bring you all the news as it happens.

[insideletting@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:insideletting@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## Mediation Service for Landlords and Tenants

**Do you have tenants that need to improve their relationships with neighbours, or have tenants whose relationship is breaking down? Do you have a difference of opinion over a deposit deduction? Is your tenant withholding rent? Are you considering ending someone's tenancy?**

The Cyrenians Homelessness Prevention Service (HPS) has a landlord and tenant mediator who can provide help.

Newly commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Council, the HPS provides support for people who have not yet made a homelessness presentation but are at a heightened risk of becoming homeless in the near future.

One of the key aspects of this service is mediation – which is offered between landlords and their tenants or mortgage holders and their creditors.

The mediator acts as a middle person to facilitate that difficult conversation which might make the difference

that enables someone to remain in their existing home. This service is particularly for people who have not been homeless before and are likely to have been directly affected by the financial crisis faced by many today.

The aim of mediation is not to allocate blame or point fingers. The objective is to provide the space and opportunity for people to have difficult conversations which lead to constructive actions, healthier relationships in the future and, wherever possible, resolution to the conflict that has arisen.

Mediation is not an easy option. Each party is asked to discuss their position with the mediator. Subsequently a face-to-face meeting takes place to talk through differences and problems. The mediator convenes this meeting and is there to manage the discussions to stop them from getting out of hand. However, our experience to date is that problems are resolved amicably and it is possible to

stop homelessness from happening, whilst meeting the requirements of landlords and lenders.

It is likely that the mediation will highlight support issues for tenants and home owners. Therefore, the service provides support for those involved to work through these problems, which are often to do with how they manage their finances.

Please contact the Cyrenians HPS to see if they can help you to resolve the situation whilst avoiding homelessness.

The mediation aspect of the Cyrenians HPS is provided in partnership with SACRO's Edinburgh Community Mediation Service.

For more information or to make a referral contact the Cyrenians Homelessness Prevention Service.

Tel: 0131 475 2556

E-mail: [hps@cyrenians.org.uk](mailto:hps@cyrenians.org.uk)

Web: [www.cyrenians.org.uk](http://www.cyrenians.org.uk)

Inside Letting is published by The City of Edinburgh Council. Please contact:

Lindsay Souter, The City of Edinburgh Council  
Chesser House, 500 Gorgie Road  
Edinburgh EH11 3YJ  
Tel: 0131 529 7454

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# Choosing a Letting Agent

**Peter Grant** Chief Executive of Grant Management

**Over the past decade more than a million Britons have become landlords. The first step to a successful buy-to-let investment is without doubt selecting the right property, but what you do next is just as important.**

Even when rental demand is high, landlords should always ensure that the property is in the best possible condition so that you can attract quality tenants.

Make sure you find time to do your research and pitch the property at the right price. Look on the internet, in local papers, or better still speak to letting agents who can offer invaluable advice.

It is important that as a landlord you are aware of the legal aspects of letting out your property. Good agents will be able to guide you through the maze of legal obligations, energy performance certificates, tenancy agreements and dealing with deposits. Good agents will also keep you informed of changes to regulations as they occur to ensure your property complies.



A letting agent can be extremely helpful when introducing and vetting prospective tenants, advising and arranging inventory and condition reports and changes to utility accounts and council tax. It will also collect the rent and pay it into your account, pay bills on your behalf, inspect the property, recommend and oversee any maintenance, repairs and redecoration.

So as a tenant or as a landlord, how do you find a good letting agent? An obvious thing to look for is if they are a member of a professional body such as ARLA or RICS. This will mean the agent is following a

code of conduct and the tenant deposit is guaranteed. It's a bit like booking a holiday through ABTA.

Other questions to ask are how long they have been in business, how much do they charge and what do they do for the money. Ask for a full breakdown of charges and charges to come. A low management fee could indicate extra one off charges. What are the hidden charges to both tenants and landlords?

Why not ask to speak to some of their other clients to get their feedback. Have they any other forms of accreditation eg through the local council or IIP (Investors In People). Look for logos on offices and letterheads. Our advice would be to choose a letting agent based on his track record and professionalism.

Any letting agent should take the pain away from managing your property, making it a seamless, stress-free and lucrative arrangement.

For more information on what to look for in a letting agent please visit [www.arla.co.uk](http://www.arla.co.uk)

"The majority of letting agents in Edinburgh are unregulated. For additional protection you can use a letting agent that is regulated by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). They will be subject to annual audits and must conform to strict standards in the way they act and treat their clients. It also means the company will employ professional surveyors who have degrees in property management.

"Make sure your letting agent carries out a full reference check on any tenants and not just a credit check. This should include: employer confirmation, address verification, identity checks, bank account verification and credit searches."

**Jonathan Gordon**

*MRICS Director Clan Gordon*

"Choosing a good letting agent can be daunting for any landlord or prospective tenant. If you are a landlord looking to place your property with an agent make sure that they are a member of an Accreditation Scheme like Edinburgh Landlord Accreditation (ELA) or Landlord Accreditation Scotland (LAS). ELA and LAS are schemes regarded by the Scottish Government and the City of Edinburgh Council as recognised industry quality standards worthy of government support. Using an Accredited Agent is the best way to ensure that your property is looked after by people who comply with the highest standards of property management and have a robust complaints procedure in place if things go wrong." **John Blackwood** MD of Gladstones Property Investment Managers [www.gladstonesproperty.com](http://www.gladstonesproperty.com)

"Licensed ARLA agents must demonstrate a minimum level of knowledge before becoming accepted. They must have passed examinations and undertake continuous professional development to remain licensed. The main benefits of being looked after by an ARLA agent are that the agent will be kept up-to-date with housing legislation and offer safeguards for both landlords and tenants by guaranteeing the security of client funds. Unregulated agents, although accredited, cannot give the guarantees regarding client and tenants funds that ARLA or RICS agents provide. ARLA agents also offer a formal complaints procedure, which is available to both landlords and tenants and includes a financial redress scheme."

**Brian Adair** Executive Chairman of Ryden Lettings

[www.rydenlettings.co.uk](http://www.rydenlettings.co.uk)



**JIM BAULD**  
of TC Young Solicitors

## CASE NOTES:

# Charges and Premiums

**The Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended) prohibits landlords from charging tenants for the cost of preparing a lease, 'key money', administration charges, reference checking or for the cost of preparing an inventory. All of these charges are known as 'premiums'.**

Many renters are first time tenants and have no knowledge of tenancy law. In many cases, they pay what they are asked for, particularly when it comes to certain payments which are sought to secure a tenancy.

It is not uncommon for prospective tenants to be asked by many letting agents to be asked to pay a variety of costs and fees ... terms used include 'key money', 'holding deposits', 'administration fees', 'tenancy reference fees' and 'sign-up fees'.

In most cases, they are told that if these sums are not paid, then they will not be given a tenancy. In some cases they are even told that these fees are 'non refundable' even if their 'application' for a tenancy does not proceed or, worse still, even if the agency or the landlord decide not to proceed.

The law is very clear on these matters. The Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended) prohibits landlords from charging tenants and amount which constitutes a 'premium'. Section 90 of that Act states that 'premium' includes any fine or other sum and any other pecuniary consideration in addition to rent.

The section excludes from that definition a deposit taken by a landlord which is returnable at the termination of a tenancy given as security for the tenant's obligations for 'utility' bills and for damage to the dwelling-house or contents. Such a deposit cannot exceed two months' rent.

Any other payment sought by a landlord is therefore prohibited by law. The 1984 Act also makes it a criminal offence to require the payment of any premium as a condition of the grant of a tenancy.

Further, the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988 require a landlord to prepare a written tenancy agreement, have it signed by both parties and give a copy to the tenant. The law specifically states that this must be done at no cost to the tenant.

**'Premium' includes any fine or other sum and any other pecuniary consideration in addition to rent.**

Landlords and letting agents should not ask for any payments from a prospective tenant which would constitute an 'unlawful premium'. The simplest course of action is to seek only the deposit detailed above.

One exception to this might be a 'holding deposit'. A prospective tenant might be asked to make payment of certain monies to 'hold' a tenancy for a short period, perhaps after viewing a house or flat. This payment is designed to ensure that the prospective tenant gets 'first refusal' on the vacant property. Such payments would not be unlawful so long as they are returnable to the tenant either when the tenancy is completed or if the tenant decides not to proceed. Any letting agent who suggests that a holding deposit is 'non refundable' is breaching the law.

No doubt many letting agents will claim that what they charge is lawful and that tenants have never complained about paying their 'administration fees'. That is probably because most tenants have no knowledge of housing law. The income of the letting agent should be obtained from the person they are acting for, the landlord, not the tenant. If landlords want to 'recover' these costs then it should be done through the rental income from the property, not as a cost from prospective tenants.



# Market Report

## Stewart Pitt of Click-let gives us his overview of Edinburgh's rental market



2008 was a volatile year in the Edinburgh and Fife rental sector, with the credit crunch having a major impact on the property market as a whole.

The weakening job market in Edinburgh and Fife along with the continued uncertainty in the housing market, resulted in rental reductions and increased void periods in the first half of 2009. In addition to the dramatic reduction in the number of tenancy applications from immigrant workers, Government statistics show a 50 percent reduction in the number of people from former eastern block countries applying for national insurance numbers. Job insecurity and deterioration in the exchange rate make Britain a far less appealing option than over the last few years.

Despite these factors new landlords continue to enter the rental market. We have found a significant proportion of new landlords have opted for letting out their property after having been unable to sell. As this increase has not been matched by a similar increase in prospective tenants it makes it important for landlords to present their property well at viewings and set a competitive rental price.

The properties (mostly one and two bedrooms) which have moved from the selling to the rental market are often furnished and decorated to a very high standard. This means that established Edinburgh landlords who have been letting their property for a number of years are now having to consider freshening up the decor, replacing tired

furniture and dressing beds to compete with these new rental properties.

Student properties with three, four and five bedrooms and an HMO licence are bucking this trend by continuing to be fiercely sought-after, having very short void periods and not experiencing falls in rentals. The student market will only strengthen as it is generally accepted student numbers in Edinburgh will continue to grow over the coming few years. However new landlords who require an HMO licence must be aware that the City of Edinburgh Council is reminding landlords that all properties must have a licence **before** tenants move in.

## Tenant Advice – it can pay off!

### **The Edinburgh Housing Advice Partnership (EHAP) is one of the City of Edinburgh Council's newly commissioned services aimed at preventing homelessness.**

It is a neighbourhood-based housing advice, information and representation service for tenants of all tenure types and owner-occupiers, with a focus on early intervention. EHAP is seeking to develop links with private landlords because private landlords are key stakeholders in promoting the timely uptake of advice services by their tenants.

Current statistics from EHAP partner agencies suggest that the majority of tenants in financial difficulties do not seek assistance from advice agencies until court proceedings have been initiated.

Furthermore it is anticipated that advice services will see an increasing number of people presenting in these circumstances due to the recent implementation of Section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003, which places a duty on landlords and lenders to notify their local authority whenever legal proceedings for recovery of property are initiated.

EHAP aims to reverse this trend by giving tenants pre-emptive advice in order to prevent common issues like rent arrears from escalating to the point where a landlord has no choice but to take court action.

Landlords will also benefit from promoting EHAP to their tenants. By encouraging individuals to seek advice early, landlords can help reduce the number of cases going through the courts and save their own time and money.

Services EHAP advisers can offer to tenants include:

- assistance with benefits problems/issues
- benefit checks and income maximisation
- advice and assistance on payment of Local Housing Allowance direct to the landlord
- debt advice
- information on tenant rights and responsibilities
- referrals to other local services
- pre-court advice and representation in some cases.

Any landlord wishing to refer a tenant to EHAP or wanting to find out more information about the service should contact the Administrator on 0845 302 460.

# Making Rented Properties

**The need to make properties more energy efficient is one of the key issues facing private landlords today. However, the perceived cost of upgrading a property to make it more energy efficient can deter even the most energy conscious landlord from taking that first step.**

Mike Thornton, Director, Scotland for the Energy Saving Trust, explains why making properties more energy efficient can reap significant benefits for both tenants and private landlords and highlights how a Scottish Government initiative can provide real financial and environmental benefits.

"There is a significant number of cold, badly insulated and draughty rented homes in Scotland which are costly in terms of environmental pollution and energy expenditure. However, private rental homes in Scotland could benefit from a new scheme, if their tenants are eligible. The Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package can help bring inefficient properties up to a more energy-friendly standard.

"If private landlords pass this information on to their tenants and advise them to call the hotline, tenants will be able to find out if they qualify for assistance. By calling the Energy Assistance Package hotline on 0800 512012, or visiting [www.energyassistancepackage.com](http://www.energyassistancepackage.com) tenants can find out about the offers and assistance that may be available to them, including:

- energy advice – to find out how to make a property as energy efficient as possible
- help to find out if they are entitled to more money through benefits or tax credits
- help to switch to the lowest-cost gas or electricity rates for those who qualify
- loft or cavity wall insulation
- other measures such as additional insulation, central heating and renewable heating systems.

**The Landlords Energy Savings Allowance (LESA) gives landlords a tax break to help with the cost of energy efficiency improvements.**

LESA is an easy way of lowering the cost of energy efficiency improvements for landlords. The LESA is available to all landlords who pay income tax (excluding corporate landlords) and who let residential property.

The scheme currently applies to expenditure on buying or installing qualifying energy saving items incurred before 6 April 2015 and provides private landlords with a tax relief of up to £1,500 per property. This means that landlords can reduce their taxable income by the amount spent on qualifying items. This maximum applies irrespective of the number of properties that a landlord owns.

The qualifying energy saving items are:

- loft insulation
- cavity wall insulation
- solid wall insulation
- floor insulation
- hot water tank and pipe insulation
- draft-proofing.

More information on LESA can be found on the HMRC's website at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)



## Home Insulation Scheme to benefit Landlords

If you own property in the Craighentiny or Duddingston areas of Edinburgh you may be able to benefit from an innovative home insulation scheme rolling out across Scotland. This scheme, which will use £15 million of Scottish Government funding and will be managed by the Energy Saving Trust, aims to boost the energy efficiency of Scottish homes and will offer householders free energy audits and advice on

becoming more energy efficient.

Householders could also be offered new loft and cavity wall insulation or top ups to existing loft insulation, all at specially negotiated prices or free to certain eligible households. For privately rented properties the negotiated price will be available to the landlord.

The scheme will feature a street-by-street, door-by-door approach undertaken by a team of home

energy assessors, who will knock on each of the 13,000 doors in the selected areas between November 2009 and March 2010.

If you are a landlord owning property in one of these areas, you can act immediately by calling 0800 512 012 to undertake this assessment over the phone or sign up online at [www.homeinsulationscheme.org.uk](http://www.homeinsulationscheme.org.uk)

# more Energy Efficient

## Energy Performance Certificates

As a private landlord, it would have been hard to miss all the talk about Energy Performance Certificates in 2008. Ten months into the scheme, energy efficiency experts from Changeworks assess their experience of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and give some tips to landlords.

EPCs are part of the European Union's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. Since January 2009 all new tenancies in Scotland have required an EPC.

An EPC details the energy performance of the property by giving it a rating on a scale from A to G, and recommends ways to improve the rating by recommending energy efficiency measures. EPCs give prospective tenants and buyers an indication of energy running costs of the property.

To date no certified property in Scotland has achieved an 'A' rating, the highest energy efficiency standard in an EPC. The lack of 'A' rated properties in Scotland is partly due to the nature of Scotland's housing stock.

Property owners should be aware not all properties will be suitable for all energy efficiency measures, and some old properties may never achieve a high rating. However, installing measures suitable to your property will ensure your property is as efficient as possible and well equipped for future trends in the market and in legislation.

The Scottish Government has recently adopted legal powers to enable it to enforce minimum housing standards and it may well extend these powers to making improvements to energy performance of properties mandatory.

In Australia, energy efficiency ratings for residential properties have been mandatory since 1999 and studies conducted in 2006-2007 show that amongst like-for-like properties, those with better energy efficiency ratings already command higher prices in the property market

While surveying a variety of properties in Edinburgh, Changeworks found the system used by Energy Assessors to make recommendations

is often too generalised for old or listed buildings. Recently, for example, an owner of a flat in a Georgian sandstone tenement in Edinburgh was advised to



overclad their property with external insulation, despite their property being on the second floor and in a Grade B listed building. With expertise in running several pioneering energy efficiency projects focused on old listed buildings, Changeworks is able to supplement automatically generated EPC recommendations with advice based on practical experience.

Jodie Wilson, Technical Energy Services Manager at Changeworks, advises landlords looking to survey and certify properties: "Choose someone who is qualified to conduct surveys and issue EPCs and who ideally can supplement recommendations on the certificate with practical advice and information to help you make the best decisions for your property."

For more information about Energy Performance Certificates contact Jodie Wilson, Technical Services Manager, Changeworks at 0131 538 7950 or e-mail [jwilson@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:jwilson@changeworks.org.uk)



# HMO Licensing – speeding up the process

Every year thousands of landlords in Edinburgh renew their HMO licences – here are a few key points to help make the process as simple and swift as possible.

## The Application Process

Know the expiry date of your current HMO licence and apply for the renewal in advance.

Check all details on the HMO application form are correct, especially:

- the day-to-day manager
- 24 hour emergency number
- your place and date of birth
- HMO agent details and
- full Director details, where required.

Remember to sign the application form and enclose the correct fee.

## Site Notice

A site notice (attached to the HMO application form) should be displayed for all new and renewal HMO licence applications. You need to display this for 21 days from the date of application in a prominent place outside the property. Check that this remains in place and make copies in case it is damaged during the 21 day period.

Take it down after 21 days and send it to the Licensing Section. Remember to sign and date it.

## Property Inspection

You will be contacted to arrange a property inspection. If it is a renewal application and you have tenants in your property, make sure you give them notice and make arrangements to gain access. Bring copies of all required certification:

- annual certificates: gas safety; fire fighting (where in place: 'Part 1' fire alarm system; emergency lighting; sprinkler system)
- three yearly certificates: electrical appliances; PIR electrical.
- You should have your own system to keep your safety certification up-to-date.

Do a check before your HMO inspection so that any defects can be repaired in time.

Common defects found during an HMO inspection include; broken window sash cords; defective bath seals; door closers that need adjustment; missing fire log books.

Your own regular property inspections should pick up any disrepair and wear and tear which should be fixed before the inspection.



Occasionally tenants remove doors and door closers or disconnect fire alarms. If you find this during a routine inspection, arrange repair work immediately and give your tenants a firm warning as this could compromise their safety.

If everything is in order, the officer will advise that they are satisfied with the property and recommend that your HMO licence is granted.

If only minor issues are found, you will be given a short report at the end of the inspection with a specific time frame in which to do the work. A further inspection will not normally be required.

If a number of items need attention you will be sent a full written report, with a date for a further inspection.

## Post Inspection

If a short report has been issued, you must complete all the work within the specified period and confirm that it has been carried out. Failure could result in refusal of your HMO licence application.

If a full report has been issued, you will similarly be expected to have carried out all the work before the further inspection.

If there is a delay in carrying out the work, contact the inspecting officer who may extend the time given depending on the circumstances.

When the property meets the required standards, the inspecting officer will inform the Licensing Section.

## Neighbour Notification and Issuing the Licence

If all is in order with the rest of the licence application, ie site notice and Police checks, a letter will be sent to you by the Licensing Section requesting that you notify your neighbours of the HMO licence. A sample neighbour notification will be included. You must then write to the Licensing Section to confirm that you have notified your neighbours and the HMO licence can then be issued which should be displayed in the property.

REMEMBER: If you are applying for a new HMO licence it is an offence to let the property as an HMO until the licence is granted.

## Keep in touch during the Application Process

Inspection Team  
Tel: 0131 469 5193  
E-mail: [hmo@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:hmo@edinburgh.gov.uk)

Licensing Section  
Tel: 0131 529 4208 or  
E-mail: [licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk)

For more information  
Web: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Housing/CEC\\_hmo\\_index](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Housing/CEC_hmo_index)



Letwise offers a programme of training and briefing events for private landlords in Edinburgh. These courses are designed to inform landlords about the various aspects of property and tenancy management and to update on any changes which impact on the private rented market.

## Training Sessions: January to March 2010

### BRIEFING SESSION

#### **Fire Safety in Double Upper HMOs**

Tuesday 8 December 2009, 2 to 4 pm  
or 6 to 8 pm

Monday 14 December 2009, 2 to 4 pm

Venue: Main Council Chamber, City Chambers,  
High Street, Edinburgh

This briefing session is intended to advise landlords and agents of the current fire safety benchmark standards for 'double upper' HMO licensed premises. ('Double upper' – a duplex style dwelling generally located on the upper most levels of tenement type property, entered from the top of the common stair.)

#### **Is it for you?**

If you own or manage a double upper HMO property you should attend this briefing session.

#### **Safety Requirements for your Property**

Thursday 14 January 2010, 1 to 4 pm

Venue: Contract Heating, 2B Bankhead Crossway  
South, Edinburgh EH11 4EX

This course, delivered by Contract Heating (members of NICEIC, the Fire Protection Association and Gas Safe Register approved) will give delegates practical experience on how to identify problems and faults within their property in relation to heating systems, water supplies and electrical systems. It will also show delegates how to read various safety certificates and identify what needs to be actioned.

#### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course delegates will:

- have gained practical experience on identifying problems and faults within their property;
- have an awareness of what is required to provide safe accommodation for their tenants;
- know what procedures to follow in a gas emergency; and
- understand how to read safety certificates and identify any actions that are required to be taken.

#### **Is it for you?**

This course is intended for both new and experienced landlords and letting agents. Please note as this is a workshop based, practical course, numbers are limited to eight delegates per course. It is advised that you book early!



## Saving Money on Domestic Energy

Thursday 21 January 2010, 5.45 to 9 pm  
Venue: European Room, City Chambers,  
High Street, Edinburgh

Energy Performance Certificates now have to be provided to prospective tenants or buyers and may have an impact on rent levels and property values. Increased energy efficiency enhances the quality of housing, reduces fuel poverty, lowers the incidence of cold related illnesses and promotes affordable warmth. This, in turn, can lead to more stable tenancies and lower maintenance costs for your properties.

All householders, including private and social landlords, are now being encouraged to meet a range of energy efficiency targets in order to reduce the amount of energy being wasted in Edinburgh homes by 30 percent. Landlords can secure tax benefits under the Landlords Energy Saving Allowance as well as benefit from a range of energy efficiency grants by making their rental property more energy efficient.

It is important that as an owner and a private landlord you are aware of changes and developments in this area and know what advice, assistance and grants are available to you.

### Is it for you?

This briefing session will be of benefit to any landlord or letting agent interested in making their rental property more energy efficient, cost effective and attractive in a competitive rental market.

## Tenancy Agreements

Thursday 4 February 2010, 1 to 4 pm  
Venue: European Room, City Chambers, High Street,  
Edinburgh

This course will identify the key elements for inclusion in tenancy agreements and suggest good practice issues in establishing assured and short assured tenancies.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course delegates will:

- be aware of the legal requirements and pitfalls in creating assured and short assured tenancies;
- be aware of unfair contract terms in leases and how to avoid these;
- be aware of the legal rights and obligations of landlords and tenants;
- understand what action can be taken against tenants if things go wrong; and
- be aware of what could be construed as harassment.

### Is it for you?

This course is intended for private landlords and letting agents involved in creating tenancy agreements whether let to individuals/families or shared occupancy. It is intended to cover assured and short assured tenancies, and is not intended to address resident landlords or protected tenancies.

All of these courses are free of charge. You can book a place by contacting Letwise on 0131 529 7454 or e-mailing: [letwise@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:letwise@edinburgh.gov.uk)

For further information about these courses or future training events, contact our Training and Development Officer, Rachel Fleming on 0131 529 2177 or e-mail: [rachel.fleming@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.fleming@edinburgh.gov.uk)

### CANCELLATION POLICY

If delegates fail to cancel their place on a course, and subsequently do not attend, their place(s) on future courses for the advertised quarter **may** be cancelled and offered to someone else on the waiting list, in order to maximise capacity and make courses as cost effective as possible. This does not prevent delegates from booking on courses within the next advertised quarter.



## Recovery of Possession

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Thursday 11 February 2010, 1 to 3.30 pm  
Venue: Midlothian Suite, Lothian Chambers,  
High Street, Edinburgh

This course will enable delegates to understand the legal requirements and pitfalls in successfully recovering possession of their property under the assured and short assured tenancy regime.

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course delegates will:

- understand the mandatory and discretionary grounds for repossession;
- understand the legal requirements to successfully regain possession at the end of a lease;
- be aware of the notices and procedures required in repossession;
- be aware of what can go wrong when seeking possession, and how to avoid these problems; and
- understand court processes.

### Is it for you?

This course is beneficial both for both new and experienced landlords and letting agents. It is not designed for resident landlords.

## Resolving Conflicts Positively

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Thursday 4 March 2010, 12.45 to 4 pm  
Venue: Business Centre, City Chambers, High Street,  
Edinburgh

This course will explore techniques for resolving conflicts to everyone's satisfaction. Typical disputes between landlord/tenant and tenant/neighbours will be examined and delegates will learn straightforward practical techniques for helping to ensure conflicts are handled productively.

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course delegates will:

- be aware of how conflicts arise;
- have a better understanding of how conflicts escalate;
- be aware of how not to make conflicts worse;
- be familiar with some constructive negotiating techniques;
- be familiar with some practical skills for handling conflicts positively; and
- be aware of how mediation can help.

### Is it for you?

This course is suitable for all private landlords and letting agents.

## Fire, Electrical and Plumbing Regulations

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Wednesday 10 March 2010, 5.45 to 8.30 pm  
Venue: European Room, City Chambers, High Street,  
Edinburgh

This course will inform landlords and letting agents about property standards in relation to fire, electrics and plumbing.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course delegates will:

- be aware of the importance of good fire safety in rented property and why it is taken so seriously;
- be aware of new building regulations; and
- be aware of water byelaws operated by Scottish Water.

### Is it for you?

This course is recommended for all private landlords and letting agents.

## Finance Matters

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Thursday 18 March 2010, 5.45 to 8.30 pm  
Venue: European Room, City Chambers, High Street,  
Edinburgh

This course will give an overview of the issues which should be considered when buying, renting and disposing of property in order to maximise the benefits of current tax legislation. It will also cover how to maintain effective financial and book-keeping records.

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course delegates will be able to:

- understand the implications of current taxation legislation as it affects landlords;
- understand the most effective ways to structure; and
- understand how to maintain effective financial and bookkeeping records.

### Is it for you?

This course is aimed at both new and experienced landlords and letting agents or those considering how to maximise tax benefits from current legislation and those who would like more information on effective bookkeeping.

## Safety Requirements for your Property

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Thursday 25 March 2010, 1 to 4 pm  
Venue: Contract Heating, 2B Bankhead Crossway  
South, Edinburgh EH11 4EX

The details for this course are on page 9.



## HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

ترجمے کے لئے حاضر آمانہدےر سے انوباد کرر

بسعنا توفیر الترجمة MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很樂意翻譯

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## Letwise

TEL: 0131 529 7454

E-MAIL: [letwise@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:letwise@edinburgh.gov.uk)

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/letwise](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/letwise)



SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF LANDLORDS

TEL: 0131 270 4774

E-MAIL: [info@scottishlandlords.com](mailto:info@scottishlandlords.com)

[www.scottishlandlords.com](http://www.scottishlandlords.com)



TEL: 0131 529 7454

E-MAIL: [ela@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:ela@edinburgh.gov.uk)

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/ela](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/ela)

## SKILLS PATH

Inside Letting supports Skills Path, a mail fulfilment service provided by adults with learning disabilities

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