

“let’s talk” NEWSLETTER

FOR THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

42

ISSUE 42



Welcome to the 42nd edition of “Lets Talk”, the newsletter for the private rented sector in East Ayrshire.

This newsletter contains important information that you need to be aware of as a private landlord or agent. **Please note that all newsletters will now only be sent by e-mail and made available on East Ayrshire Council’s website.** Please therefore ensure that you keep your e-mail address up to date. **If we hold an e-mail address for you all landlord registration renewal notification will be sent by e-mail.**

FREE Private Landlords Forum

East Ayrshire Council is hosting a free private landlord forum. This event will be held at St Joseph’s Academy, Grassyards Road Kilmarnock, KA3 7SL on Wednesday 25th March 2020 from 6.30 pm until 8.00 pm.

The Agenda will be as follows:

6.30 Welcome – Karen Walker
Private Sector Housing Unit,
East Ayrshire Council

6.40 Mediation Services
May Millward MBE,
Project Officer, Scottish
Mediation Network

7.10 Break

7.20 Liz King
Private Sector Development
Officer, EAC – New Projects

7.30 - Liz Trusdale, Training Officer –
New Private Rented Sector
Tenant Training Scheme

If you would like to attend the Forum please contact either Karen Walker, Dawn Cadwell or Liz King on 01563 554584 or 554560 to confirm attendance as places are limited.



E-MAIL UPDATE: You can check or change your e-mail address by accessing your registration application using your registration number. Please always ensure that your contact name and address held on the landlord registration system is accurate. Please ensure you check your e-mails to avoid important notifications from us being missed.

Please also ensure that you have the correct agent details on the system as this will allow all contact to be more effective and can assist in an emergency situation.

Rent Deposit Scheme

The Rent Deposit Scheme have clients who are waiting for properties in the following areas of East Ayrshire;

1x 1 Bedroom, Kilmarnock Town Centre

1x 2 Bedroom, Newmilns.



If you have any suitable properties please contact the Rent Deposit Scheme on 01563 521288 or rentdeposit.chap@gmail.com

New Missing Share Scheme



East Ayrshire Council has introduced a Missing Share Scheme. A missing share is where the majority of owners in a tenement agree to a common plan of works however one owner is unwilling or unable to pay their share. The missing share scheme will allow East Ayrshire Council (under certain conditions) to pay the missing amount and recharge the missing owner thus allowing the work to commence.

Section 50 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 allows the majority of owners to request the Local Authority to pay missing shares.

The Council can only pay a Missing Share if:

- The owners are responsible for carrying out maintenance work to common areas of the building (in accordance with the burden of the titles)
- The majority of the owners have agreed to carry out the work
- The owners have been requested to pay their share of the funds for the works into a maintenance account
- The majority of owners have paid their share into a maintenance account
- The majority of owners (through the Factor) have notified the non-paying owners that they are in the minority and their payment is required in order for the works to be instructed.

Before East Ayrshire Council agrees to pay these missing shares, the Council has to be satisfied that the work is reasonable and that **all owners have been fully informed** of the criteria.

Please note if work has commenced prior to approaching the Council, assistance through Section 50 (missing Shares) will not be available.

On completion of the works, the owners will provide a copy of the Completion Certificate along with authenticated receipts to demonstrate that the money has been used for its original intention. Thereafter, East Ayrshire Council (EAC) will, in due course, arrange to issue an invoice to the non-participating owner(s) for the amount paid by EAC into the maintenance account, plus an additional charge of 15% of the amount deposited, to cover the legal, financial and administrative expenses.

Please contact Karen Walker, Private Sector Manager on 01563 576878 for further information.



Landlord Registration Fees from 1st April 2020

The Private Landlord Registration (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 came into force on 11 June 2019. Section 3 of the regulations makes provision for fees to adjust from 1 April each YEAR using a formula that reflects the value of the Consumer Prices Index in the preceding calendar year. Where 1 April falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the fees are varied from 9 am on the Monday following 1 April.

Following release of the CPI data for 2019 WHICH was released on 15th January the fees will be varied as shown in the table below. In accordance with the regulations, the value of the fees has been round to the nearest pound. As the impact of CPI on the property fee came to less than £0.50, this means that there is no increase on the property fee this year. However, the formula for calculating fee variations enable the partial increase to be carried forward into next year's calculation.

| | Fee Type | | |
|------------|-----------|----------|------------------|
| | Principal | Property | Late Application |
| 2019-20 | £65 | £15 | £130 |
| 2020-21 | £66 | £15 | £132 |
| Difference | +£1 | 0 | +£2 |



Innovative tenant accreditation training scheme for East Ayrshire

The Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) is a charitable organisation who has managed the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme in East Ayrshire, on behalf of the local authority, since 2006.

Funding has been secured to establish a pilot project in East Ayrshire to provide a private rented sector tenant accreditation and tenancy sustainment training scheme for a period of one year. The main aim of the project is to improve/enhance tenancy sustainment in the private sector as it is believed that a number of tenancy breakdowns could be avoided if tenants were given the appropriate support and training.

Landlords frequently request a list of 'bad tenants' but this is not a feasible option. Instead, a more appropriate and positive option is to offer a training and accreditation scheme to raise standards and provide landlords with a mechanism of choosing accredited tenants.

The project will establish a tenant training programme that would incorporate:

- Tenancy obligations
- Housekeeping
- Gardening
- Community engagement
- Budgeting
- Energy supply advice
- Employability skills
- Benefit applications
- Advocacy
- Community Engagement

Tenants will be educated in relation to their legal rights and obligations in the private rented sector and the training offered will provide them with the appropriate skills required to ensure a tenancy is sustained. This will be of particular assistance to first time private sector tenants or tenants who may be vulnerable and in need of additional assistance. Tenants who have undergone the training can use this as reference for future tenancies. With so much emphasis being put on 'unacceptable' references, this pilot project would offer a positive aspect to references.

The project will aim to minimise tenancy breakdown, promote sustainable and solid communities and prevent homelessness. Landlords will benefit as the tenancy should be in place for longer and operate more efficiently thus avoiding turnover and void periods. Landlords will also benefit from the knowledge that the tenant they are allocating their property to has undertaken training and is accredited. This training is available to current tenants not just new tenants.

The project will provide a holistic and joined up approach to setting individuals on a path of achievement which could positively influence the rest of their lives.

If you would like further information on this new and innovative scheme please contact the Private Sector Housing Unit or Let's Do It Right Project @ CHAP, Tel: 07904582239, Email: letsdoitrightproject@gmail.com



Free Property Matchmakers Event

East Ayrshire Council has established a grant fund to assist owners who have an empty commercial property in Kilmarnock Town Centre and would like to change the use of the property for residential purposes.

A property 'Match Making' event will be held on **Wednesday the 29th of April 2020** at the Park Hotel to bring empty property owners and prospective buyers together.

Speakers at the event include Phil Prentice from Scotland's Towns Partnership. Other subjects that will be covered will be changes to non-domestic rates legislation, the role of the assessor and how rates relief is applied.

This event will provide the opportunity to network with housing developers, local businesses, empty property owners and council officers.

If you would like to attend or if you have a property that you think may be suitable please contact Karen Walker, Private Sector Manager on 01563 576878.

Landlord Registration

Legionella Risk Assessment

Since the introduction of the new prescribed information process, the Scottish Government has introduced changes to the landlord registration process in Scotland. As of 16th of September 2019 landlords are required to declare whether or not they comply with specific obligations when they register for the first time or when they renew their registration.

Landlords are required to declare whether or not they comply with specific duties. The revised on-line application journey has been developed and now asks straightforward questions that are easily understood. Signposting information is now included to help landlords who are not sure what they need to do.

The additional questions relate to compliance with the following:-

- The Tolerable and Repairing Standards
- Fire and carbon monoxide safety
- Gas and electrical safety
- Private water supplies and legionella risk assessment
- Energy performance certificates
- Insurance and common repairs on tenement property

Question 12 seems to be throwing a number of landlords. The registration system asks:-

Has a Legionella risk assessment been carried out on every rental property and have safety concerns addressed?

Yes No Not Applicable

A number of landlords are not answering 'yes' to this question when it is a requirement. Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water containing Legionella. All water systems can provide an environment where Legionella may grow.



A landlord has a duty to ensure that a legionella risk assessment is carried out on their properties. This is to help guard their tenants against any risk of getting the illness from contaminated water.

Who can carry out an assessment?

Landlords and letting agents can carry out a Legionnaire's risk assessment themselves if the property is a single dwelling or a flat with its own water supply (hot and cold) and they are competent to do so. In particular landlords should:

- understand different types of water systems
- understand Legionella bacteria and the factors which increase the risk of an outbreak in a domestic setting
- understand the control measures which if present will reduce the risk of an outbreak within a domestic setting

Before considering carrying out a risk assessment you should familiarise yourself in particular with the following HSE publications: -

Legionnaire's disease: A brief guide for duty holders

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf>

Legionnaire's disease Part 2: The control of the relevant part of Legionella in hot and cold water systems

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf>

If you are not sure that you meet your landlord responsibilities please contact the Private Sector Housing Unit on 01563 554584 or 554560.

Other useful sources of information are the Mygov.scot and Renting Scotland websites.

Empty Homes

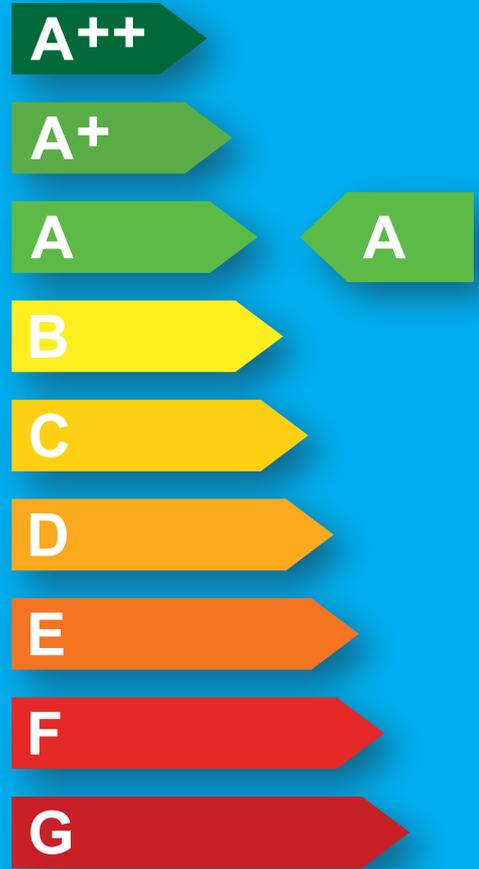
If you are interested in bringing an empty home back into use the Council can offer you some advice and assistance in the following areas:

- Safety and security
- Renovation overview
- VAT discounts
- Energy efficiency
- Selling options i.e. estate agents, auction houses, property buying companies
- Private Renting
- Interest free loans provided by EAC
- EAC operate a 'buy back' scheme
- EAC operate a Matchmaker Scheme whereby owners can provide details of their property, this information can be passed to potential purchasers

If you would like further information about this scheme or wish to bring an empty property to our attention please contact:

Liz King, Empty Homes Officer
Private Sector Housing Unit, Civic Centre North, John Dickie Street
Kilmarnock KA1 1HW

Tel: 01563 554583 / Email: Elizabeth.king@east-ayrshire.gov.uk



Advertising Private Rented Property

Reminder to all landlords - you must include your registration number and Energy Performance Certificate rating in all property to let advertisements.

UC Universal Credit

Support Team

East Ayrshire Council have formed The Universal Credit (UC) Support Team to assist and support East Ayrshire residents in making and maintaining a UC claim. The Team will also be able to support residents with basic budgeting skills, IT skills, education and employability, whilst working with them to ensure tenancy sustainability.

It replaces:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income based)
- Employment Support Allowance (Income based)
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

If your tenant requires any assistance or has any questions regarding the above please ask them to **call the UC Support Team on 01563 503280.**



New timetable for energy efficiency regulations

Regulations for a new timetable for rules to improve the energy efficiency of rented homes were today laid before the Scottish Parliament.

Under proposed new rules, homes in the private rented sector will have to meet minimum EPC standards by 1st October 2020, instead of 1st April 2020 as originally proposed.

This will allow landlords the time they need to check their properties are compliant and carry out remedial work to bring them up to standard if needed in time for the revised deadline.

The new standards are aimed at improving Scotland's legacy housing stock, reducing energy bills for tenants and tackling the climate emergency by cutting carbon emissions.

The rules will mean that private rented sector properties in Scotland will need to achieve at least:

- EPC of E at change of tenancy from 1st October 2020
- All rental properties must have an EPC rating of E by 31st March 2022
- EPC of D at change of tenancy from 1st April 2022

- All rental properties must have an EPC rating of D by 31st March 2025

Landlords will face fines of up to £5000 if they don't comply with the minimum standard.

For more information on support for energy exceptions in the Private Rented Sector please visit

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/businesses-organisations/landlords>.

The Energy Saving Trust has also developed an animated video setting out the new requirements:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msjAaU4Vu0M>

Energy Efficiency standards are part of the Scottish Government's 'Energy Efficiency Scotland programme – you can find more information on this at:

<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/05/1462>

Tenancy Sustainment and Homelessness Prevention

East Ayrshire Housing Options Service can provide your tenants with “A one stop shop for all housing advice and information needs”

We can:

- Work with your tenant and other services and agencies to resolve tenancy issues and address support issues;
- Consider what can be done to enable your tenants to sustain their tenancies;
- Provide your tenants with advice and information on a wide range of housing and related issues;
- Provide information to your tenants on Housing Options including homelessness advice;
- Provide information to your tenants so that they are able to make informed decisions about their circumstances.

Prevention of homelessness benefits landlords, tenants and communities:

- Tenancy issues can impact on landlords financially in respect of rent loss and costs to relet a property.
- Homelessness can impact on people's health and wellbeing and cause disruption to everyone experiencing homelessness including children.

- Keeping people in their homes, addressing issues and providing support can also have a positive effect on communities.

If your tenant is experiencing difficulties please encourage them to contact Housing Options at the earliest opportunity as the sooner we are aware of the issues the sooner we can provide assistance.

We aim to achieve positive outcomes for people and have a person centred approach.

Contact Housing Options by telephoning us on 01563 554554, by email to housing@east-ayrshire.gov.uk and we are located at Civic Centre North, John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock.

We are able to offer:

- Trained Reception Staff and Housing Options Officers
- Private Interview Rooms
- Accompanied Interviews (They can bring along a friend, relative or advisor)
- Male and Female Interviewers (They can request that their interview is with a male or female)
- Interpreters (If their first language is not English we can arrange for an interpreter to attend their interview)



Help to buy for first time buyers

Are you thinking about selling your rental property?

If you are, your current tenants may be eligible for help to buy the property through the Scottish Government's Low-Cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT) Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE) scheme. Applicants to the scheme can get up to 40% towards the cost of a home; it could be the LIFT they need to get onto the property ladder.

What is the LIFT scheme?

The LIFT scheme was created to help people on low to moderate incomes buy their own home. Over 12,000 people in Scotland have benefitted from the scheme since it was introduced in 2005.

LIFT OMSE is a shared equity scheme; the Scottish Government helps the buyer purchase a property by contributing between 10% and 40% of the sale price.

For example, if the property is valued at £100,000, and the buyer can afford to contribute £70,000 (through mortgage/ deposit), the Scottish Government could contribute the remaining 30% (£30,000). When the property is sold, 30% of the sale price is returned to the Scottish Government.

As the seller, you would receive the full sale price just as you would for any other property sale. The property can't be purchased for more than the valuation price.

To be eligible for the LIFT scheme, the property must be:

- Advertised for sale publicly (e.g. on a social media site or an Estate Agent's website) and have a valid Home Report.
- The correct size for the buyer's household.

- Priced within the maximum price thresholds for the area. East Ayrshire thresholds are:

| | | |
|-------------|----------------------|----------|
| 2 apartment | 1-2 person household | £50,000 |
| 3 apartment | 1-2 person household | £70,000 |
| 4 apartment | 3 person household | £90,000 |
| 5 apartment | 4 person household | £125,000 |
| 6 apartment | 5 person household | £190,000 |

An apartment is a habitable room including; bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms and box rooms. Kitchens, bathrooms and conservatories are not classed as apartments.

To be eligible for the LIFT scheme, the buyer must be a first-time buyer or be in one of the schemes other priority groups:

- People with a disability who can demonstrate a housing need.
- Members of the armed forces.
- Veterans who have left the armed forces within the past two years.
- Widows, widowers and other partners of service personnel whose partner who have lost their life while serving in the armed forces within the past two years.
- People aged 60 and over who can demonstrate a housing need.

Link administers the LIFT scheme on behalf of the Scottish Government for the whole of Scotland.

Visit www.linkhousing.org.uk/LIFT to find out more.



This information can be made available, on request, in braille, large print or audio formats and can be translated into a range of languages. Contact details are provided below.

درخواست کرنے پر یہ معلومات نابینا افراد کے لئے اُبھرے حروف، بڑے حروف یا آڈیو میں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہے اور اس کا مختلف زبانوں میں ترجمہ بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ رابطہ کی تفصیلات نیچے فراہم کی گئی ہیں۔

本信息可应要求提供盲文，大字印刷或音频格式，以及可翻译成多种语言。以下是详细联系方式。

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ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਬੋਲ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਇਹਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

Niniejsze informacje mogą zostać udostępnione na życzenie, w alfabecie Braille'a, w druku powiększonym lub w formacie audio oraz mogą zostać przetłumaczone na wiele języków obcych. Dane kontaktowe znajdują się poniżej.

Faodar am fiosrachadh seo fhaighinn, le iarrtas, ann am braille, clò mòr no clàr fuaim agus tha e comasach eadar-theangachadh gu grunn chànanan. Tha fiosrachadh gu h-ìosal mu bhith a' cur fios a-steach.



East Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

Contact the **Private Sector Housing Unit** on **01563 554584, 554560 or 576878**.