

# Scheme Overview



## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHEME

Private landlords play an essential role in the provision of accommodation in the local area. It is acknowledged and appreciated that many private landlords provide and maintain properties to a good standard, often above the standard required by law. It is important to recognise these landlords and encourage and support others to achieve this higher standard. This is the reason for developing a local landlord accreditation scheme.

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire was originally set up by Stoke-on-Trent City Council in 2003. A few years later it was joined by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and these two authorities still work in partnership to deliver what is now known as the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire (the Scheme). Stoke-on-Trent City Council continues to be the Co-ordinator of the Scheme supported by a designated officer from Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council.

It works on the principle of accrediting the member rather than a property.

The Scheme is designed to benefit all partners equally, providing help and advice to all individuals and agencies with an interest in the private rented sector within the local authority areas.

It prides itself on being innovative and has continued to grow now boasting over 500 members.

The Scheme is affiliated to 'Accreditation Network United Kingdom' (ANUK) and works to the agreed code of standards for such Schemes, see [www.anuk.org.uk](http://www.anuk.org.uk)

## AIM OF THE SCHEME

The aims and objectives of the Scheme are;

- To operate a scheme that promotes good physical conditions of properties and good management practices
- To create and maintain a stock of private rented accommodation to a good standard which meets legal requirements in the local area
- To give public recognition to those landlords who provide housing that meets or exceeds the higher standard expected of an accredited landlord
- To give tenants the confidence and choice of renting a good standard of accommodation

## GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHEME

The Scheme works towards a 5 year Business Plan to frame a strategic overview of the development of the Scheme. The Plan also contributes to relevant service plans of both authorities. Representatives from each authority meet twice yearly to ensure progress of targets and outcomes are being met and that the Scheme continues to develop.

The partner agencies also form part of the Steering Group which meet at regular intervals throughout the year. This group deals with more of the operational issues. Two landlord elected members also sit on the Steering Group and serve a two-year term.

All partners to the Scheme, including the elected members, sign and abide to a Service Level Agreement which outlines expected roles and responsibilities.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHEME

Membership of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire (the Scheme) is open to any individual or company owning residential property within the boundaries of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council whether they be locally based or not. Applications will also be considered from any person or company being a lessee of the premises or any person or company having full management control – a copy of the lease or management agreement will need to be submitted.

The Scheme is not open to registered social housing providers, letting or managing agents, or university run accommodation as these are subject to existing regulatory control.

Membership will be awarded for a 2-year period subject to the qualifying conditions being met, submission of a valid application, copies of all relevant certificates and payment of the relevant membership fee. Please see the [Terms & Conditions of Membership](#) and also the [Fit & Proper Person Criteria](#).

The Scheme requires that landlords meet their legal responsibilities and that the physical conditions of properties, basic amenities and management practices are fair and reasonable and will not be prejudicial to the health, safety or welfare of tenants or the surrounding neighbourhood.

Participants of the Scheme must ensure compliance with their legal obligations as well as the requirements of the Scheme.

Whilst membership of the Scheme is voluntary, there is a membership fee which is to cover the cost of the running of the Scheme to enable it to be self-financing. The current membership fees can be found on our application form and are proportional to the size of members portfolio.

Any unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing including the reasons the decision.

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

### 1) Local Authority

- Improving relationships between local authorities and the landlord community whilst creating a constructive atmosphere in which to raise standards through partnership and incentivisation
- Raising housing standards (in addition to the legal minimum)
- Help to regenerate deprived neighbourhoods
- Recognising landlords who comply with Scheme standards as good landlords
- Helping to settle persons in housing need into rented accommodation.

### 2) Landlords

- Public recognition that you are a landlord providing a good standard of accommodation
- Market advantage when letting a property
- Provision of a certificate to promote and provide proof of your membership to the Scheme
- Access to information and advice at a Core Membership event
- Access to discounted or free professional development events
- Being kept up to date with changes to legislation through quarterly newsletters and regular updates by email
- Networking opportunities at events
- Co-operation, support and advice from the Scheme Operators on all aspects of private renting including direct line numbers to officers including tenancy relation officers for advice or dispute resolution
- Improved access to other local authority departments and services
- Member access to the Scheme website where you can post free advertisements and promote your vacant properties to let
- Access to discounts from local participating companies
- Periodic inspections of properties registered with the Scheme to offer advice on standards and ensure that they meet the Scheme requirements

- Registration with the Empty Property Matching Service which is a tool that was developed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council to deal with long term empty properties when we are approached by empty property owners looking to sell
- Discounted licensing fees
- Access to grant funding, where available
- Ability to advertise properties on local University websites as an accredited member (fees may apply)

### 3) Tenants

- Identify good landlords that are professional and reputable with good standard of accommodation on our website
- Browse accredited landlords' properties available for renting
- Have confidence that the property you are renting is of a good standard and is properly managed
- Access to information on private renting
- Help if problems arise with accredited landlords and their properties through the Scheme complaints procedure.

## BREACHES & COMPLAINTS

Any comments or complaints regarding the Scheme, its partner agencies or its members should be referred to the Scheme Co-ordinator at [accreditation@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:accreditation@stoke.gov.uk). An acknowledgment of receipt will be issued and also confirmation of outcome.

The complaints procedure will have 3 stages

- Stage 1 – informal and may warrant a warning
- Stage 2 – further investigation for more serious breaches of the Scheme and may include a suspension of membership
- Stage 3 – evidence of a serious breach and would include revocation of membership

There is also an appeal process where cases will be considered by the Review Panel

See the [Complaints Procedure](#)

## FAIR PROCESSING NOTICE/CONFIDENTIALITY INFORMATION

Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council take your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to process applications and membership of the Scheme, to keep members up-to-date on current and new legislation and any other matters affecting landlords' business, to promote and provide products or services that would benefit landlords or tenants and for purposes required or allowed by law. We are joint data controllers for the personal information we hold about you in relation to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire.

You can find information about how we handle your personal information by visiting [stoke.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://stoke.gov.uk/dataprotection). You should be aware that we have a duty to protect public funds. We may therefore use the information you provide for the prevention and detection of fraud. We may share this information with other bodies for these purposes. We may also share this information with other departments of the council or other relevant organisations for purposes which may include enforcement.

## COPYRIGHT

The logo of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire remains the copyright of the Scheme and use of the logo is not permitted unless you are a current member of the Scheme or have been granted express permission for its use.

The Scheme Operators may, through the Steering Group make amendments to these Terms and Conditions.

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire is a partnership between;



For further information, please contact the Landlord Accreditation Team at

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