



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our latest newsletter.
Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire is a voluntary scheme run by Stoke on Trent City Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council.

Our aim is to promote good quality housing, good management practices, create and maintain a stock of privately rented accommodation to a standard which meets legal requirements, give public recognition to our members and give tenants the choice of renting a good standard of accommodation.

Accredited landlords, please encourage fellow landlords to join the scheme to receive the benefits on offer.
We hope you all enjoy this edition.

There are currently
433 members,
owning 2,613
properties across
the two local
authorities

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Local News**
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If there are any topics/Acts you would like to see covered in the next issue, please email your ideas!

Newsletters

Copies of past newsletters can be found on our website landlordaccreditation.co.uk

Just log into your account and search under downloads.

Please remember that newsletters are produced for the benefit of members of our scheme and should not be advertised on any other website.



Scheme/Local News

We have a new on-line training platform!

Due to the difficulties we have experienced around Covid and the postponement of in person meetings, we are pleased to announce that Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire has secured funding and developed an on-line learning system for members.

The learning platform will be the primary place to complete your compulsory core membership development which forms part of your membership and must be completed within your term of membership every 2 years.

The course consists of four modules: Property Standards, Tenancy Management, Modern Slavery and Policing, and Anti-social Behaviour / Domestic Abuse.

You'll need to complete all four modules to pass this course and to receive certification. If you need to, you can complete one module at a time and come back to complete the others, or if you have to exit a module before finishing, you can pick it up from where you left off to complete it. You can also complete all modules at once if you wish. There are two assessed quizzes to complete – the first one is an assessment of your learning for the Property Standards and Tenancy Management modules, and the second is to assess your learning of the Modern Slavery and Policing and Anti-social Behaviour / Domestic Abuse modules.

We will hopefully be able to resume in person meetings over the coming months and then landlords will have the choice to attend and/or complete the session on line but for now, this is the preferred/only available option.

We will commence Course enrolment to all members in the New Year, please ensure that you look out for the email Course enrolment invitation and enrol as soon as possible.

We will be monitoring completion of the course and send reminders if it is not completed within a reasonable amount of time.

Consultations planned for January

The Private Sector Housing Team at Stoke-on-Trent City Council will be running two consultations in the new year.

The first consultation is regarding the new methodology of determining the level of financial penalty issued instead of prosecutions under provisions of the Housing Act 2004.

The second consultation relates the issue of penalties under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 and how we will determine the level of fines. These regulations relate to the requirements to let out properties with an Energy Efficiency Rating of E and above.

Both consultations are not mandatory and will run for four weeks. We are keen to hear your views on the way we determine the level of fines we issue.

Details of how to respond to the consultations will be released in the new year when we know the start dates.



Green Homes Grant – additional funding Energy Efficiency Improvements funded by the Government’s Green Homes Grant Local Authority ~Delivery Scheme Phases 2 and 3

Phase Two

The Council have been working in partnership with E.ON since August to upgrade homes in the City with energy efficiency measures that will save on bills and reduce carbon emissions. The current scheme is focussed in Birches Head and Burslem Park wards.

Almost 100 residents have signed up for improvements and 40+ properties will have external wall insulation fitted as part of this project. Other measures that can be delivered include loft and cavity wall insulation.

No financial contribution is required for eligible homeowners. A financial contribution is required from landlords towards the cost of work in rented properties.

Work on site will begin in February 2022 and complete by the end of June 2022.

The scheme is still open for applications for smaller measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation and the easiest way to apply is directly over the phone by calling the Green Homes Grant team at E.ON on 0333 202 4846 or by emailing GreenHomesGrant@eonenergy.com with the subject ‘Green Homes Scheme.’

Landlords can also find out more about the scheme by visiting <https://www.eonenergy.com/green-homes-grant.html>.

The council contact is Eleanor Taylor, email: privatesectorhousing@stoke.gov.uk

Breaking News – Phase 3

The Council have just been notified of a further £1.2 million Government funding for Phase 3 of the scheme.

This will provide energy efficiency measures for around 160 more fuel poor households living in homes with low energy performance ratings i.e. those with EPC D, E, F or G.

The grant will be available to both owner occupiers and private rented sector tenants with combined household incomes of £30,000 or less or eligible through the Council’s published Statement of Intent for Flexible Eligibility.

Phase 3 will continue on from LAD2, focussing on older terraced properties in Birches Head area radiating out around the central areas of the city. Beyond the city centre the areas Burslem, Fenton, Longton and Tunstall are identified as contingency.

More information about the scheme will be available in March 2022. Watch this space!

Landlord Contributions – Local Authority Delivery Scheme

The guidance for the Green Homes Grant requires that the average subsidy cost should not exceed £5,000 per property in private rented properties. See examples below which show scheme costs and required contributions from landlords:

Green Homes Grant Funding	Minimum Landlord Contribution	Total Cost
£1,000	£500	£1,500
£2,000	£1,000	£3,000
£3,000	£1,500	£4,500
£4,000	£2,000	£6,000
£5,000	£2,500	£7,500

Example Image showing properties with External Wall Insulation installed by E.ON



Grant funding available from Staffordshire Warmer Homes

[Staffordshire Warmer Homes](#) is a scheme run by Staffordshire County Council, in partnership with district and borough councils and covers properties in Newcastle and other areas of the County. This scheme is currently administered by [Beat the Cold](#).

Grants are available for such things as

- solar PV
- external wall insulation
- air source heat pumps
- Gas central heating systems

You could be eligible if your tenant meets one of the below criteria

- Claim benefits or tax credits (including Universal Credit)
- Have low or no income
- Are disabled
- Are elderly
- Have very young children
- Are currently unemployed

[Beat the Cold](#) are an independent local energy advice service This is a free, independent service for all private sector residents (home owners and private tenants) in the city. They can be contacted by phone on 01782 914915 emailing enquiries@beatcold.org.uk

or visit the website at <https://www.beatcold.org.uk/>



HMO License renewal

Stoke on Trent City Council HMO licenses;

The renewal of an HMO licence is the responsibility of the licence holder and not the City Council. We will aim to send out a renewal pack several weeks before the licence is due to expire. However, ultimately the licence holder needs to be aware of when any licence is due to be renewed.

Licence holders who fail to manage this process may be deemed as failing to licence a property that is required to be licenced and face possible enforcement action, or alternatively face private action from tenants who are able to apply for a rent repayment order.

Sale of an HMO

If you sell your HMO, you need to inform the council of the sale via email; HMOAdvice@stoke.gov.uk

Let's move away from paper!

We are encouraging as many landlords as possible to use electronic methods such as email, where possible, when making an application. Electronic methods are quicker, more cost effective for all parties and eliminates the use of paper.

Keele SU Housing Fair 2022

The Keele SU Housing Fair will take place on **Tuesday 1st February 2022** in the Keele SU Ballroom.

Keele are pleased to confirm that (covid permitting) the Housing Fair will be a physical / in person fair this year.

More information about the fair, including how to book can be found at the link below.

<https://keelesu.com/advice/accommodation/housingfair/landlords/>

Please use the following email address for any questions about the fair su.housingfair@keele.ac.uk.

Please ensure that you read the terms and conditions, available on the website, carefully before booking.

Bookings will close on Tuesday 18th January 2022 **at the latest**. Places are limited by the physical space in the Ballroom and places are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Once all stalls are booked no further bookings will be accepted, even if this is before Tuesday 18th January 2022.

General News

COVID-19

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities formally Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, updates its guidance document, setting out general advice and information predominantly for tenants and landlords in the private and social rented sector, regularly so please check their website.

The guidance covers issues which may arise during the Covid-19 outbreak including what to do if a tenant is struggling with paying rent, advice around carrying out emergency repairs, and information on property viewings and moves within rented accommodation.

The guidance, which applies to England only, and can be found by [clicking here](#)

Smoke and Carbon Regulations consultation

A Government response to the recent consultation of the [2015 Smoke and Carbon Regulations](#) has been released by Government.

The full Government response to the consultation can be found [here](#). The document sets out the findings of that consultation, the government's response to the findings and intended next steps.

Although no time frame is given as to when these policies will be introduced into the regulations, it is likely to be at some point in early 2022.

The guidance on both positioning of alarms and type of carbon monoxide alarm will be reviewed and may be brought in line with BS EN 50292 and BS EN 50291.

Damp & Condensation

It's that time of year when condensation becomes more noticeable.

Condensation is the appearance of water on cold surfaces. Water produced from condensation is generally noticeable where it forms on non-absorbent surfaces (i.e. windows or tiles) but it can form on any surface and it may not be noticed until mould growth occurs.

Damp and mould growth is one of the 29 recognised hazards under the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#). It can cause breathing difficulties, exacerbate existing conditions such as asthma and anxiety or lead to the spread of fungal infections.

There are a number of practical steps both landlords and tenants can then take to tackle condensation, please take a look at our attached leaflet, which you can also give to your tenants, to provide them with useful tips on reducing condensation in their home.

Landlord responsibilities – a reminder

You're a landlord if you rent out your property. As a landlord you must:

- keep your rented properties safe and free from health hazards
- make sure all [gas](#) and [electrical equipment](#) is safely installed and maintained
- provide an [Energy Performance Certificate](#) for the property
- [protect your tenant's deposit](#) in a government-approved scheme
- check your tenant has the [right to rent your property](#) if it's in England
- give your tenant a copy of the [How to rent](#) checklist when they start renting from you (you can email it to them)

Don't forget that an EICR dated within the last 5 years is now a legal requirement for all tenancies and must be completed by a 'competent' electrician.

[Renting out your property - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Scheme Reminders

Keep us updated!

Please **remember** to let us know;

if you change your email address, contact number, home address or agent's details
if you acquire or dispose of any properties

Tenancy Relations Officer

James Ibbs, who is a member of our private sector housing team, is a tenancy relations officer. If you need advice or assistance on any tenancy or management related issue please call him on 01782 237717 or email TenancyRelations@stoke.gov.uk or PrivateSectorHousing@stoke.gov.uk

Recommended tradespeople

Have you used a tradesperson recently who you would recommend? If so, let us know they may be willing to join our list of participating companies. We have had a couple of new companies join us recently, take a look on our website.

Feedback

So that we can continue to develop and improve the Scheme for the benefit of our members, we would like to ask you for your feedback/comments of the scheme and give us any suggestions or topics for future training events, please email them to me at accreditation@stoke.gov.uk or complete and return our feedback form which can be located on our website under member downloads when you log in.

Property Shop

Don't forget you can advertise your empty properties on our website, just log into your account, click on Properties Portfolio listed under Quick Links, select the property you wish to advertise, check the details and description are still current and set the property as 'online'

Please note that properties will automatically be taken 'Offline' by the Accreditation Team if the 'Available date' is more than 2 months old.



Last but not least, the team would like to thank everyone for their support over the last year and wish you all a very

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



For any further information or advice please contact Landlord Accreditation Scheme: North Staffordshire on 01782 232271 or accreditation@stoke.gov.uk



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