

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND



Department for
**Social
Development**
www.dsdni.gov.uk

Newsletter Issue No 8– March 2015

Welcome to our eighth Newsletter for private landlords. We aim to continue to keep you up to date with useful sources of information and legislative changes that may affect you.

Copies of all previous Newsletters can be downloaded from our Private Rented Sector Publications on the DSD Website.



Setting the standard for letting property

The Scheme has now over 39,000 landlords registered at 20th March 2015 who have provided details of 85,000 private tenancies.

Once registered, landlords are provided with up-to-date information and support in relation to their duties and responsibilities. The Scheme also provides essential information to councils in support of their enforcement and compliance role.

Tenants are encouraged to look for the Landlord Registration logo and registration number when taking up a new tenancy. This will provide reassurance that their landlord has complied with the statutory requirement to register.

To find out more, or to register, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/landlord or call **0300 200 7821**

Review of the Role and Regulation of the Private Rented Sector

We recognise the vital role that the private rented sector plays in providing people with a flexible housing option. The number of private rented sector properties has grown considerably over the past number of years and provides homes for around

16% of all occupied housing stock in Northern Ireland.

The Department is currently carrying out a review of the role and regulation of the private rented sector. The purpose of the review is to identify ways in which the sector can be enabled to provide a viable, attractive and good quality housing option for a broad range of households into the future.

We are particularly keen to ensure that those living and working in the private rented sector have a voice in the policy review. A discussion paper setting out the main issues will be produced before the summer and a copy will be issued to all on the mailing list for your views and comments.

Review of Housing Fitness Standard

The current housing fitness standard applies to all dwellings including private rented sector dwellings. It has been unchanged in legislation since 1992, and comprises of nine criteria dealing with structural stability, disrepair, heating and lighting, ventilation, provision of water, hygiene facilities and drainage, food preparation facilities and prevention of dampness. The standard is enforced in the private rented sector by Councils.

The fitness standard is currently under review and the Department intends to publish proposals for change later in 2015. The proposals will be published on the DSD website and the views of all interested parties will be welcome.

Tackling Empty Homes

The Empty Homes Unit will shortly issue the details of an “Empty Homes Matching Service” (EMMS) including the website address where owners and sellers can register. Registration will be free to both parties.

You can find out more information or report an empty home by:-

- Telephoning the Northern Ireland Housing Executive’s Empty Homes Unit on **03448 920 900**;
- Visiting the NI Housing Executive’s Empty Homes website and providing details of the property – www.emptyhomesni.com

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

Reminder: All tenancy deposits received on or after 01 April 2013 **must** be protected, **within 14 days** of receiving the deposit, in either a custodial or insurance

based Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

The landlord or agent **must** also give the tenant written confirmation (called “prescribed information”) **within 28 days of receiving the deposit** from the tenant detailing the amount of the deposit and where it has been protected.

In the first 22 months, since the introduction of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme 6,882 landlords and agents have registered with the scheme and protected over 37,000 deposits, totaling over £21 million.

Further information can be found at [Tenancy Deposit Scheme - Introduction for Landlords | nidirect](#)

HM Revenue and Customs online tax guidance

HMRC have launched an online service offering landlords training in tax matters which is part of their Let Property campaign.

It is a computer based tutorial aimed to make it easier for landlords to understand when and how to pay tax on their rental properties.

What is the purpose?

HMRC want to make sure that landlords have their tax affairs right from day one, whether it is because they have not declared before or have under - declared their earnings they will now be able to make sure that it is done correctly without confusion.

What is it?

The bite-sized modules will explain to landlords:

- when and how property letting starts, and what to do
- the various types of property income – furnished, unfurnished, holiday lets, Rent-a-Room, the Non Resident landlord Scheme – and how they are taxed
- the correct treatment of income and expenditure, both revenue and capital
- tips on record-keeping
- property disposal, Capital Gains and Inheritance Tax
- tax return filing and paying dates – and when and how
- PAYE and VAT obligations

[Details](#) of the Let Property campaign and [the tutorials themselves](#) are both available online.

HMRC are also holding a series of public webinars. Live webinars will last for an

hour and you can ask questions throughout the presentation and get answers from your HMRC host. They are aimed at sole traders and business partnerships and are not suitable for directors of limited companies.

One that landlords may be interested in is:

Wed 1 April @13.00 – My property income and HMRC

Other public webinars that landlords may be interested in are attached in the spreadsheet below.



April 2015- public webinar schedule.xlsx

If you would like to register or organise a webinar especially for your organisation please contact Ian Patterson HMRC Tel 03000511218 for further advice and information.

What other information is available?	
NI Direct	Environmental Health
<p>NI Direct brings together lots of information from government departments and agencies. It provides information and services on many topics including buying, selling or renting a home, your neighbourhood, rates, building regulations, homelessness and evictions. For further information, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk.</p>	<p>Environmental Health Officers deal with issues around public health & housing, health and safety, pest control, food hygiene, dog wardens and home safety.</p> <p>They provide advice to private tenants and landlords and enforce housing and public health legislation.</p> <p>You can find contact details of your local Environmental Officer within your council area at the following link: Local councils in Northern Ireland nidirect</p>
Welfare Reform	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
<p>Many private landlords will already know there are significant changes being made to the social security system. For the most up to date information on</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Housing Executive can provide advice and information on many aspects of housing including improving energy efficiency of private</p>

<p>Welfare Reform please visit the following link: Welfare Reform nidirect</p>	<p>rented dwellings. NIHE also deals with housing benefit applications and payments. To find out more visit: www.nihe.gov.uk or telephone 03448 920 902.</p>
<p>nibusinessinfo.co.uk</p>	<p>Affordable Warmth Scheme</p>
<p>nibusinessinfo.co.uk is a free service provided by invest NI, which brings together key information from government departments and agencies to deliver the most authoritative business advice. Access the business support finder to search from over 2,500 grants, loans and support schemes and find customers or suppliers in a directory of over 90,000 local companies. To find out more visit: Business support, information and advice nibusinessinfo.co.uk</p>	<p>From 01/04/15 the Affordable Warmth Scheme will replace Warm Homes as DSD's energy efficiency scheme for vulnerable households. This scheme is a programme for owner occupiers and private tenants, where local Councils will target specific areas and offer advice and assistance to eligible households. This is not a self referral scheme, but if you have an eligible tenant in one of the areas being targeted then you may qualify for 50% grant assistance for improving the energy efficiency of the home.</p> <p>Further information is available on NI Direct website. Affordable Warmth grant scheme nidirect</p>

All contributions for future issues should be forwarded to barbara.simpson@dsdni.gov.uk or call 02890 829322.