

The Landlords NEWSPAPER

March
2022

Welcome to our new and improved newsletter

This publication is for all registered landlords and agents throughout West Lothian, our aim is to keep you updated with what is important to you. A newsletter will be issued three times a year and will cover relevant information on legislation/regulations, tips on best practice, forums, training and various other topics.

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Included in this version of The Landlords Newspaper

- Private Sector Leasing Team.
- A Deal for New Tenants Consultation.
 - Eviction Legislation Update
- Landlord Registration Fee Changes.
 - Repairing Standard Enquires
 - Landlord Registration Forum
 - Winter Support Funds
- Landlord Registration Team Update



Private Sector Leasing Team

West Lothian Council Private Sector Leasing service utilises empty private let properties and provides a guaranteed income for at least 12 months to private landlords and agents in West Lothian. We would like to invite landlords /agents who have 1, 2, 3 or 4 bedroom properties available to contact us who may be interested in the scheme. If you would like to find out more or to request an application pack, please speak to an officer by contacting:

The Accommodation team
01506 280000
private.lettingservices@westlothian.gov.uk

Contacting the Landlord Registration Team

The team no longer offers a drop-in option within the Civic Centre. All mail and certificates must be submitted by emailing us at landlordregistration@westlothian.gov.uk. When the service returns to undertaking face to face advice and support, this will be by appointment only.

Please do not attempt to seek unscheduled appointments at the Civic Centre, as you will be turned away. We continue to offer a full service in terms of support, advice, and registration remotely.

If you require advice or assistance from the team, you this will be carried out by email, telephone or request a scheduled call.



A NEW DEAL FOR TENANTS

Draft Strategy Consultation Paper
December 2021



The Scottish Government invites comments to this consultation on A New Deal for Tenants - Draft Rented Sector Strategy, which seeks to improve accessibility, affordability choices and standards across the whole rented sector in Scotland. The draft strategy consultation sets out and invites views on how we can deliver a new deal for tenants to progress the right to an adequate home and deliver our vision for Housing to 2040.

It aims to ensure all tenants, whether living in private or social rented homes, can access secure, stable, tenancies, with affordable choices - whilst also benefiting from good quality of homes and professional levels of service and rights. It aims to ensure all tenants, whether living in private or social rented homes, can access secure, stable, tenancies, with affordable choices - whilst also benefiting from good quality of homes and professional levels of service and rights.

The Consultation closes on 15 April 2022,
to view the consultation paper and subject
your views please click the below link;

TAP HERE



THE CORONAVIRUS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2020 UPDATE

The Scottish Government implemented The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 on 1st April 2020. The legislation provides new powers and measures to help protect the public, maintain essential public services, and support the economy during the Coronavirus outbreak. The aim of the legislation is to protect both private and social tenants from eviction.



The Scottish Government have announced that they have laid regulations before Parliament confirming their intention to allow the longer notice periods on grounds for eviction which were introduced at the start of the pandemic, to expire on 30 March 2022.

From the 31 March 2022 the notice periods will revert back to the original requirements before the pandemic

The regulations which put this change in place contain a transitional provision which prevents a landlord who has already served notice to end a tenancy from serving a new notice on the same eviction ground with a shorter notice period post 30 March. A fresh notice with a shorter notice period can only be issued if notice is being served on a different eviction ground.

We have updated our website to include a section on evictions, this will be updated regularly. Should you require further assistance, please use our new website in the first instance, please tap/click the council badge below to take you straight there.



Enquiries received 2021/22

The Landlord Registration Team have a dedicated Technical Officer who investigates enquiries raised in relation to properties within the sector that fail to meet the Repairing Standard. The Technical Officer also provides advice and support to landlords to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities. Below is a not of number of enquires received in 2021/22;

Type/Number

Leak -21

Roof Repair - 7

Dampness/condensation - 14

Heating - 10

Wear and Tear - 19

Electrical -4

External - render etc - 6

Communal- 0

Third party damage - 0

Total 81

As you can see, the majority of enquiries have been around water, leaks causing damage to the property, dampness and condensation. A lot of remedial works could have been avoided if there was swifter action taken to resolve the source of the leak.

As you can imagine, the majority of roof and dampness issues were at the start of the year. This is a good time, if you haven't already so, for a visual inspection of the outside of the property, particularly with the recent strong-winds, quite often cement is misplaced, roof tiles moved and render coming away from the external walls.

Wear and tear is very common, regular internal inspections of the property could help you identify this and address it before it becomes a bigger problem, particularly if the tenants are being heavy handed on cupboards, doors etc. Not only could this help mitigate costs over the year, rather than be made aware of multiple issues at one time, it could also provide you with an avenue to discuss tenant damage.

There were a total of 16 landlords who had not completed their safety requirements of an annual gas safety check and/or a 5 yearly EICR. As this is a matter of health and safety. It is very important these checks are completed to protect the lives and wellbeing of the occupiers in the property and it is a legal requirement.

Landlord Registration Fees

The Private Landlord Registration (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 came into force on 11 June 2019. Section 3 of the Regulations makes the provision to be adjusted from 1 April each year. In accordance with the regulations, the value of the fees has been rounded to the nearest pound. This increases the value of the fees to apply in 2022/23.

The new fee amounts take place from 9am Friday 1 April 2022

[TAP HERE](#)

Email Notifications

You may have noticed that the team have changed our Out of Office and Automatic Email Acknowledgments. Based on feedback from you, our customers, we felt it was important to better manage your expectations; therefore, we have now included our Service Level Agreements

Website Update

The website has now been updated with useful information and covers all topics relating to private renting. The website also has a new layout which will make it easier to navigate, the website will be updated monthly to reflect any changes in the service, legislation and regulations and updates from the Scottish Government.



Landlord Registration Forum

30 March 2022
2pm until 4pm
Microsoft Teams



LAS
LANDLORD
ACCREDITATION
SCOTLAND

The first Landlord Registration Forum of 2022 will be held on 31 March 2022 from 2pm until 4pm on Microsoft Teams. The below speaker will be giving a presentation:

- Carol Bradburn - Safe Deposit Scotland
- Housing Benefit Update - Graham Watt, West Lothian Council
- Rent Better Survey Douglas Robertson, Indigo House Group
- Consultation Discussion- Zak Abercrombie, West Lothian Council

To book a place onto the Forum please go to the below link and book your ticket.

BOOK NOW

The forum provides an excellent opportunity for you to hear about national and local issues that affect private landlords as well as sharing experiences with other landlords.

All presentations and handouts will be published onto the dedicated webpage for Landlord Registration, which can be found by clicking the image below.

FUTURE EVENTS AND TRAINING

If you have any suggestions on training and speakers to provide a presentation at the next landlord forum, please email your suggestions to landlordregistration@westlothian.gov.uk.

The training and forums are designed to ensure that you as a landlord have the most up to date knowledge of the sector and training that suits your needs.

LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCOTLAND TRAINING

Dealing with rent arrears – This course is fully booked, please contact the LAS office.

This webinar helps landlords put plans in place to manage the situation when it becomes apparent that the tenant may not pay their rent. The Rent Arrears Pre-Action Requirements (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 came into force on 30 September 2020, which means landlords and letting agents acting on landlords' behalf are required to undertake specific actions prior to serving notice on the ground of rent arrears. This webinar guides you through those required actions, focusing on early intervention and best practice in communication.

Topics covered in this webinar:

- Early intervention – understand the likely causes of rent arrears
- Good communication – important in encouraging the repayment of arrears
- Pre-actions requirements
- Timeframe for effective arrears management

Participants can ask questions throughout the webinar and as many questions as possible will be answered in a Q&A session.

To book a space onto the course please go to the below link;

BOOK NOW



WINTER SUPPORT GRANTS

FEELING THE PINCH FUND

This is for specific, one-off funding for low income households who need help but are not suitable for any other type of support. The Feeling the Pinch Fund can provide a grant of up to £300 toward essential items or to cover unexpected costs. This could include:

- Household items
- Essential clothing
- Replacement of lost or broken essential items such as a phone
- Help toward unexpected bills or payments such as repairs, travel costs or moving expenses

This list is not exhaustive and all applications will be considered on a case by case basis. Please note, however, that this fund cannot be used to pay toward debt.

Applications will be accepted from council services and third sector organisations who are working directly with marginalised low income households. e.

For further information about the Feeling the Pinch Fund, contact FYPAS@westlothian.gov.uk

FUEL GRANT FUND

The Advice Shop is administering a winter energy grant fund to help those who are in fuel poverty and/or at risk of disconnection.

The WLC Fuel Grant is a one off payment of £75.00 made to a household via their bank account to help with fuel costs and to keep them on supply.

If you have a client who is

- i) struggling to top up their prepayment meters and keeps running out of gas or electric
- ii) has a dry meter but is struggling to pay their fuel bill and is at risk of being disconnected from supply
- iii) is spending more than 10% of their net income (minus rent/mortgage payments) on their fuel costs

Then they could be eligible for a £75.00 payment.

They will be required to complete a short income and expenditure form and will also need to provide proof of their bank account details to allow payment to be made.

As this money is paid via bank transfer (which can take up to 5 working days) the WLC Fuel Grant is not an emergency payment. However, working alongside other emergency support via the Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grant payments and the Fuelbank Foundation, it could help someone who is feeling overwhelmed or worried by energy costs.

Referrals for this grant should be made via FORT to the Advice Shop Energy Advice Team and an advisor will then contact the client to go through the application process.

Any questions about this grant can be directed to energy.advice@westlothian.gov.uk



USEFUL INFORMATION

Landlord Registration Team
landlordregistration@westlothian.gov.uk

West Lothian Home Choice Team 01506 282765

West Lothian Council Customer Service 01506 280000

Environmental Health 01506 280000

Shelter Scotland 08080 800 4444

The Shelter Scotland Website



00:04:08 Avg. Time on Site

28.30% % New Visits

Map Overlay

Direct Traffic: 397.00 (40.49%)
Search Engines: 316.00 (38.04%)
Referring Sites: 342.00 (21.47%)

Content Overview

Pages	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/	5,832	23.33%
/information-resources	1,306	5.14%
/decisions	667	3.41%
/information-privacy	697	2.74%
/information-privacy-guidelines	692	2.72%