

NEWSLETTER

February
2017 Edition

RCT Landlord Forum Newsletter



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Next Landlord Forum:
Tuesday 14th March
6pm—8pm
Llantrisant Leisure Centre

Message from the Chairman Of the RCT Landlords Forum

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council are very keen to work with local landlords, recognising that the Private rented sector has outgrown social housing, and have secured sponsorship for the RCT Landlords forum of which I am the current Chair.

As we enter 2017 I would like to wish all our RCT Landlords a very happy and 'prosperous' new year.

I emphasise 'prosperous' because there is so much in this coming year that will hit the finances of the Private Rented Sector landlords and for many of us I'm sure the question will arise 'Is it worth it'?

We all face a very challenging year and to list just a few topics that will get our attention:

1. Renting Home (Wales) Act 2016
2. The implementation of higher tax bills for landlords with mortgages.
3. The Housing White Paper going through Westminster and the how will landlords be affected?
4. The enforcement of unlicensed landlords under Rent Smart Wales. Will this legislation enacted on the 23rd of November 2016 really work or is it just another regulation to hit good landlords and have no effect on rogue landlords.
5. The letting fees ban - what steps will you take?
6. The Welsh SDLT Debate (Land Transaction and Anti Avoidance of Devolved taxes (Wales) Bill)

Our next meeting is **Tuesday the 14th of March** and I encourage all local landlords to attend these meetings in order to stay up to date and interact with other landlords. It is my intention to make these meetings landlord focused, that includes all aspects of knowledge necessary for a being a professional Landlord. I look forward to meeting with you at the next meeting.

Vince Botham

HOME SHARE SCHEME

The Home Share Scheme is an initiative designed to increase the availability of shared accommodation for the needs of single person households. Landlords willing to develop this option are able to receive a package of incentives intended to reduce the costs and risks of establishing and managing shared accommodation in the private rented sector.

Under the terms of the Home Share Scheme landlords can receive;

- 12 months Free Housing Management.
- 12 month Rent Guarantee
- Specialist tenancy support service
- Free tenant finder service.
- Comprehensive advice in developing shared accommodation in the PRS

For further details you are able to contact the Private Rented Sector officer on:

Tel: 01443 425638 or

E-mail: RCTLandlordsForum@rctcbc.gov.uk

Unlicensed Treforest Landlord Prosecuted!

A Gwynedd based landlord has been handed a fine and has had to pay Council costs in relation to an offence of operating an unlicensed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Treforest, Pontypridd.

Jeremy Alwyn Davies pleaded guilty to operating an unlicensed HMO in Cyrch Y Gwas Road, Treforest at Merthyr Magistrates Court on the 16th November 2016.

The prosecution was brought by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Housing Standards Team following a complaint that the property was being used as an unlicensed HMO. Investigations confirmed that the property was indeed being occupied by three unrelated persons living as three households and therefore was required to be licensed under the Council's Additional Licensing Scheme 2014. The owner was given the opportunity to submit a licence application but repeatedly failed to respond to correspondence.

The Council licences HMO's to ensure that properties are free from serious hazards, have the appropriate facilities and fire precautions and are safe to live in.

The landlord may now be unable to become a licensed landlord with Rent Smart Wales and could have to appoint a licensed agent to manage his properties on his behalf. In addition if he were to apply to licence any of his properties as HMO's, Licensing Authorities would have to consider whether he is fit and proper to do so having regard to his conviction. On top of this his tenants can apply to a Residential Property Tribunal for a Rent Repayment Order. A Residential Property Tribunal could determine that he has to pay each tenant up to twelve months of their rent back.

Paul Mee, Service Director for Public Health & Protection said:

"Licensing of HMO's is necessary to ensure that tenants, some who may be vulnerable, and students who are living away from home for the first time have decent and safe homes to live in. The Council will continue to work with landlords to achieve compliance however when they fail to engage or respond to correspondence a hard line will be taken"

Treforest Property Accreditation Scheme

The Treforest Property Accreditation Scheme is now in operation and provides landlords the opportunity to attract and retain good tenants in the Treforest area of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The TPAS is designed to raise the quality, amenity and standard of rented accommodation.

The TPAS is **voluntary** and **free** to access for landlords with rented accommodation in Treforest. The scheme is supported by the University of South Wales who give priority lettings status to accredited properties and the Residential Landlords Association who offer a discount to membership for landlords.

RCT council are also supporting the scheme and are able to provide a 10% discount to the cost of HMO Licenses for landlords of accredited properties.

All landlords must be registered/licensed with Rent Smart Wales to have their properties accredited with this scheme.



The Property Accreditation Scheme is open to landlords and letting agents who are able to engage voluntarily and without charge.

2 to 5 star accreditation

- Raise your profile
- Recognition of the quality of property and the housing management
- Attract tenants

THIS PROPERTY HAS ACHIEVED:



Endorsed by:
RLA (Residential Landlord Association)
University of South Wales
South Wales Police
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/propertyaccreditation
Tel: 01443 425638



To complete an on line application click [here](#)

Or visit RCT Council's Treforest Property Accreditation Webpage [here](#)



South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

"The RLA is supporting RCT Council and the drive to voluntarily improve standards in HMOs. As an additional incentive to the scheme the RLA will be offering those landlords who have achieved a 5-star rating 25% off RLA membership for a year. Properties must be verified by RCT Council before the discount applies." Please visit the [RLA website](#) for further information.

RCT Landlord Forum is sponsored by:



Property Sales & Lettings

Tel: 0800 043 7300

Web: propertypluswales.co.uk

Email: sales@propertypluswales.co.uk // lettings@propertypluswales.co.uk

We provide the total buying and selling experience, covering all areas and offering the highest level of customer service to buyers and sellers, landlords and tenants. Our vision is to be the agent of choice for anyone considering a property-related transaction by being the very best in our profession.

We aim to provide an outstanding level of service to our clients. We believe in keeping clients for life, and will stay in contact for long after their transaction has completed so we remain their agent of choice for future transactions.

Housing Benefit Working For Landlords in RCT

Landlord Services Online

If you are a landlord in Rhondda Cynon Taf then why not use the Council's range of e-services to help you manage you and your tenants Housing Benefit payments. By registering through the simple on-line authentication process you will have access to important information 24/7, at the touch of a button. You will no longer need to visit the Council Offices or telephone the Council's Contact Centre, therefore avoiding queues and appointments.

The on line services available include being able to:

- View your tenant's Housing Benefit entitlement
- View Housing Benefit payments being made direct to you (as the landlord)
- View any Housing Benefit correspondence issued to you

All the on-line services are compatible with tablet PC's and smart phones and you can download information from the website directly into Microsoft Excel; this is invaluable for analysing payment schedule information and storing it securely and electronically.

If you are interested in finding out more about this service please contact Housing Benefits on 01443 680733 or register now at www.rctcbc/e-account.gov.uk

BACS Payments

Are you one of the few remaining landlords still receiving payments of Housing Benefit from the Council by cheque? If so then the Council are asking you to consider switching to an electronic transfer through BACS.

The Council pays out approximately £6m a month in Housing Benefit and 90% of this is paid by BACS. Those landlords who have already switched to this facility are taking advantage of the benefits of the service and receive payments securely and quickly. Payments by BACS means that you will get your money up to **5 days quicker** than being paid by cheque.

Importantly, choosing payment by BACS would still mean you are able to receive a paper schedule of payments, although this information is available through our e-services.

If you would like to be paid by BACS in the future, please contact the Council on **01443 425002** and a form will be sent to you.