

Cashbacks on offer



Tenants and landlords are reaping the benefits of four schemes designed to reduce maintenance, save heat and money.

Philip Drysdale (above) and Linda Wakefield of Woodlands Rise, Haworth, are now enjoying a warmer winter, thanks to the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. Their landlord Mr Gray had cavity wall insulation installed under the scheme, which improves the value of the property and cuts down maintenance by reducing condensation and dampness.

Linda said: "We've noticed the walls haven't been as cold, and it's certainly taken the chill off the kitchen.

"When we turn the heat off it tends to stay warm for longer, so in the long run it will save money."

Do I qualify ?

Landlords with tenants on housing benefit will qualify for the Government's Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. They will get about £700 per property towards cavity wall and loft insulation, draught proofing doors and windows.

Landlords of properties where tenants are over 60 can get up to £2000 for all the above plus central heating. Bradford Council runs three schemes for landlords with tenants who are not on housing benefit.

The Bradford Warmer City Project is aimed at parish and town council areas, where the Council will put landlords in touch with installers offering very competitive rates for cavity wall and loft insulation, and also

offer cashbacks of up to £50.

The Warmer Rural Areas Project offers discounted prices and up to £650 in cashbacks, if landlords install double glazing (£250), central heating (£250), cavity wall insulation (£100), and loft insulation (£50).

The Energy Savings on Prescription Project offers the same benefits to landlords as the Warmer Rural Areas scheme, where tenants are suffering from cold related illnesses such as asthma, rheumatic or respiratory diseases, coronary heart disease or strokes.

MORE DETAILS from Home Energy Conservation Co-ordinator Terry Booth on 01274 757589.

Use your forum

The first meeting of Bradford's Landlords' Forum is to be held on February 24, 2 pm at the Carlisle Business Centre, 60 Carlisle Road, Manningham. The speakers will be from the Housing Benefit Service and Environmental Protection's Private Sector Housing, with a question and answer session to follow.

The forum is initially aimed at managing agents, but if you are a landlord who would like to attend please contact Shonu Miah or Lorna Frost on 01274 754279.

News for landlords from Bradford Council's Environmental Protection Division



Dear Landlord...



by Councillor Jim O'Neill,
Executive Member for
Homes and the Environment

Welcome to the first issue of Let's Talk, a newsletter from Bradford Council for landlords of private properties. We aim to use Let's Talk to keep you up to date with changes in your responsibilities, and to build up links between you and our staff.

We hope too that you will use Let's Talk to talk back to us. Please fill in the enclosed questionnaire about this first issue, write to us about any matters of concern, or see opposite for how to contact the Environmental Health Officers covering your patch.

We are also setting up a Landlords' Forum, where you and council staff can meet together to discuss issues affecting us all, such as new laws, resolving problems with housing benefit, and dealing with disruptive tenants. A warm, safe, healthy home for everyone in the district is something we must all work towards, and we will only succeed by working together.

Jim O'Neill

If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas escape, shut off the gas supply immediately and contact the Transco Gas Emergency Freephone number - 0800 111 999. MAKE SURE your tenants know this number.

Safety checks mean peace of mind for all

Gas safety is one of the biggest threats to the health of tenants.

Carbon monoxide kills about 50 people each year and injures hundreds more.

The Gas Safety Regulations were introduced in 1998 to protect them from faulty or neglected gas appliances.

Are you doing your bit to meet the requirements? If not, the stark reality is you may be responsible for someone's death, and you risk being prosecuted, fined and even imprisoned.

What landlords must do

Landlords with properties where people live must :

- ensure all gas fittings and flues are **maintained** in a safe condition
- ensure an **annual safety check** is carried out on each gas appliance and flue, and a gas safety certificate is obtained.

Before a new lease starts you must make sure these checks have been done within a year before the start of the lease date, unless the appliances have been installed for less than 12 months, in which case they should be checked within 12 months of their installation date.

- have all installation, maintenance and safety checks carried out by a CORGI-registered gas installer (ask for their CORGI ID card or registration certificate)

- **keep a record** of each safety check for two years
- **give a copy of the record to each tenant** within 28 days of the check being done, or to any new tenant before they move in.

The safety checks are **not the same** as an annual service inspection. You may need to have both - ask the advice of a CORGI registered gas installer.

What equipment is covered

The safety check and maintenance requirements apply to all appliances and flues except:

- * appliances owned by the tenant
- * flues or chimneys solely connected to an appliance owned by the tenant

However, appliances and flues serving homes, such as central heating boilers not installed in tenants' accommodation, but used to heat them, are covered. So are portable appliances, such as LPG cabinet heaters.



Can I delegate duties to a tenant ?

No.

What happens if I use a managing agent ?

You must ensure the management contract spells out exactly who is responsible for maintenance, safety checks and record keeping.

Access to property

Your tenancy agreements or contracts must allow you access for any maintenance or safety checks to be done. This may mean giving written notice to a tenant asking for access and explaining why. If a tenant refuses access, keep a record of what you have done. If a tenant continues to refuse access, you might have to consider court action under the terms of the tenant's contract.

Failing the safety check

You must get any defects put right by a CORGI registered gas installer before the equipment is used again.

It is an offence to use or allow the use of a gas appliance you know to be unsafe.

Never reconnect an appliance which has been condemned, isolated or disconnected for safety reasons until the fault has been put right.

The safety check record will contain details of any failed appliances or flues, and what was done about it.

If you need further advice about gas safety issues ring the HSE Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300 363.



Local gas man's TV advice

The latest gas safety campaign from British Gas (above) featured a TV advert with a local star – Bradford gas service engineer Vince Reynolds (inset). Vince, who lives in Dudley Hill and has worked for British Gas for 25 years said:

"I do gas safety checks on a regular basis and I'm glad I was able to be part of the campaign. I hope this advert raised awareness among landlords and tenants who live in rented accommodation. You really cannot play around with safety."

Mrs Deborah Bennett, the landlord from Huddersfield who features in the fly-on-the-wall ads first shown last November, also supports the campaign to encourage landlords to get gas safety certificates by having their gas appliances checked by a qualified engineer. She said: "The certificate gives me peace of mind – I know that my tenants are safe from carbon monoxide poisoning. "

Get in touch

Please use these numbers to speak to staff on the Private Sector Housing Teams responsible for your area:
Bradford – 01274 753531
Keighley/Ilkley – 01535 618049
Shipley/Bingley – 01274 757057

LET'S TALK! - we want your views

This is the first issue of our newsletter to private landlords, and we need to know what you think of it. Please fill in and return the enclosed questionnaire, which will automatically enter you for a free prize draw.

If anyone wants to talk about LET'S TALK! please ring Liz or Jane on 01274 754665.

Your fire alarms must be loud and clear

Is your fire alarm loud enough to wake up every sleeping tenant? Or do you need more sounders ?

New research has shown that just one sounder may not be enough to achieve the 75 decibels at every bedhead required by law.

The effect of closed fire doors with smoke seals is to reduce sound levels by up to 30 decibels, and smoke itself can also cut the sound by another 20 decibels. Shipley Environmental Health Manager John Taylor explained that up to now, some houses in multiple occupation have had an automatic fire detection system connected to a single warning sounder which may not comply with the required British Standard, 5839. John said: "When Environmental Health and Fire Officers carry out their regular inspections of HMOs, they will need to check that there are enough sounders installed to guarantee the 75 decibels at every bedhead in the building."



Above, the devastating effects of fire , and right John Taylor, Environmental Health Manager.

"And it may even be necessary to install sounders in individual lets."

Environmental Health Officers and Fire Safety Officers continually inspect the district's HMOs for fire safety, as the risk of injury or death from fire is ten times greater for tenants living in bedsits than for people in single let houses.

Their inspections cover the warning system which gives people time to get out of the building, and the means of containing fire and toxic fumes, such as fire resistant walls and ceilings, fire doors with self closers, smoke seals and intumescent strips.

■ Anyone wanting information about upgrading their existing system should contact their local private sector housing team - see inside.

Grants - do you qualify?

Bradford Council offers two grants to landlords to improve their homes - but only in times of crisis!

Renovation grants are available when the Council's Building Control staff decide that a tenanted property is in such a dangerous structural condition that it must be repaired immediately.

Anyone worried that their property is structurally dangerous should get a report from a qualified structural engineer which must identify the danger.

This report must be sent to the Council's Home Improvement Service at Usher Street, Bradford BD4 7DQ, who will ask Building Control to decide if the situation demands immediate action.

আপনি যদি এই প্রচারপত্রের বাংলা অনুবাদ শুনতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহপূর্বক ইকুয়াল অপারচুনিস্ পলিসী ইউনিটকে (01274) 754667 নাম্বারে ফোন করুন।

HMO Grants are available in certain cases to landlords of houses in multiple occupation who have been served with notices requiring works under the Housing Act 1985.

The grant is for fire precautions, and work to common areas to make the property suitable for the number of occupants.

Both grants are subject to a test of financial resources and the landlord's contribution is the higher of:

- a fixed percentage- 50% or,
- an appropriate figure based on the advice of the Rent Officer

Anyone wanting guidance and information on these grants should contact the Council's Home Improvement Service on 754509.

If you would like the contents of this newsletter interpreted, please contact our Equal Opportunities Policy Unit on (01274) 754667.

Also available in Braille, in large print and on tape.

اگر آپ چاہتے ہیں کہ اس لیفلٹ کا ترجمہ آپ کے لئے موزوں کے ذریعے کیا جائے تو مہربانی فرما کر ایول ایجوٹیز پالیسی یونٹ سے فون نمبر (01274) 754667 پر رابطہ قائم کیجئے۔