

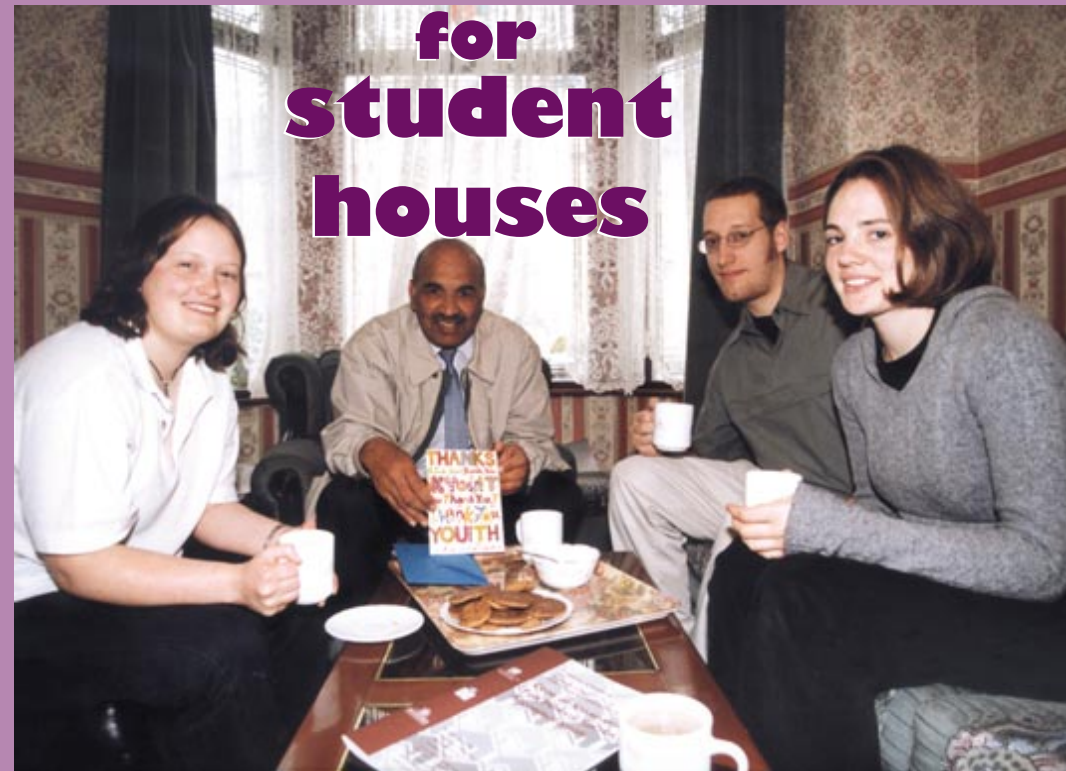
Chance to quiz our staff

Do you need some information and advice about housing benefits and grants? Then you will get a chance to quiz our staff if you go along to the second meeting of Bradford's Landlords' Forum to be held at Shipley Town Hall on September 14 at 2pm. There may also be a chance to get some energy efficiency tips from one of our officers. Organiser Shonu Miah said they had wanted to move the venue around to make it accessible to private landlords all over the Bradford district. The first round of forums in Bradford and Keighley, was a huge success – [see details inside.](#)

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

New standards for student houses



Mr Akbar proudly shows off a thank you card from students who were happy with his accommodation.

If you are looking to provide rented accommodation to students you will have to make sure its facilities and safety standards are up to scratch. The University of Bradford and Bradford College have recently launched a code to improve standards for their students living in privately rented homes. The Joint Accommodation Service is only going to inform students about private accommodation that meets standards set out in the new code. Developing the code along with the Joint Accommodation Service were the students' unions, Bradford Council's Environmental Protection department, the West Yorkshire Fire Service and the West Yorkshire Police. Landlords and landladies

have also had their say on the code. Private landlord Mr. Mohammed Akbar, who has been a landlord for about 15 years, has been pressing for such a code ever since he saw one in Leeds. "I think it will improve properties in Bradford," he said. "If landlords have a code they know what standards they have to reach. It is best for the landlords and best for the students." One of Mr. Akbar's tenants, language student Emily Corkhill who comes from Brighton, said: "I think this code is a really good idea. It will make it easier for students looking for accommodation. I like being able to leave the university, whereas if you live in halls you are surrounded by the university."

The code covers gas, electrical and fire safety, security and facilities, and the responsibilities of both landlords and tenants are included. The implementation of different aspects of the code are to be phased in, beginning in September.

If you wish to know more about the code, please contact the Joint Accommodation Office on (01274) 234886.

News for landlords from Bradford Council's Environmental Protection Division



BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Landlords welcome 'Let's Talk'



'Let's Talk' has been greeted with great enthusiasm by private landlords who welcome receiving up-to-date information and advice about issues close to their hearts! We had over 200 responses to our reader survey sent out with the first issue, the majority of whom found the newsletter easy to read and of great interest.

The respondents also put in many requests for information on a huge range of subjects – one of the top subjects being illegal eviction – so we have produced a big spread for you on this very topic in our second issue.

Amongst the many subjects which landlords asked us to cover are: information on housing benefits, grants, general legal information, fair rents, income tax, vandalism and ways of preventing it, accreditation schemes, and right of access for landlords.

Landlord, Mr. J. Gray of Haworth said: "I am very impressed with 'Let's Talk'. It's a good idea – very informative."

Eviction - follow the law!

Stay on the right side of the law – and follow the correct procedure if you want to end a tenancy.

Our private sector housing team gives advice to both landlords and tenants about the rules that landlords must follow. But the team can also get tough – prosecuting landlords that break the law by illegally evicting or harassing a tenant. The rules vary according to the type of tenancy. After 28 February 1997, even if there is no tenancy agreement, the tenants have an assured shorthold tenancy. As this is now the most common type of tenancy the advice that follows applies only to **assured shorthold tenancies**.

To evict the tenants the landlords must follow one of two procedures:

either

They must give at least two months' notice in writing to quit the tenancy. They do not have to use a special form for this. Landlords cannot evict tenants in this way before the end of the assured term (usually six months) of the tenancy.

For example, if a six-month assured shorthold tenancy starts on January 1, 2001, the earliest that a notice to quit can be given is April 1, 2001, for possession on June 1, 2001.

or

There are certain grounds - such as rent arrears or if the tenant is causing damage to the property - which mean that the landlord can give two weeks' notice to quit a tenancy.

However, notice must be given on a special form outlining the specific reasons for terminating the tenancy.

It is possible to serve a notice to quit during the assured term – for example, if a tenancy begins on January 1, 2001, and by April 1, 2001 the tenant is in two full months' rent arrears, then two weeks' notice to quit can be given on the prescribed form.

Full details can be found in the leaflet "Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies – A Guide for Landlords" which is available free from your local Private Sector Housing Team.



What happens if the tenant does not leave?

If the tenant does not leave and the notice period expires, the landlord must apply to the court for a possession order. It will usually take a month to get a court date. The judge may then issue a court order requiring the tenants to leave. If they still refuse, bailiffs will enforce the court order on the landlord's behalf. Police officers have no powers to forcibly remove tenants, or to help landlords to do so.

It is against the law for landlords or their agents to harass or forcibly evict tenants, even if the notice to quit has expired. They must not change the locks or in any way force the tenants to leave. If the landlord doesn't follow the correct legal procedure, private sector housing will carry out investigations with a view to taking legal action. The maximum penalty for breaches of the Protection from Eviction Act on indictment is a two-year prison sentence or an unlimited fine, or both. The tenant may also take civil proceedings to claim compensation from the landlord.

Different rules apply to the above if:

- The tenants moved in before 28 February 1997
- The rent is more than £25,000 a year
- The rent is less than £250 a year
- It is a tenancy of a business, including the tenancy of a licensed premises
- It is an agricultural tenancy
- The landlord is a university or college
- It is a holiday let
- The landlord lives at the property and shares part of the house.

You should contact your local Private Sector Housing Team or a solicitor for further advice.

First round of forums hailed a success

Housing benefit was the hottest topic at the first round of Landlords' Forums.

The first forum held in Bradford was a huge success, attracting over 60 people to the event at the Carlisle Business Centre.

The invitation to all Bradford landlords and agents in the first edition of 'Let's Talk' provoked a huge response with many people ringing in to find out more details. Letters were also sent out to managing agents in the Bradford city area.

One of the organisers, Environmental Health Officer Lorna Frost, said: "We had a whole cross-section of people attending, ranging from larger managing agents to single property landlords, from an entire family to an 87-year-old lady!"

The first Keighley landlords' forum on 6 July attracted 20 landlords.

Both forums covered the role of the Private Sector Housing Section within Bradford Council, and changes to housing benefit.

Lorna Frost said: "The response from the landlords was very encouraging. Many asked questions and voiced their opinions on all the presentations, particularly on housing benefits."

There will be a representative from Housing Benefits at all future forums.

