



SAVING YOUR PLANET
SAVING YOUR MONEY



In partnership with

WHY PAY NEW PRICES WHEN YOU CAN GET GOOD QUALITY RE-USED OFFICE FURNITURE, AND HELP THE ENVIRONMENT?

CHAIRS	from £20
DESKS	from £50
TABLES	from £10
PEDESTALS	from £20
FILING CABINETS	from £20

...AND LOTS OF OTHER STUFF FOR RENTAL PROPERTIES, OFFICES & STUDIOS

* 10% DISCOUNT WITH THIS LEAFLET – 15% DISCOUNT FOR NUS CARD HOLDERS!!!

Opening times: 9.00am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday

St Vincent Works, Silverthorne Lane, Bristol BS2 0QD

Tel: 0117 9720889 Email: office@sofaproject.org.uk

HOW TO FIND US:



Landlord News

Issue 28, Autumn 2010



Inside this issue:

- Bristol tackling rogue landlords
- Planning changes – yet again
- Changes to Local Housing Allowance
- Drainage tips for landlords
- Renewable energy
- HomeChoice Bristol

This issue sponsored by:

PMG Services Ltd
Ecocetera
Sofa Project

Do you have any stories or items of interest that you would like to share with other landlords? If so please contact **Julie Norris** on:

Tel: 0117 353 3867

Email: Julie.norris@bristol.gov.uk

Bristol tackling rogue landlords

The Housing Minister, Grant Shapps has urged councils to use the wide range of powers they already have at their disposal to tackle the minority of rogue landlords that blight some communities, provide a poor service to tenants and damage the reputation of the private rented sector.

Bristol City Council has taken this on board and will be using its full powers where landlords are disregarding their duties or if there are serious breaches of legislation. Examples include:

- Operating an unlicensed HMO
- Breach of licence conditions
- Failure to comply with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations
- Not complying with the requirements of an Improvement Notice

For further details see www.bristol.gov.uk/privatelandlords

Any advertisement or reference to a commercial company or organisation in Landlord News should not be taken as an endorsement of any company or product. If you are looking to promote your products and services, please contact Julie Norris on the details above for further information.

Dates for your diary:

National Landlords Association (Wessex) – open to all landlords
Wednesday 26 January 2011, 2:00pm at Lansdown Golf Club, Bath, BA1 9BT
Wednesday 2 February 2011, 7:00pm at BAWA Club, Southmead Road,
Filton Bristol, BS34 7RG, email: Nlawessex@landlords.org.uk

Westcountry Landlords Association – open to all landlords
Wednesday 1 December 2010, 7:30pm at Filton Community Centre, Elm
Park, Filton, Bristol, BS34 7PS. Tel: 01752 242 980 see www.wlainfo.co.uk

Save the date – Landlord Expo 2011

Next year's Landlord Expo will be taking place on Thursday 9th June from
12.00 till 7.00pm at the Exhibition & Conference Centre, University of the West
of England, Bristol

Further details in the next edition of Landlord News

NLA endorses Bristol Scheme

The National Landlords Association (NLA) has officially
recognized the West of England Landlord Proficiency Test.

NLA have launched their own accreditation scheme, details
can be found at www.goodlandlord.co.uk

To achieve accredited status landlords need to complete the NLA Foundation
Course. However, landlords who have successfully completed the West of
England Landlord Proficiency test can be passported onto the NLA scheme.

The West of England Landlord Proficiency Test can be found at
www.privatehousinginformation.co.uk or by telephone to 0117 353 3867.

Landlord Survey

To help us decide the best ways of working with landlords and tenants of
private rented properties, we've put together a short on-line questionnaire.
The questionnaire is being given to landlords, managing agents and tenants,
and it would be really useful to us if you could complete it.

It's completely confidential and respondents will remain anonymous, it should
take you less than five minutes to complete.

The questionnaire can be found at <http://privatehousing.limequery.com/46969>

The results will be published in the Winter edition of Landlord News.



Drainage tips for landlords

Many blockages are due to poor maintenance and bad habits around the
property, the more serious problems don't tend to happen overnight so by
regularly checking the system by lifting external manhole covers twice yearly you
may not stop the final blockage but you may well see it coming prior to the big
flood.

There are several things a Landlord can do to avoid blockages through normal
daily use, a simple rule of thumb is don't put anything into the system that will not
dissolve or break down.

Drainage Grids & Gullies - These are the drains at the side of the property where
your rain water down spouts and kitchen and bathroom waste pipes discharge
into, they should have a water trap on them similar to the way a toilet operates,
the trap is there to stop smells from the main line drainage venting at ground level
and the trap also prevents silt and debris from entering the system and hopefully
rats coming the other way.

It is therefore good practice to clean out the gullies occasionally as grease, fat
and fibres from sinks, washing machines and dishwashers can hold and solidify in
waste gullies, while silt and debris from roofs and gutters collect in storm water
gullies. Leaves and debris can seal the grid top preventing water from entering
the gully pot so again an annual clear out could save you money in the long run
as will making sure that the plates enter the dishwasher or sink with as little
residue on them as is possible

PMG Services Ltd is a well established Bristol based company that specialises in
all aspects of liquid waste removal and drainage cleaning with our fleet of tankers
and skilled operatives. Our clients range from independent property owners
through to blue chip companies with large property portfolios. PMG provides a
first class service in drainage and sewer cleaning, high pressure jetting, septic
tank emptying, interceptor waste management, liquid waste removal and drainage
CCTV inspections.

Whether you have a blocked drain or require liquid waste removal then please
contact our experienced, friendly team for expert advice.

PMG Services (Bristol) Ltd
Unit 1, 38 Albert Road
St Philips
Bristol BS2 0XA

Tel: 0117 972 8564
Mobile: 07973 633 747
Email: info@pmgservices.co.uk
www.pmgservices.co.uk



What is Renewable energy?

Nearly all the energy generated on earth is derived from burning fossil fuels or from nuclear energy. Both these have well documented environmental problems. Renewable energy is a naturally replenished energy, which uses non-extinguishable resources such as wind, sun, rain, tides, and geothermal heat, and can be used as an alternative to fossil fuels and nuclear power. Renewables such as solar photovoltaic or thermal, wind power and biomass offer more sustainable solutions for providing energy. Renewable energy is greener energy.

Solar Photovoltaics (PV) are one of these alternative sources of energy. They are typically panels that harness sunlight to generate electricity, and can be seen on many a rooftop. Once installed on your property, you can use this green electricity at source, and send any excess back to the national grid.

The Feed In Tariff introduced in April 2010 pays you for all the electricity you generate – whether you use it or not. At a rate of 41.3p a unit, this means a typical return on investment in excess of 8%. If you take into account the reduction in electricity bills this figure rises to 10% (or higher, depending on the size of system). The Feed In Tariff is index linked, so as energy prices increase so will your income. It is also guaranteed for 25 years, and as it is paid by the energy companies, not the government, it is an area not subject to spending cuts!

Ecocetera is a Bristol based renewable energy company that specialises in solar photovoltaic systems. Passionate about the environment and helping homeowners reduce their dependency on fossil fuels and nuclear power, it is a fully accredited company, and aims to simplify the whole process of having a system installed.

Why have a photovoltaic system installed?

As well as the benefits mentioned above there are other incentives such as:

- Systems are noiseless and 100% emissions free
- They can be installed on any unshaded roof or open space facing from east to west (although roughly south facing is best)
- Having your own power source means protection against rising energy prices and fuel shortages
- PV systems can increase property value by up to 10% (Source: Energy Saving Trust and the Guardian Newspaper)

Ecocetera offers free no-obligation surveys and quotations



www.ecocetera.com
enquiries@ecocetera.com
0117 959 0580

Why are landlords installing renewable energy systems?

Since the Feed in Tarriffs commenced private landlords are seeing the benefits of installing renewable energy systems in their rented properties. It adds value to their properties, it makes them money and it's good for their tenants. Under the FIT energy scheme householders who generate their own electricity through solar panels and wind turbines can receive regular payments from energy suppliers.

The scheme guarantees a minimum payment for all electricity generated by the system and a separate payment for any excess electricity exported to the grid. These payments are in addition to savings made on bills by generating electricity from renewable energy systems

One Bristol Landlord has recently been crowned NLA Green Property Woman 2010 in recognition of her commitment to the environment and her efforts in implementing green initiatives in her rental properties – she truly is a green champion.

Fiona Macaskill is always on the look out for new ways that she and her tenants can reduce their carbon footprint and her green efforts include: introducing eco boilers and 'A' rated appliances, insulating to the highest level to help tenants keep bills down, as well as draught proofing, double glazing and installing solar PV panels.



“I am absolutely delighted to have won NLA Green Property Woman and that the judges have recognised my efforts in reducing both mine and my tenants’ carbon footprint.”

Planning changes – yet again!

New legislation has been announced which effectively reverses the changes that came into force on 6 April 2010.

The classification of a small HMO (C4 Use Class) is to remain however permitted development rights have been extended to allow all changes between the C3 (Dwellinghouse) and C4 classes without the need for planning applications.

This legislation came into effect from 1 October 2010, so planning permission for change of use is now no longer required for any new small HMOs. However, larger HMOs (above 6 units) classified as Sui Generis, may still require planning permission.

The Government announced that councils are to be given more flexibility to manage shared homes in their area. In areas where there is a need to control HMO development, local authorities are able to use an Article 4 direction to remove the permitted development rights and require planning applications for the change of use.

Bristol City Council is currently considering whether it is appropriate to make any Article 4 directions following the legislative changes. The Council will need to consider whether there is sufficient evidence to justify such action.

Any further updates will be announced in future editions of Landlord News.

Changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The Government is planning to make legislation in November 2010 that will change the LHA rules. From 1 April 2011 the Government plans to:

- end the maximum £15 weekly excess that some customers can receive under the LHA arrangements
- remove the five bedroom LHA rate so that the maximum level is for a four bedroom property
- introduce absolute caps that LHA **weekly** rates cannot exceed - £250 for a 1 bed, £290 for a 2 bed, £340 for a 3 bed, £400 for a 4 bed

From October 2011 the LHA rate will be set at the 30th percentile of rents, an illustration of what this will mean in Bristol can be seen in the table below:

	1 room	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed
LHA Oct. 2010	£62.14	£120.82	£143.84	£166.85	£228.99	£316.44
30 th percentile	£58.68	£113.92	£136.93	£159.95	£205.97	N/A

For further information see the benefits pages of the Bristol City Council website www.bristol.gov.uk/benefits or email local.housingallowance@bristol.gov.uk

Are you a landlord with properties to let?

HomeChoice Bristol may be able to help you.

HomeChoice Bristol advertises all social housing vacancies in Bristol allowing anyone who is on the Bristol Housing Register to bid for those properties. In Spring 2011, Bristol City Council will be extending this scheme to allow private landlords to advertise their properties on the Homechoice Bristol website.

There are currently 13,000 households on the Bristol Housing Register and nearly 180,000 hits on the HomeChoice Bristol website per week.

If you are interested in advertising and letting your property via HomeChoice Bristol you will need to be an accredited landlord and will need to accept people who are receiving Local Housing Allowance.

If you would like more information regarding this please complete the tear off slip and return it to:

Rehousing Service (FHO)
P.O. Box 595
Bristol, BS99 2AW
or alternatively contact Sue Long
on 0117 3533009 or via email on
sue.long@bristol.gov.uk



Name:

Address:.....

Contact telephone number(s):

Are you currently an accredited landlord: YES/NO

Would you be willing to pay for advertising via this method: YES/NO

How many properties do you currently let?.....

Can you give an indication of areas/property sizes of the properties currently in your portfolio?

.....