

Condensation problems?



You are not alone, 1 in 5 properties will suffer from condensation. It can lead to costly refurbishment and unhappy tenants.

Condensation and mould forms when relative humidity is more than 70%.

The average household will produce 112 pints of moisture per week through cooking, bathing and breathing. The moisture is increased when clothing is dried in the home.

As we seal up our homes to make them more energy efficient through loft and wall insulation and double glazing this results in a cling-film effect.

By gently introducing fresh filtered air into the home at a continuous low rate the moisture-laden air is diluted, displaced and replaced. This reduces the relative humidity, condensation cannot form and mould spores dry out into a powder which can be brushed off.

The Energy Saving Trust has also commented that this can save up to 10% of the heating cost.

EnviroVent design and manufacture award winning products for houses and flats, we also provide a full installation service using our own dedicated installation team.



We donate a percentage of our profits to Asthma UK.

For more information and a free no obligation homecheck call EnviroVent on 0845 2727 807.



Landlord News

Issue 29, Winter 2010/11



Inside this issue:

- Landlord fined over gas safety breaches
- Planning – Article 4 direction published
- Changes to Local Housing Allowance confirmed
- Bristol Landlord Forum convened
- Private rented policy, your chance to contribute

This issue sponsored by:

**Purple Frog
EnviroVent**

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

2005–2006
Promoting Social Equality
2006–2007
Transforming the Delivery of
Services Through Partnership
2007–2008
Healthy Schools
Preventing and Tackling
Anti-social Behaviour



Landlord fined over gas safety breaches

The HSE have successfully prosecuted the owners of a rented property in Bristol with fines totalling £8,300. The case was passed over to the HSE after several failed attempts to get a gas safety certificate from the owner, and also allegations from tenants that the owner had been working on the boiler without the necessary qualifications.

The HSE Inspector said: "Working with gas supplies is a specialised job and must only be carried out by trained engineers who are members of the Gas Safe Register. As landlords, they should have made sure that the boiler was properly installed and maintained by someone properly trained and certified to do so. Landlords must also provide proof that boilers have been checked for safety every year."

More information for landlords is available at www.hse.gov.uk/gas

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

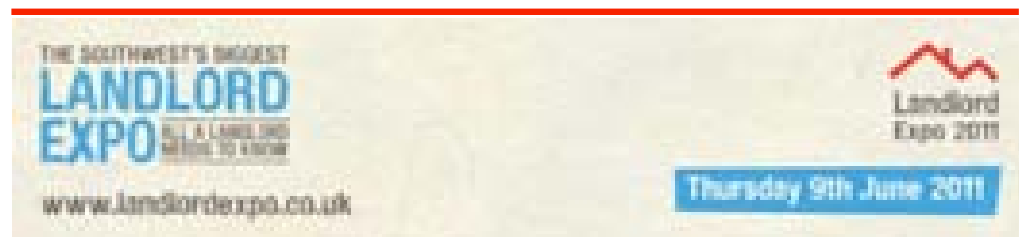
Westcountry Landlords Association – open to all landlords
Wednesday 9 March 2011, 7:30pm at Filton Community Centre, Elm Park,
Filton, Bristol, BS34 7PS. Tel: 01752 242 980 see www.wlainfo.co.uk

Bristol Landlord Forum

With so many changes affecting private landlords at the moment it seemed time to convene the Bristol City Council Landlord Forum. This is an open meeting for any landlord to attend.

Topics to include; LHA benefit changes, Article 4 planning, HMO licensing re-applications

Date: **Tuesday 8 February**
Time: 7.00 pm till 9.00 pm
Venue: The Bristol Room
The Memorial Stadium
Filton Avenue
Bristol BS7 0BF



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

Full details in the next edition of Landlord News



How will the student finance reforms affect the private rented sector?

From the summer of 2012 Universities and Colleges will be able to charge new entrants fees of up to £6'000 per year (in exceptional cases Universities will be able to charge higher contributions, up to a limit of £9000). Initially you might think that student numbers would fall and the amount of money students have to spend on accommodation would be reduced having a negative impact on the private rented sector. However, after a little further analysis it appears that it may not be all that bad after all.

As an extension of the current system, students will not have to pay any fees upfront, only paying back the loans taken to pay the fees after they graduate and start earning over £21'000pa, (up from the current figure of £15'000pa). As such, when students arrive at University and start looking for accommodation the amount of money they have to spend on housing would not be affected by the rise in fees.

This also means that if the right message is being communicated by the Coalition government, fewer students than thought will be put off of going to University. In addition, KPMG were one of the first large companies to announce this week that they will pay for tuition fees of their intake of trainees this autumn; they said that it may well be the "blueprint" for private sector support for students; it might just be the start of a trend in companies supporting students through University.

Any reduction in applications would have to be very significant to reduce the actual number of students at University as places have been substantially over subscribed throughout the past decade. International students are also becoming increasingly important in the market, accounting for over a third of all University places. This could conceivably take up any capacity in the University system. What's more, those students studying part time courses will now be eligible for the student loan and will not be forced to pay fees upfront which will most likely lead to an increase in applications.

Arguably, it could be said that the risks in the student private rent sector are currently higher than in previous years as no one really knows what will happen to student numbers, however, the right property in the right location, presented correctly and managed professionally will always let and can be a great investment.

Article provided by Patrick Garratt of Purple Frog
The Student Property People in Bristol


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We're already letting houses for
2011/12 students!

Changes to Local Housing Allowance confirmed by Government

Housing Benefit is changing

The Government has confirmed its intention to reduce local housing allowance in the Housing Benefit regulations which were laid before parliament at the beginning of December, with the changes coming into affect from 1 April 2011.

For those tenants who are already getting Housing Benefit, the amount they get may change when their claim is reviewed after April 2011. The timing of when this will affect your tenants benefit will depend on their specific circumstances and the council will write to let them know how and when they will be affected.

In addition, from April, the council will have more discretion to pay Housing Benefit directly to you. This can only be considered in very specific circumstances where it would help the customer secure a new tenancy, or remain in their current home at a reduced rent.

If your tenant has moved into your property since April 2008, they are very likely to be affected by these changes.

What are the changes?

From April 2011

There will be maximum rate caps, so that Local Housing Allowance weekly rates in any area cannot be more than:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £250 for a one bedroom property• £290 for a two bedroom property | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £340 for a three bedroom property• £400 for a four bedroom property |
|---|--|

There will no longer be a five bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. The maximum level is for a four bedroom property.

Local Housing Allowance rates will be reduced to a lower amount, so that about 3 in 10 properties for rent in the area should be affordable to people on Housing Benefit. At the moment about 5 in 10 properties in each area are affordable to people receiving Housing Benefit.

If you want to know what the Local Housing Allowance rate is now, visit the [LHA Direct](http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk) website at <http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk>. These rates change every month, so keep checking.

Summary of Changes from 1st April 2011

New Claims

- Removal of £15 excess
- Financial cap restrictions (e.g. £250 per week for 1 bed, £290 for 2 bed)
- 4 bed maximum LHA restriction
- 30th percentile calculations, instead of median.

Existing Claims

Most will be affected from the first anniversary date after 1st April 2011.

- Removal of £15 cap

Most will be affected from the first anniversary date after 1st April 2011, plus 9 months, see 'transitional protection'.

- Financial cap restrictions (e.g. £200 for 1 bed LHA)
- 4 bed maximum restriction
- 30th percentile calculations (Previously Oct '11)

Transitional protection for existing claims

It will not apply to existing claimants from 1st April 2011 when;

- There is a change of address, or
- Room need goes down

It applies to existing claimants from 1st April 2011 when;

- First anniversary date arrives, or
- Room need for the dwelling goes up, And
- The new rate of LHA is less than the existing one.

It will continue to the earliest of;

- 9 months ending, or
- There is a change of address, or
- Room need goes up, or
- Room need goes down.

New and existing claims

- LHA Payments may be paid to the landlord when it is in the interest to assist the claimant to securing or maintaining the tenancy
- Additional room need for disabled claimants who require an additional room for a carer. (*Definition of additional room need – In receipt of DLA (care) middle or high, or Attendance Allowance, or satisfies LA of need for extra room, and additional room is needed/provided for that care).*)

Change of Use to Small Houses in Multiple Occupation – Article 4 (1) Direction published

On 1 October 2010 changes to planning legislation relating to the control of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) came into force. The changes mean that any change of use between a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and a small House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4 – being a small shared house or flat occupied by three to six unrelated individuals) can occur without the need for planning permission.

However, in certain circumstances, councils can identify an area or areas where a planning application would be required. Councils are able to do this through the use of an article 4 direction, which removes the permitted development right that allows the change of use to occur.

On the 10 December 2010 Bristol City Council took the first step in removing this permitted development right for the wards of;

- **Ashley**
- **Cabot**
- **Clifton East**
- **Cotham**
- **Lawrence Hill**

This has involved the making of an article 4 direction and serving notice of the direction. An officer delegated report and decision sets out the rationale for making the direction.

The removal of permitted development rights is not proposed to take effect until **11 December 2011**. For the notice to take effect the council must take into account any representations made.

Any representations or objections to the direction may be sent in writing to:

Stephen McNamara
Head of Legal Services
Council House
College Green
Bristol BS1 5TR

Please quote reference number IA1/ 48 on all correspondence.

The council will consider representations up to **31 March 2011**.

Further details on the article 4 direction are available at
<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning>

The council is considering whether further article 4 directions in other areas of the city will be appropriate in the future.

Your chance to have a say



The Council is currently reviewing its Private Rented Sector Housing Policy for 2011-14.

We value your continuing contribution to the provision of rented housing in Bristol, and very much need your views to inform our review of our policy, which will inform our practice for the next few years.

This is even more important in the light of recent proposed changes in national policies, especially regarding Housing Benefit, announced by the Government.

We have devised an online questionnaire which can be found at:
<http://privatehousing.limequery.com/51366/lang-en>

We have also posted a copy of the questionnaire to a random selection of landlords and agent.

We trust you will find the time to complete the Questionnaire; we will analyse your views during January and February, and discuss the best ways to respond to them with Landlord and Agent associations, and with individuals. Our new proposals will then be fed back to you.

The closing date for responses is 25 January 2011.

Any queries, please contact Steve Smart on 0117 352 5263 or email steve.smart@bristol.gov.uk

With thanks in anticipation

