

The Landlord's Guide to Student Letting: How to Find an Investment Property and Let It Out to Students (Paperback) by Catherine Bancroft-Rimmer (Author)

This comprehensive book explains the nuts and bolts of letting, with a particular emphasis on letting to groups of young people studying in higher or further education. Plus: sample application forms, tenancy agreements, guarantor forms, standing order mandates, notices to quit and seeking possession, together with useful addresses and organisations.

ISBN-10: 1845281896 Price £7.69 Amazon Books

Fiona Fullerton's Guide to Buying to Let By Fiona Fullerton

Certainly recommended this book to anyone thinking of becoming a landlord - Fiona tells it like it is and is upfront about the difficulties as well as the benefits of being a landlord. You should be able to tell, after reading this book, whether buy to let is for you.

ISBN 0 7499 2280 X (paperback) Price: £6.49 Piatkus Books Limited

Renting Out Your Property for Dummies UK Edition (Paperback)

by Melanie Bien (Author), Robert S. Griswold (Author)

It talks of agencies, contracts, a great deal on tenants, Insurance, taxes and much more.. A great selling point is that the book provides a check list of all things in the house you need check so that you can fit and repair to getting a better rent rate. Definately worth buying for beginners or people who already own 1 or 2 properties.

ISBN-10: 0764570161 Price: £8 Amazon books

Website Links you may find useful:

Plymouth City Council : www.plymouth.gov.uk

Bristol City Council: www.bristol-city.gov.uk

Tenancy Deposit Schemes:

www.depositprotection.com (CUSTODIAL)

www.mydeposits.co.uk (INSURANCE BACKED)

www.tds.gb.com (INSURANCE BACKED & RESOLUTION SERVICE)

Valuation Office (District Valuer) www.voa.gov.uk

Buy-To-Let Finance: www.themoneycentre.co.uk

Rental Property Knowledge: www.landlordzone.co.uk

National Federation of Residential Landlords (NFRL) www.spla.co.uk

Courtesy & thanks to Letting Network, Landlord-Law, NFRL, NLA, RICS and all others for the use of some or part articles within this newsletter



Published : October 2007 - Issue:5 Westcountry Landlords Association (WLA) - (© MP)

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Contact: (01752) 242980

Email: landlords4landlords@hotmail.co.uk



NEWSLETTER

Welcome,

To our October / November issue.

We received tremendous feedback from many who enjoyed the previous 16 page special issue newsletter in addition to which the informative E-Bulletins received much praise. The voluntary dedicated committee are pleased that we are able to deliver this service. A warm 'Thank You' goes to all who took the time out of their normal busy schedules to comment..

**More than
30,000
landlords have
failed to sign
up to...**

More than 30,000 landlords have failed to sign up to a compulsory scheme to protect their tenants' deposits.

A survey for the Tenancy Deposit Scheme revealed that while 125,000

landlords had joined the scheme, almost a fifth were still unaware this was mandatory.

Landlords were required to sign up to one of three government authorised schemes from 6 April this year.

However, the Tenancy Deposit Scheme warned that it expected the number of disputes to increase significantly in two months' time when the first significant tranche of tenancies covered by the scheme end.

Lawrence Greenberg, chief executive of the TDS, said landlords were still far too complacent. 'As a result, some landlords, and even their agents, could be in for a rude shock as tenancies come to an end. Worse, it also means there are too many tenants who are unsecured,' he said.

Failure to comply means that a landlord forfeits the right to possession of their property and will also have to pay the tenant three times the amount of the original deposit taken.

Mr Greenberg added that the number of landlords who had signed up was disappointing 'given how successful we have been in helping to implement mandatory tenancy deposit protection'

Landlords Fail to sign up..

Disclosure of Local Reference Rents

Rent Service—Market Evidence

Landlord Challenges

HMO Licence Fee

WLA Free E-Bulletins

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Forthcoming Events

Buy To Let— still strong

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Ban the light bulb

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Westcountry Landlords Association

DISCLOSURE OF LOCAL REFERENCE RENTS

George Ferard of the Teesside Landlords Assoc with NFRL's support, has been pursuing, with the Information Commissioner, that all Local Reference Rents should be public information. In a letter to George, the Commissioner upheld his complaint, and the Rent Service was found to be in breach of the Freedom of Information Act. As a result, the Rent Service has detailed local reference rents on www.therentservice.gov.uk – go to Corporate Publications, LLRs, second quarter 2007. This information can be used by members and their associations to ensure that local reference rents are set at levels consistent with market levels in their localities. NFRL's thanks goes to George for his hard work and success.

Once again, this demonstrates how organisations using expert knowledge within the members can produce results far exceeding many people's expectations

PROVIDING MARKET EVIDENCE TO THE RENT SERVICE AGENCY

Don't forget to provide market evidence to the Rent Service Agency of the rent you are charging, since this will be used when setting and updating the level of Local Housing Allowance. The level of the LHA will affect all rent levels in a rental market. You can contact them on 0202 0236000 or visit <http://www.therentservice.gov.uk/contact/contact-details.asp>

LANDLORD GOES TO THE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TRIBUNAL TO CHALLENGE PAYMENT OF AN HMO LICENSING FEE

Members may wish to know that a landlord has appealed against having to pay a licence fee in respect of an HMO. The circumstances are not yet clear but we will be looking closely at both the case and the result. We'll keep you up-dated.

**FREE e-bulletins
for all Landlords**

**Just register your details at
www.wlainfo.co.uk**

Land Registry on target to achieve comprehensive land database

Land Registry, the government department responsible for land registration in England and Wales, has exceeded its annual target and is well on course to achieving its aim of a comprehensive land register, according to the Annual Report and Accounts 2006/7.

Almost 60 per cent of land in England and Wales is now registered on the national land database - up from just 48 per cent two years ago. More than 700,000 hectares - an area the size of Cumbria - have been registered in the past year.

Introducing the report, Chief Land Registrar and Chief Executive Peter Collis said it was a "major accomplishment" which had largely been achieved by explaining the benefits of voluntary registration to larger landowners.

The report also shows that customer satisfaction continues to reach the highest levels, with almost 99 per cent of customers declaring themselves satisfied or very satisfied with Land Registry's range of services. More than half said they were very satisfied with the service provided.

"At the heart of our vision for the future is a Land Registry even more focused on its customers' needs than now, tailoring its services to their particular requirements," said Mr Collis

"Last year we took significant steps in this direction by developing and marketing a range of commercial services and launching our new House Price Index".

"In the coming year we will continue to develop these and other new services and will put even more effort into bringing them to the attention of the huge range of businesses and individuals whom we believe could benefit from them," he said.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Landlord Show—Birmingham NEC
Thursday 6th December 2007

Landlord Buy To Let Show—London Olympia
Saturday 19th April 2008

More Info: www.landlordshow.com

Westcountry Landlords Association

Membership Application Form

Please complete the details below and return with a cheque (**14m for 12**) for **£35** (1st Nov on) - (this amount includes a "one-off" joining fee of £10) payable to "Westcountry Landlords Association"...Or join online at www.wlainfo.co.uk

After Completion return to

Westcountry Landlords Association
P.O. Box 454
Plymouth PL3 4WL

Trading Name:

Surname (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr)

Christian Name(s):

Partners Surname (if applicable):

Partners Christian Names:

Full Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No. (Day):

Telephone No. (Evening):

Email Address

Choose preferred password
For members area website access

Where did you hear about us ?

Signed:

Dated:

Above Information will be held on a computer system and shall be kept Private & Confidential.

Membership year runs from 1st January — 31st December
Membership November 2007—31st December 2008 = 14 months

CUT HERE



Planning and land use to support sustainable rural communities

The Prime Minister has announced (03/09/07) that Matthew Taylor MP will advise and assist the Minister of State for Housing and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - within the context of existing protection for the rural environment - on the application of land use planning policy to facilitate the provision of land for greater economic and social sustainability within rural communities, including land for enterprise and provision of affordable rural homes.

Matthew Taylor will in particular to look at the practical issues around:

- the identification and release of appropriate land for local economic development and affordable rural housing provision, working in conjunction with local government, parish councils and land owners;
- investigating the potential for increasing the provision of live/work space within rural communities; and
- assessing the local implementation of new planning rules on rural housing following the recommendations of the Affordable Rural Housing Commission.

He will report around July 2008.

Article Courtesy Communities and Local Government (National)

Bristol News



LANDLORD EXHIBITION

Join Us On:

Wednesday 7th Nov 2007 2pm until 8pm

Don't miss this special event.....at IKEA Bristol

*Free Goodie bag for the first 200 visitors to register via email at:
aict@memo.ikea.com*

*For further information contact us on: 0117 9527049 Or visit
www.ikea.com (and click on the Bristol site)*

Having a problem reading this newsletter ?

Larger print version available on request

***If you're not already a member you may wish to join this growing association. →
Alternatively, members may wish to recommend a friend.
Many benefits of membership.....
Or Join online at www.wlainfo.co.uk***

BUY TO LET STILL STRONG

The buy-to-let market remains strong despite recent falls in house prices overall, according to new research released in September. The buy-to-let market remains strong despite recent falls in house prices overall, according to new research released today.

Rental yields in the market are up by six per cent on a month ago, according to analysts Paragon.

The average annual returns made by landlords increased to 10.3 per cent, up from 9.4 per cent three months ago.

This comes despite reports from Right-Move.co.uk that prices have fallen 0.6 per cent in the last month.

"Activity in the securitisation and whole loan markets has been muted over the summer and, when investors return in force, credit quality will be top of their agenda".

"Given the superior, indeed exemplary, credit profile of buy-to-let, we can expect them to favour paper backed by low risk mortgage assets originated by specialist lenders," commented Nigel Terrington, chief executive of Paragon.

According to the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) only 0.63 per cent of buy-to-let properties were in arrears for three months or more in September, compared with 1.06 per cent in the market as a whole.

The market has benefited from strong consumer demand in recent weeks, as market uncertainty and high interest rates have made an increasing number of those looking to buy property hesitate.

The findings support evidence from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Rics) released earlier this month which stated rental demand was at its highest ever level.

"The current housing market is in many respects a positive signal for buy-to-let, which has certain counter-cyclical characteristics relative to the mainstream market".

"Tenant demand remains buoyant and investors continue to invest," concluded Mr Terrington.

Article Courtesy: www.aboutproperty.co.uk

WHEN IS A CONTRACTUAL RENT NOT A CONTRACTUAL RENT?

Landlords will be most concerned that contractual agreements entered into with contractual rent payments are being ignored for Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance purposes when the "8 weeks in arrears" rule applies. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is insisting that the rent must actually be in arrears by 8 weeks and not simply contractually in arrears (*i.e. "as per contract" - occasionally agreed as TWO CAL MONTHS in advance*).

All civil courts accept contractual arrangements. DWP is currently being challenged by the NFRL as to their right to change contractual agreements. Courtesy NFRL (Edited)

FORTHCOMING PROPERTY AUCTIONS

PLYMOUTH

Shobrook & Co

Tel: (01752) 663341

Email: info@shobrook.co.uk

Website: www.shobrook.co.uk

Venue: New Continental Hotel Millbay Road

NEXT AUCTION DATE:

20th NOV 2007

PLYMOUTH

Fulfords — Westcountry Property Auctions

Tel: 0870 2414343

Email:

info@westcountrypropertyauctions.co.uk

Website: www.fulfords.co.uk

Venue: Novotel Hotel —Marsh Mills

NEXT AUCTION DATES: 5th / 6th DEC 2007

BRISTOL

Maggs & Allen

Tel: 0117 949 1888

Email: admin@maggsandallen.co.uk

Website:

www.maggsandallen-auctioneers.co.uk

Venue: The Bristol Golf Club

Blackhorse Hill Almondsbury

NEXT AUCTION DATE: 27th November 2007

Ban the Light Bulb

British retailers are to phase out traditional incandescent light bulbs and offer customers only low-energy fluorescent bulbs by 2011.

The plan, which will cut UK carbon dioxide emissions by five million tonnes a year, was announced by Hilary Benn, the Environment Minister, on the last day of the Labour Party conference in September.

Mr Benn said that the move was the result of a voluntary initiative by major retailers and energy suppliers "with the strong support of the lighting industry and the government" to phase out old-fashioned light bulbs.

"We need to turn them off, for good" he said. "So our aim is for traditional 150W light bulbs to be phased out by January next year, 100W bulbs the year after, 40W the year after that and all high-energy light bulbs by 2011".

"This will save five million tonnes of CO2 a year and take us closer to our 2050 target."

Retailers said that the initiative was an attempt to pre-empt EU-wide rules expected to be introduced some time after 2011.

In a statement, the Co-Op said that it would stop selling incandescent - or tungsten filament - bulbs will start next month at 50 of its supermarkets. They will be phased out across the group's 2,300 food stores by 2010.

Around 80 per cent of bulbs sold in UK stores are high-energy bulbs, even though fluorescent bulbs use 75 per cent less energy and last up to 12 times longer. Retailers said that they can reduce electricity bills by £9 per year per bulb, or £100 over the bulb's lifetime.

The Government has already set a target to reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 and Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, announced earlier in September that he had called for a review on whether that target was sufficiently ambitious.

Mr Benn said: "Britain can either lead the world in a low carbon transformation of our economy, in protecting our countryside and wildlife, and in renewing our cities, with new jobs in new environmental industries, or we can be left behind.

"As individuals, we can either learn to live more sustainably today or, in a few years' time, face having to tell our grandchildren why, as a generation, we did not act while we still had some time".

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

A new system for replacing Housing Benefit (as we know it), it will only affect new claims or a change of circumstances (a break in the current claim or they move onto another property). LHA will not rely on 'pre-tenancy determinations' Existing tenancies will not be affected and no change to entitlement.

This system will be implemented on 1st April 2008.

Brief Overview:

What will change ?

The Amount

Depends on the area where the tenant lives and how many people in the household.

Payments

These will be made directly to the tenant in the first instance, there are some exceptions.

Exceptions are:

1. "Tenant Deemed to be Vulnerable" [i.e. unable to manage own financial affairs etc...] (Local Authorities will set it's own "Vulnerability Policies")
2. Tenant is more than 8 weeks in arrears or more.

Capped

Tenant will be entitled to the full amount available - (i.e. if the full amount available is £15p/w more than what the rent is it will be capped at £15, you may have a scenario that the tenant receives more benefit than the rent that is being charged. [This is because the amount is set on area not specific to the property, as previously under the Housing Benefit regime.]

The current situation is that calculations of the LHA levels will be based on a 'broad rented market area' - calculated and set by the Rent Service. Previously Housing Benefit was calculated using a local reference rent and assessed on the 'average' - LHA will be based on the 'medium'.

Westcountry Landlords Association will work with Local Authorities to influence a smooth introduction of this new system and the definition of their 'vulnerability policy'.

Q: A very basic, common question....

Are tenants, including those for whom Housing Benefit is paid directly to the landlord, still liable for the rent if they remain in the property after expiry of a section 21 notice?

A: Yes, tenants will remain liable for rent. Service of a section 21 notice does not alter the tenants obligations under the tenancy agreement to pay rent, and certainly does not entitle them to live at the property free of charge after it expires.

Q: Housing Benefit payments and how the dates run.

A: Dates run as follows:

- Weekly payments are taken to the Monday before.
- Monthly payment is from the day they move in until the day before they move out.
- If they leave on a Monday then the Landlord is paid to the previous Sunday

Q: What can a landlord do in the case of Antisocial Behaviour?

A: If you, as a private landlord, become aware that one or more of your tenants, or persons residing with or visiting your tenants are behaving in an antisocial manner then you should follow your own policy and procedures, (such as issuing a formal written warning to the tenant) to deal effectively with the problem. If your intervention does not resolve the matter you should report the situation to the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Unit.

Q: Joint And Several – What Does That Mean?

A: Mostly, where there is to be more than one (adult) person living in the property, the tenancy will say they are "jointly and severally" responsible. This expression means that, jointly, the tenants are liable for the payment of all rents and all liabilities falling upon the tenants during the tenancy, as well as any breach of the Agreement. Individually each tenant is responsible for payment of all rent and all liabilities falling upon the tenant, as well as any breach of the Agreement until all payments have been made in full.

Q: What Is A "Break-Clause"?

A: This is a clause sometimes inserted in a fixed term tenancy, typically if the initial fixed term is for a year or more. A break clause will usually be worded in such a way as to allow either landlord or tenant to give two months written notice at any stage after a particular date or period →

of the tenancy, thus terminating the tenancy earlier than the end of the original fixed term.

Q: Can a landlord or tenant take action against a trespasser ?

A: Yes, but usually this will involve applying for a possession order from the court.

These proceedings are known as a "claim against trespassers" under the Civil Procedure Rules Part 55. This is similar to the standard possession procedure.

It is possible to apply for a quick temporary possession order against a trespasser, known as an "Interim Possession Order" before the final order is made.

Q: How much notice does a landlord have to give a tenant under an assured shorthold tenancy before he or she can apply for a possession order ?

A: If the period of the tenancy has come to an end the landlord must give at least 2 months notice. (Where the tenancy has continued as a periodic tenancy, then the notice must reflect the period of that tenancy so that if rent is usually paid every 3 months the landlord must give 3 months notice).

If the tenancy has not come to an end and the landlord seeks possession on ground 2 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988, he must give 2 months notice. [Sect:21]

If under grounds 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 14A, 15 or 17 he must give 2 weeks notice. [Sect:8]

Q: What happens if a landlord evicts a tenant without a court possession order ?

A: If a landlord evicts a tenant without a court order this could amount to unlawful eviction for which a tenant would be entitled to sue the landlord for compensation.

This could be very costly for the landlord as the measure of damages is based on the difference between the value of the property with a tenant in occupation and the value of the property without a tenant in occupation.

Q: Why is eight weeks arrears significant?

A: Under Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended by the Housing Act 1996) a landlord may be able to terminate an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement when at least eight weeks rent is unpaid and the rent is payable weekly or fortnightly.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995



Williams v Richmond Court [2006] EWCA Civ 1719 [2007] 09 EG 204 – Disabled tenant seeking landlord's consent for the installation of a stairlift. Whether refusal of the landlord's consent constituted discrimination within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Section 22(3) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 renders it unlawful for anyone managing premises to discriminate against a person occupying those premises.

Section 24 of the same Act defines discrimination as treating a person less favourably by reason of his disability, without being able to show that this treatment was justified.

The respondent was an 81 year old woman who had mobility problems and lived in a flat on the third floor of a block of flats. The respondent had difficulty in using the stairs and applied for consent to have a stairlift installed. The landlord refused.

The trial judge found that this refusal constituted discrimination within the meaning of the 1995 Act, but the landlord's appeal to the Court of Appeal was, perhaps surprisingly, allowed. What won the appeal for the appellant landlord was that its reasons for refusing consent to the stairlift had nothing to do with the respondent's disabilities. Such a request would have been refused, whoever had made it.

The Court of Appeal held that there was no obligation on the landlord to treat the respondent more favourably than anyone else.

Landlords warned over dishonest tenants

Almost a quarter of all tenants choose to lie about their income in some way when applying to live in a rental property, according to new research from Experian.

Twenty-three per cent of prospective tenants either lie outright or exaggerate the extent of their income, the study found.

In addition, the survey also revealed that four per cent of applicants change their job title in order to appear more reliable.

While two fifths of those at fault fell into the 20 to 30 age bracket, Experian cautioned that the problem was by no means confined to this generation and that landlords should remain cautious if they want to safeguard their property investment.

"Although this [demographic] is the perceived core of the rental market, it is important that landlords use processes that carry out thorough checks on their tenants regardless of their age," commented Experian's Peter Brooker.

"Many landlords insist that tenants are professionals on the basis that they will be paid well enough to afford the rent - but this leads to some prospective tenants lying about their employment status and their salary," Mr Brooker confirmed.

Landlords also need to increase their awareness of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS), it was advised earlier this week, with a fifth still reportedly unaware of the new mandatory regulations.



Landlords needed to house homeless

Landlords are needed to provide empty houses to help Plymouth's homeless and guarantee themselves a regular rent.

The City Council is looking to rent two and three bedroom properties from private owners to provide homes for families.

In return owners receive a guaranteed rent from the council – even if the property is empty, the property is also managed for free by Tamar Housing. The council will also return the property in good condition at the end of the agreement.

The HouseLet Scheme was set up in September 2005 as an extension of the private sector leasing scheme and has successfully accommodated over 345 families.

Houses should be in good repair and have central heating, double-glazing and a secure play area.

For more information please call the Empty Homes Team on 01752 307074

Energy Efficiency Top Tips

1. Insulating your property is the most cost effective measure you can take. Cavity wall insulation is straightforward, inexpensive and hassle-free. Loft insulation is an easy DIY job and should be done to a depth of 270mm.
2. If your boiler is over 15 years old it's probably time to replace it. By law, new boilers must now be of the high-efficiency condensing type and will save more energy if combined with modern heating controls.
3. If you need to save space, buy a combi condensing-boiler. Unlike conventional boilers, it does not store hot water in a tank but heats water directly from the cold water mains as it is used.
4. While double glazing can be a fairly expensive home improvement it will reduce noise and lower heating bills.
5. When replacing appliances, look for ones displaying the Energy Saving Recommended logo. They are the most energy efficient and could add to the rental value to your property.

If you're not sure where to start, call your local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512012. They can provide you with a FREE home energy check and details of grants in your area.

Don't forget to fit low energy bulbs—uses 80% less energy

**Warm Front Grant Scheme
You may be eligible...**

Warm Front makes homes warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient. The Warm Front Grant provides a package of insulation and heating improvements up to the value of £2,700 (or £4,000 if oil central heating is recommended). It is a Government-funded initiative.

As a landlord, you may be eligible for a grant under the Warm Front Scheme.

Either Contact: 0800 316 2805
Website: www.warmfront.co.uk
Or contact your Local Authority.



CONTRACTORS & SERVICES

Some of our members have used these contractors and services below and would like to recommend them to other landlords

PLEASE NOTE

The WLA does not accept responsibility for third party providers / services below

PLYMOUTH

Dale Domestic Appliances *

30 Dale Road
Mutley
Plymouth PL4 6PD
Tel: (01752) 266409

Already Property Services *

5 Loftus Gardens
St. Budeaux
Plymouth PL5 1NZ
Tel: (01752) 369843
Mobile: 07799 856663

181 Respin *

181 Healy Place
Plymouth PL2 1SE
Tel: (01752) 606359

Palladium Builders Merchants *

158 St Levan Road
Plymouth PL2 1PT
Tel: (01752) 551881
(Call WLA for discount code issued for members)

Fras999 *

Fire Risk Assessment & Fire Safety Advice
Tel: (01752) 880064
Website: <http://www.fras999.co.uk>

Portable Appliance Testing — am-pat *

Tel: (01822) 833520

Nash & Co LLP (Solicitors)

Beaumont House
Beaumont Park
Plymouth PL4 9BD
Tel: (01752) 664444

Larry Speare Carpets & Beds

Rendle Street
Plymouth PL1 1TP
Tel: (01752) 220964

* Denotes WLA Discount Available

BRISTOL

Furnished Homes *

Underley Furnishings Ltd
Great Western Business Park
Armstrong Way
Yate
Bristol BS37 5NG
Tel: 0845 603 1553
Website: www.furnishedhomes.org
(Suppliers of Robust, Durable Furniture)

The Sale Shop *

203 Cheltenham Road
Bristol BS6 5QX
Tel: 0117 907 1785
(Suppliers of new furniture for the office or landlord)
Website: www.thesaleshopbristol.co.uk

Landlords Safety Services *

129 Fossway Road
Hengrove
Bristol BS14 9QL
Tel: 01275 832284
(Corgi safety checks and PAT testing)

Emmaus Bristol *

Barton Manor
St. Philips
Bristol BS2 0RL
Tel: 0117 9540886
(Used household goods for the Landlord)
Website: www.emmausbristol.org.uk

AMD Solicitors

2 Station Road
Shirehampton
Bristol BS11 9TT
Tel: 0117 9235562

(Contact: Chris Brown & quote WLA Membership Number)

**Have you used a good
Tradesman or Service and
been satisfied ?**

Let us know for inclusion here

OR

**Would you like to
advertise in next newsletter?**

Just contact us: (01752) 242980

Fire Statistics

Communities and Local Government (CLG) has released the latest national fire statistics which cover the period 30 September 2005 to 30 September 2006. In the press release CLG quotes a fall in the total numbers of primary fires but and an increase in secondary fires. Deaths by fire decreased marginally.

The figures are compiled from reports submitted to CLG on fires and false fire alarms attended by the fire and rescue service (FRS) throughout UK resulting in detailed fire statistics as part of the National Statistics series.

Primary fires mean all fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures and any fires involving casualties or rescues.

Secondary fires means the majority of outdoor fires including grassland, refuse fires and chimney fires unless they involve casualties or rescues or property loss.

Some key figures:

FRS attended 876,300 fire and false alarm incidents - a slight increase on the previous 12 months

There were 482 fire deaths - down 1% on the previous 12 months

Dwelling fire deaths fell by 9% to 342, the lowest total since records began. (All fire death figures for 2006 should be treated with caution as they are still provisional and subject to change.)

Primary fires fell by 5 % to 162,000 which is the lowest total since 1985

These figures can be broken down into: Dwelling fires went down by 2% to 56,400, fires in other buildings (incl. workplaces) went down by 7% to 33,200 and road vehicle fires went down by 9% to 60,600

Secondary fires rose by 6% to 267,000 mainly due to an increase in grassland fires

Attendances at false alarms dropped by 1% to 436,500. Malicious false alarms dropped by 15%

Deliberate primary fires fell by 10% nationally to 73,626

The statistics show a decrease for as much as 25% in East Sussex, Hertfordshire and Lincolnshire whilst Hereford & Worcester figures at the bottom of the statistics with an increase of 8%

CLG has a target to reduce domestic fire-related deaths by 20 per cent and arson by 10 per cent by March 2010. →

CLG also announced that they will work closely with FRS with renewed focus on fire prevention and actions developed locally and also to provide infrastructure, equipment and training to the FRS.

As universities are starting up next month, The Official National Community Fire Safety Centre website has produced a leaflet with fire safety tips for students living in rented accommodation. The leaflet outlines how the students can stay safe whilst living away from home including the landlord's obligations as quoted below:

Ensure gas appliances are installed and maintained annually by a corgi-registered plumber.

Maintain wiring and electrical appliances provided to ensure they are safe to use.

Make sure any furniture and furnishings they provide meet the fire resistance regulations.

Landlords, property managers and letting agents have an obligation to ensure that all rented properties are up to standard according to fire safety regulations.

The Fire Safety Centre points out that if you consume alcohol and smoke at home you are at greater risk from suffering a fire. Smoking materials are the biggest cause of fire-related death in the home. Nearly a third of all households have a smoker living in them.

There are an average of 120 deaths, 1,300 injuries and 3,750 fires per year in accidental home fires caused by smoking materials. Similar, recent research has found that about half of all adults killed in fires were under the influence of alcohol. The overwhelming majority of people who are killed in a house fire perish as a result of smoke and toxic fume inhalation as opposed to burn injuries. Evidence finds that alcohol not only impedes human detection of smoke, but also impedes people's ability to respond to the danger a house fire poses to them and get out of their home safely.

For further information on the fire statistics please visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1124925>

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More than a Man & Van



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