



Open House Newsletter



Welcome to the 2011/12 edition of our "Open House" newsletter for landlords

Student Term Dates 2011-2012

Autumn Term
3rd Oct - 16th Dec 2011

Winter Term
9th Jan - 30th Mar 2012

Spring Term
16th Apr - 20th Jul 2012
(exams: 30th April – 25th May)

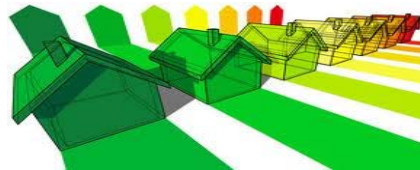
Summer Term
23rd Jul - 5th Oct 2012

Become a Green Landlord

Your property will be more attractive to tenants if you can save them money through good energy saving initiatives. Possessing a good energy efficiency rating is worth bragging about! There are many ways to improve energy ratings in your property that don't involve a new boiler or heating system. These include:

- Installing double glazing
- Getting up to date insulation
- Installing energy efficient appliances, such as fridges, dishwashers and washing machines
- Installing a meter for your tenants to monitor their energy use

Some local authorities offer grants for home energy improvements, so it is worth contacting them to find out if you qualify.



Tax on Lettings

Income Tax is payable on rent received from property lettings. Resident landlords are eligible to earn rental income of up to £4,250 a year tax-free through the Rent a Room Scheme.

Non-resident landlords should contact HM Revenue and Customs at www.hmrc.gov.uk or Tel: 08459 000 444.



Cat Hill Campus Sale

The university has agreed the sale of our Cat Hill campus. The campus will close in early Summer 2011, with all students, staff and courses moving to Hendon in time for the 2011-12 academic year. Our new Art, Design and Media building, opening in the autumn, will be home to all programmes from Cat Hill and some from the Trent Park campus.

The project is part of the plan to consolidate teaching onto fewer, better resourced campuses. Funds raised from the sale will enable the University to continue our programme of investment into our staff and the best facilities for our students.

Do You Have More Properties.....?

We are currently looking for additional properties near our campuses, so if you or someone you know has available rooms or properties near Hendon, Trent Park or Archway please contact us.



Carbon Monoxide Risks

An incredible one in five homes investigated by the Gas Safe Register has an unsafe gas appliance. The gas watchdog says 250,000 illegal gas jobs are carried out each year. The only way to ensure your tenants are safe from carbon monoxide poisoning or faulty equipment is to use a Gas Safe registered engineer and fit carbon monoxide alarms.

As a landlord you have a duty of care to ensure that your tenants are safe in your property. That is why it is imperative that you get your gas appliances checked annually, as it against the law not to have a Gas Safety certificate.

In order for us to advertise your property you must provide us with a copy of a current gas safety certificate. We are happy to accept photocopies or scanned copies by e-mail, providing no alterations have been made.

Please Let Us Know

One of our major problems is keeping our housing list up to date, particularly during the busy periods when students are looking for accommodation. So kindly keep in regular contact with us to confirm availability to enable us to offer an efficient service to both our students and yourselves.

For further information on any subject featured in this newsletter or suggestions please contact Evelyn or Tracey at:

Private Rented Accommodation Office

Middlesex University

Hendon Campus, The Burroughs, Hendon, London, NW4 4BT

Tel: 0208 411 5068 Email: pra@mdx.ac.uk

Landlord Rights & Responsibilities

Tenancy Agreements & Contracts

Many non-resident landlords prefer to rent individual rooms as this increases the rental value of their property. When renting rooms it is important to remember you cannot rent the property exclusively to multiple individuals therefore the agreement is either specific to the room or as a collective (self-contained or shared house).

For individual room lets - each person must be issued with their own tenancy agreement and the agreement should specify the dwelling such as Room One, Room Two, etc. Please note that the tenants cannot exclude you from the property as they have 'non exclusive' use of common areas.

If you are advertising your property as self-contained and a collective/group of individuals rent the property in its entirety, they can be issued with a joint contract. As such they are jointly and severally responsible for paying the rent etc. Please note that the tenants can exclude you from the property if fail to give them appropriate notice as they have exclusive use of the whole property.

Resident landlords must use a licence agreement and not an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (ASTs) agreement as you will increase the rights of the tenant and they be afforded protection under the Housing Acts.

Repairs

Generally a landlord is responsible for:

The structure and exterior of the property;
Baths, sinks, basins and other sanitary installations;
Heating and hot water installations;

Responsibility for other repairs depends on your agreement with the tenant. You are not responsible for repairing damage caused by the tenant.

Gas Safety

As already mentioned, landlords have a duty to ensure all gas appliances are maintained in good order and that a Gas Safe registered engineer carries out an annual safety check.

Electrical Safety

Landlords must ensure that all installations for the supply of electricity and electrical appliances such as cookers, kettles, toasters, washing machines, immersion heaters etc supplied in a property are safe to use. One way of helping to achieve safety is to undertake a regular formal inspection of the installation and appliances on an annual basis.

Fire Safety of Furniture and Furnishings

Any furniture and furnishings you supply must meet fire resistance requirements in the Furniture and Furnishings (fire safety) Regulations 1988. Most furniture will have a manufacturers label saying if it meets these requirements. Further information can be obtained from your local Trading Standards Office.

Access

You have a right to enter your property at reasonable times of day to either carry out repairs or to inspect the property. You must give at least 24 hours' notice of an inspection.

Thank you!

We hope you have found this newsletter useful and we thank you for your support in providing accommodation for our students.

Top 10 Tips for Landlords

1. Keep up with legislation, and be aware of the rules and regulations which apply to you and your property.
2. Make sure you have adequate insurance cover as general household insurance will not normally be sufficient.
3. Do not set too high a rent. It is better to have a tenant in the property paying a modest rent than to set a high rent and have the property remain empty.
4. Make sure you are contactable whenever possible whilst you are trying to let your property, and also once your tenants are in.
5. Check you know who your tenants are - get as much information from the prospective tenant as possible as photographic ID, Middlesex student number, home address, parents phone numbers etc before considering granting them a tenancy.
6. If you are taking a deposit (for ASTs) you will need to have this protected under one of the government approved tenancy deposit schemes, and inform the tenant using the proper form within 14 days of taking the deposit.
7. You should always prepare a detailed inventory giving details of the property contents and condition, and check this over with the tenants and agree it before they go in, and when they leave. This should include matters such as carpets, walls, doors and light fittings and their condition. If there is no inventory you will find it very difficult to justify any deductions from the deposit in any arbitration.
8. Tenancy Agreements are important, as they are a record of your agreement with your tenants. Using the correct type is very important, as it will protect your position and give your tenants no excuse to misbehave (particularly if it is written in plain English). It pays therefore to make an effort to find the right tenancy agreement for your situation. Make sure the tenants have signed the tenancy agreement and that you hold the tenancy agreement with their original signatures (i.e. not photocopies, or a faxed or scanned copy) before you hand over the keys and they are allowed to occupy the property. They should also be given a copy of the tenancy agreement with your original signature on it.
9. It is important that you keep track of when a tenant's rent falls due and become aware when they first fall into arrears. It is at this stage that you are most likely to be able agree some way around the situation. Once rent arrears are allowed to accrue, they can quickly reach a stage where it is virtually impossible for the tenant ever to repay them.
10. A good relationship with your tenants is the key to a smooth-running tenancy. Deal with any challenges, from repairs to rent arrears, as quickly as possible and keep written records. Leave helpful information for tenants, such as utility provider numbers, notes on working appliances etc, and save yourself a lot of time dealing with enquiries.

Council Tax Information

Non-residents landlords: Properties occupied exclusively by full time students are exempt from council tax but this is not automatic. You will still be liable for the bill unless you provide your council tax office with proof of student status of all your tenants i.e. their full names, move in / move out dates and council tax exemption certificates (once enrolled, our students can apply for their certificates online via their MISIS online accounts). It is essential that you keep the council tax office fully informed when students move in and out because once they leave a property it may no longer be possible to prove their student status and you will be liable for the bill.

Resident landlords: Are liable for the council tax bill as you share your home with your tenant(s) i.e. lodgings, however when sharing your property with a student you may be entitled to a reduction in council tax. Please contact your local authority for more information.

Useful telephone numbers:

London Borough of Barnet Council Tax Office - 020 8359 2608
Enfield Council Customer Service Centre - 0208 379 1000