

**Islington Landlords' Forum
Thursday 25 September 2008
Islington Town Hall, Committee Room five and six
Upper Street, N1**

Minutes of meeting

1. Opening by Irna van der Palen (Chair), Private Sector Partnerships Manager, Islington Council

The chair welcomed attendees and apologised for Councillor Terry Stacey who could not attend the forum. Katie Rosengarten, the speaker from Broadway Housing was also unable to be present.

2. Islington Council Service Director Housing, Patrick Odling-Smee

The council's new Service Director for Housing, Patrick Odling-Smee, introduced himself. He said that 25% of Islington's housing stock was in the private rented sector and therefore landlords played an important in helping to house people in the borough.

Patrick acknowledged that the housing market and the economic climate is changing. He was sure however that the council can continue to work with landlords to meet housing need in the borough.

Patrick was aware that he was mainly preaching to the converted but hoped to involve more landlords.

**3 Deaf Awareness In The Private Sector
Linda Thomas, Project Officer Social Services, Islington Council**

Linda sits on the Islington disability panel. There are also deaf residents who attend a disability equalities group. The council has access to British sign language interpreters.

There are estimated to be around 5000 Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people in Islington. The council is doing a number of things to develop and improve services for this group, including home adaptations, training staff in deaf awareness and BSL, increased use of BSL interpreters, and outreach work.

There is an annual consultation event for deaf people known as "**hands up**". This is held every May and landlords can contact Linda if they want to be involved.

Deaf residents sometimes experience difficulty in reporting repairs and landlords were encouraged to train their staff in sign language and to develop pictorial tenancy agreements.

Deaf awareness training costs approximately £150.

Jill Ellenby from Residential Environmental Health reported that grant applications for adaptations for deaf tenants would be considered.

Contact Linda Thomas Tel: 020 7527 8148

Email: linda.thomas@islington.gov.uk

4. Energy Performance Certificates

Ellis Turner, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Islington Council and Charles Shackelford, Communities and Local Government

The requirement for an energy performance certificate has come from a 2002 European directive.

From 1 October 2008 it is a legal requirement for landlords who rent out self contained flats to provide certificates to all new tenants. There is no requirement however to carry out the recommendations contained in the report.

Landlords who lease out property to housing associations will need to find out through discussion and agreement who is responsible for providing the certificates. It would normally be the owner rather than a managing agent.

Landlords have to pay for the certificate regardless of who pays the fuel bill, and the certificates are valid for ten years. It was acknowledged that due to the age and profile of Islington's Housing stock, there is a limit to the potential of energy efficiency savings that can be made.

Sufficient domestic energy assessors should be trained to meet demand and the time taken to train each assessor varies with each training provider.

It is hoped that information from the certificates will be analysed to assist in targeting certain types of housing stock and inform other strategies to make improvements in energy efficiency.

A penalty notice of £200 can be served on landlords if a certificate is not provided and this is enforced by trading standards.

Charles welcomed people to call or email him any questions or queries and referred to the websites in his presentation.

Contact Charles Shackelford Tel: 020 7944.3828

Email: charles.shackelford@communities.gsi.gov.uk

5. Council Tax Debt Recovery

Duwayne Brown, Enforcement Manager, Revenues and Benefits, Islington Council

Duwayne explained how he wanted to work with landlords to avoid problems with payment of council tax. Debt recovery starts with reminder letters being sent before going to court.

Prevention of debt is the best way to avoid problems. Exemptions and reductions are available for students and people on benefits and this can help avoid a council tax debt occurring on a property in Islington.

There is also a reduction for resident landlords, and landlords were advised to contact council tax if a property becomes empty as discounts may be available.

Landlords should make sure that their tenancy agreements are clear as to who pays the council tax. Landlords can help the council tax service by providing forwarding addresses for tenants who have moved on.

Contact Duwayne Brown Tel: 020 7527.2111
Email: enforcement@islington.gov.uk

6. Any Other Business

Kieran Gillen was introduced as Islington's tenancy relations officer, He can be contacted for advice on landlord and tenant issues on 020-7527-6386.

Ian Tagg, Procurement and Development Manager, LB Islington, informed landlords about the next landlords' training day being held in Russell Square, on the 9 October 2008 at a cost of £75.

Landlords who are interested should contact Ellis Turner to arrange a place. Details of the course and contact details can be found in the flyer in the landlord pack.

Contact Ellis Turner Tel: 020 7527 3041
Email ellis.turner@islington.gov.uk

Ian Tagg also asked landlords to come forward with suggestions or ideas as to how to improve or develop the forum. Landlords should contact Ian with any ideas.

Contact Ian Tagg Tel: 020 7527 6078
Email: ian.tagg@islington.gov.uk

Next meeting 9 December 2008
Islington Town Hall
Upper Street
N1 2UD

6.00pm – 8.00pm