

Newsletter – June 2017

Energy Efficiency in the Private Rental Sector – What you need to know

The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards are now law as detailed below

A failure to comply could result in a fine of up to £5000

Since 2016 tenants can request a landlord make improvements to a property, if this can be achieved at no upfront cost the landlord cannot 'unreasonably refuse'

25% of properties in England have an E rating or below

April 2018 – a landlord cannot grant a new tenancy of a property with an EPC below E

April 2020 – a landlord cannot let any property with an EPC below E

It is the government's wish to raise the minimum standard to rise to D by 2025 and C by 2030

What can you do?

Lighting – replace all bulbs with Low Energy lightbulbs

Ensure you have loft insulation

If you have cavity wall construction it may be possible to fill

Thermostatic Radiator Valves have a positive effect on your EPC rating

Central Heating system – replace old inefficient boilers

Install Renewable Technologies including solar / photovoltaic panels

Information and Advice

- The consultation period for the ban on Letting Agent fees to tenants comes to a close this month. We strongly feel a fee ban could result in tenants putting in multiple applications leading to less commitment and uncertainty. Agents would also be forced to review landlord charges which could lead to rent increases.
- Dates still to be confirmed but it could become a legal requirement to provide an Electrical Safety certificate. Did you know that if a notice to quit is to be given and a possession order is to be sought, a judge will require that proof of gas and electrical safety has been provided to the tenant?
- In 2014, 16% of private rented tenants experienced problems with electrical hazards. 12% of accidental domestic fires (2013/2014) were caused by electrical distribution systems resulting in 419 casualties and 18 fatalities. 1,440,000 people in England estimated to be living in properties with unsafe electrics.
- Increased insulation of properties to comply with EPC requirements is causing a growing problem with damp and mould. We suspect ventilation systems to alleviate these issues will become big business. We advise that kitchens have external vented extractors and bathrooms have humidistat fans.
- We strongly urge you to ensure you have a smoke detector on each floor of any rental property and provide a Carbon Monoxide Alarm in order to comply with the Deregulation Act of October 2016.
- **The ESTAs Awards 2017.** We are pleased to announce Robert Bell & Company has been recognised for its outstanding customer service to its clients by the biggest award scheme in the UK residential property industry. The Lettings team at Horncastle and Lincoln have both been nominated for best Letting Agents in the East Midlands nominated by Landlords.

If you have any concerns or would like some advice about any of the above subjects or any related matter please contact:

Horncastle Office – 01507 522 222 - Jane, Paddy or Will

Lincoln Office – 01522 538 888 – Sharon, Lisa or Michelle

We have been approached in respect of a scheme to replace old and worn out central heating boilers (min 9 years old) for tenants in receipt of certain specified benefits. Do let us know if your boiler and tenant may qualify.