Further Information

Durham County Council
Private Sector Housing
Customer Access Point
St John's Square
Sophia Street
Seaham
County Durham
SR7 7JE

03000 268 000
www.durham.gov.uk
privatesectorhousing@durham.gov.uk

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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<thead>
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<th>العربية</th>
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<th>中文 (繁體字)</th>
<th>(Chinese)</th>
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Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Altogether better
Foreword

Councillor Shaw Portfolio Holder for Housing believes “private rented accommodation is an important and growing part of our housing market. We recognise the valuable role private landlords’ play and we wish to work with landlords to support and promote the private rented sector. Our Private Landlord Accreditation scheme offers a number of membership benefits some of which include: advertising of empty properties on Durham Key Options, the website accessed by those looking for social housing as well as private rented properties; tenant referencing; in depth advice and guidance; legislative updates; training; and access to financial assistance.

It provides help and support to ensure landlords can offer quality homes but it also gives tenants peace of mind, knowing that their landlords adhere to a code of practice as part of the scheme.”

Introduction

Private Landlord Accreditation is a voluntary scheme and is available to any private landlord who rents out property within County Durham.

To participate in the scheme landlords;

- Complete a membership application form, including details of all properties rented out across County Durham
- Agree to work in line with a Code of Practice
- Sample property inspections will be carried out

How to Apply

Joining the scheme is simple. Application forms can be downloaded from our website at:

www.durham.gov.uk/landlordaccreditation

Or for further information please contact the Private Sector Housing Team;

📞 03000 268 000
✉️ privatesectorhousing@durham.gov.uk
The objectives of the scheme are to;

- Provide official recognition to landlords who achieve the required standards
- Improve lines of communication between Durham County Council and the private rented sector
- Increase tenants confidence in their landlords, and the maintenance and management of their rented accommodation
- Reduce the number of empty, unused properties
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and harassment

**Cost of Scheme**

To experience a number of membership benefits landlords can apply to join for an annual fee. This operates on a sliding scale depending on the number of properties within a portfolio the County;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Properties in County Durham</th>
<th>Accreditation Fee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 10</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-50</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>£350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>£500</td>
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**Breaches of scheme**

Landlords may be suspended from the Scheme where:

- The property falls below the required standard
- The Code of Practice is contravened
- Information provided to support the application is found to be inaccurate or fraudulent
### Benefits to Landlords

- A certificate awarded for recognition to display on premises
- Advertising of empty properties on our Durham Key Options website; the online portal for social housing – giving access to a waiting list of potential tenants.
- An interest free repayment loan of up to £15,000 to carry out renovation works to long term empty properties, repayable over a maximum period of five years (subject to availability, terms and conditions)
- A tenant referencing service
- Access to a quarterly forum, training, advice and guidance around landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities
- Anti-Social behaviour assistance
- Recognition that good quality accommodation is offered

### Benefits to Tenants

- Confidence in their landlords
- Easier to find good quality accommodation
- Assurance that management standards are in place
- Properties comply with Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) regulations
- Protection of a written tenancy agreement
- Support where needed

### Good Character of the Landlord

Landlords declare that they are a fit and proper person (as outlined in the Housing Act 2004).

Landlord should have;

- No previous convictions for violence, sex offences, drugs or fraud
- No convictions of unlawful discrimination
- Broken no laws relating to landlord and tenant issues
- Broken no approved codes of practice for previously managed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) or Selective Licensing
Private Landlord Accreditation is:
- Voluntary
- Renewable annually
- Landlords agree to work in line with a Code of Practice
- Properties can be advertised through Durham Key Options
- Reference Checks are available
- Information, guidance and documentation will be provided
- Support will be put in place where needed

Landlords agree to adhere to and abide by a Code of Practice which reflects a combination of legal duties and good practice. It is based on standards in three areas:
- Condition of the property
- How the tenancy is managed
- Good Character of the landlord

Landlords will be supported to manage a tenancy by:
- Assisting in carrying out pre-tenancy checks
- Providing documentation to set up a successful tenancy
- Offering guidance on Deposit Protection and Right to Rent
- Offering advice and guidance around landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities

Landlords will be supported to maintain a successful tenancy. Assistance will be given so procedures are in place to deal with:
- Repairs
- Quiet enjoyment of the property
- Anti-Social behaviour

Legal advice and guidance can be given on the correct way to terminate an agreement and the service of notices, if a tenancy cannot be sustained.

A comprehensive referencing service is included. We will carry out a minimum five year housing history and anti-social behaviour check. In some localities a police check will also be included.
Properties should meet the following standards. Support and guidance will be given to assist in achieving these specifications:

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<tr>
<th>Property Standard</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Property Standard</strong></td>
<td>Maintained in a safe, warm and comfortable condition free of significant defects / hazards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repair</strong></td>
<td>Good overall repair both internally and externally and well maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heating</strong></td>
<td>An adequate and efficient heating system - fixed heating appliance installed in each habitable room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchen</strong></td>
<td>Reasonably modern facilities and services, fully functioning and in good working order with a washable floor covering.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bathroom</strong></td>
<td>Reasonably modern facilities and services, appropriately located, in good working order with adequate ventilation and a washable floor covering.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Smoke Alarm</strong></td>
<td>Long life battery alarms suitably located. One to be installed on each floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electrical Installation &amp; Portable Appliances</strong></td>
<td>Installation, supply and appliances are to be in a safe condition at the outset of each tenancy and are to be maintained in a safe condition throughout the term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gas Safety</strong></td>
<td>Gas safety certificate required annually and to be provided to the tenant at the outset of each tenancy and upon request. Provision of a carbon monoxide detector is recommended</td>
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| Building Insurance          | Copy of Certificate of buildings insurance required annually |
| External Condition          | Reasonable clean and tidy appearance. Landlord to encourage tenant to keep gardens and yards in a clean and tidy condition |
| Internal Decoration         | Good condition and clean appearance throughout upon each new tenancy |
| Refuse Provision            | Adequate provision for the storage of refuse and the area to be kept in a clean and tidy condition. This should include the supplying of bins for refuse and recycling |
| Furnishing (if furnished)   | Good clean furnishings certified to meet fire safety regulations |
| Security                   | Mortice locks to all external doors and locks to all accessible windows |
| Energy Performance Certificates | To be provided to the tenant at the outset of each tenancy. Properties let to new tenants after 1st April 18 must have a rating of E or above. |
| Inventory                  | To be carried out for each property within, including unfurnished |