ATLAS & LLAS PRESS PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

39th Edition Feb. 2019

Challenges & Opportunities Conference and Award Ceremony Join us on Friday 29 March 2019

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Welcome to the latest edition of the PReSs

The 4th biennial London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS), and Accreditation & Training for Landlords and Agents Service (ATLAS) Conference & Award Ceremony is to be held on the 29th March 2019 and will not only recognise and reward good practice in the sector but will also provide excellent insight and information on recent changes in the PRS. The keynote speakers Richard Bowser, & Tony Gimple are recognised experts in their respective fields of taxation and property investment. Continuing professional development points are awarded for members who attend.

The previous LLAS & ATLAS Conference & Award Ceremonies were very successful and all those who attended both enjoyed the event and found it to be relevant and useful. At the time of writing this, we still have a few tickets remaining so go online & purchase a ticket and I look forward to seeing you there.

The changes affecting the PRS shows no sign of abating despite evidence beginning to emerge that the torrent of new legislation and tax changes is beginning to affect the market. Evidence is emerging that the sector is beginning to shrink for the first time in many years.

In an ideal world the Government would have a long-term strategy for the sector, balancing the needs of all parties, balancing supply and demand and have an attainable target at the end. I'm not sure that this is currently the case, many of the Government proposals and actions appear to be knee jerk reactions, based on questionable evidence, aimed at giving a "good impression" to the young and private tenant voters who were shown to be the least likely to vote for the Government at the snap election 18 months ago. One possible advantage with the current shrinking sector is that as demand seems to be holding up, any reduction in supply may result in higher rents for the remaining landlords.

The recent Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2019 will require landlords, both private and social, to ensure that from 20 March 2019 for any new tenancy or renewal of an existing tenancy that the premises is fit for habitation at the start and throughout the tenancy. If a landlord fails to do so the tenant can take the landlord to court and claim damages. The Act basically requires the premise to be in good repair – similar to the requirement under Section 11 Landlord and Tenants Act 1985- plus the premises must also meet safety requirements for all 29 hazards detailed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

This Act in my opinion may have a significant impact on the amount of action taken against landlords and it is now imperative that landlords are not only keeping their premises in good repair but also are aware of the main requirements under HHSRS – some of which may not be evident. A major impact for landlords will be that tenants can now sue for condensation, which is rarely a disrepair issue and so no action can be taken under pure disrepair legislation. Under HHSRS condensation is an issue which may be the responsibility of the landlord. Do ensure you are aware of HHSRS especially if considering possession proceedings as the Act will undoubtedly be used for counterclaims against landlords.

From 1 June 2019 landlords and agents will only be able to demand money (fees) from new tenants in very limited situations. It will still be legal to demand rent, up to 5 weeks rent deposit only or 1 weeks holding deposit. A few other fees can be claimed but they are very limited and can only cover costs. Landlords who use agents will need to check whether, as the tenants' fee income will be lost, the agency fees to the landlord will increase.

It is anticipated that from 1 April 2019 all agents must have Client Money Protection Insurance covering any money they hold in "clients' accounts". Other issues still in the pipeline, but with no set dates, include consideration of longer – 3 year minimum - fixed term tenancies, establishing a separate Housing Court to speed up court action, a requirement for all landlords to have to be members of a landlords' redress scheme, similar to that required currently for agents, mandatory carbon monoxide detectors where gas used, periodic electrical installation inspections etc.

The Government continue to "believe" that the criminal element can be driven out of the sector merely by passing more legislation. In practice it is enforcement of existing laws which is needed not the plethora of complicated legislation.

I hope you enjoy this issue of The PResS.

Challenges & Opportunities in PRS Conference &Award Ceremony on Friday 29 March 2019

At: The Radisson Blu Portman Hotel, 22 Portman Square, W1H 7BG. Time: 6pm-champagne/drinks reception

YOU are invited to join us for what promises to be an informative and fun evening to celebrate the scheme's successes and reward the excellence of our members. The event will bring together over 500 landlords, agents, property investors, housing professionals, local partners and VIP guests.

The event will include a champagne/drinks reception and 3 course dinner and focus on inspiring, informing and awarding those landlords and agents who have over the years helped to provide and improve some of the capitals vital private sector housing stock. It's important to highlight that the event will be marketed to local and national press by our communications team alongside an ambitious online coverage strategy across our social media channels and as per previous events, the media will be invited to cover the event on the day.

We will hear from some of our industry leaders who will map out some key themes and trends for you to adapt, change, thrive & survive in 2019 & beyond.

- Challenges: How are landlords responding to the substantial changes they are facing in financing, regulation and taxation? What impact will Brexit have on the sales and lettings market long term and what of the government's plan
- **Opportunities**: What next for the property market? Where will the next opportunities be, how to get yourself ready and prepared for the market opportunity which lies ahead.

How to get your tickets

- You can pay by credit/debit cards online at this BOOK HERE
- Phone LLAS/ATLAS staff on **0207 974 2839** & pay over the phone
- Send a cheque via post to LLAS, Private Sector Housing Team, Camden Town Hall, London WC1H 9JE (all Cheques are made payable to the London Borough of Camden)

Ticket Fees £120 for a regular ticket /£95.00 for accredited landlords/agents

Do you want to gain exposure to your local landlord and property market?

Then we invite you to enhance your marketing efforts through event sponsorship and product promotion

There's still time, so don't miss the opportunity to be a sponsor of our highly successful Conference & Award Ceremony event. Your company will, as well as gain access to a database of over 35000 landlords and property investors, will also gain recognition, brand awareness and exposure to the London and Southeast local landlords and property market and new members joining LLAS & ATLAS on a daily basis.

For further information and to discuss the packages available, please call us on **0207 974 1970 or 0207 974 2839 or** email <u>llas@camden.gov.uk</u> or visit: <u>www.londonlandlords.org.uk</u>

Challenges & Opportunities in PRS Conference &Award Ceremony on Friday 29 March 2019 AWARDS FINALIST

Best Services Provider in PRS

Les Tax for Landlords
London Property License
Legal for Landlords
Homyze
Spotahome- online rental platform
Caridon Property Ltd
Sachinkumar Gupta

Best Small Landlord of the Year

AGAPE Properties Ltd
Mr. & Mrs Michael & Christine Shoruna
Mary Georgiou-Macko
Thomas Young
Alvarine Coulton
Jonathan Goddard
Maria Zagoritou

Best Portfolio Landlord of the Year

Azad Ayub Ltd PPP Capital Bond Housing Group Mace Housing Co-operative Ltd

Best Letting Agent of the Year

Central Housing Group Ltd Property Hub Limited University of Surrey Lettings (USL)

Best Green Landlord/Agent of the Year

Central Housing Group Ltd Topmove Estate Agents ZM Homes Ltd

Empowering Tenants Award

Lodger Landlords Association Itd Topmove Estate Agents AGAPE Properties London Borough of Redbridge Mace Housing Co-operative Ltd

Making a Difference in PRS Award

Maria Zagoritou Ethical Lettings Lodger Landlords Association Itd London Property Licensing Caridon Property Ltd London Borough of Redbridge

Best Landlord of the Year for Student Housing

Bond Housing Group Student Housing Ltd Azad Ayub Ltd

Best Landlord Legal Services Provider

Legal for Landlords ATH Solicitors

Overall Best Landlord of the Year

Marston Properties Ltd PPP Capital Susan Luckier Janet Tagoritou

Best Buy to Let Mortgage Provider

Foster Denovo CPA Finance CGX Invest Finance Ltd

Best Landlord Insurance Provider

Alan Boswell Group Landlord Insurance Ltd NIA Insurance

Landlords do you have a property to let in the london area?

Camden Lettings offers great benefits to landlords and is tailored to protect you and your investment during a time of immense change in the sector.

With Camden Lettings you can choose between our free rent guarantee service, or generous cash incentives up to £5000.

The comparison chart highlights some of the key features of Camden Lettings:-

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Camden Lettings	Cash Incentive	Rent Guarantee Service
Fully vetted prospective tenants. Checks includes immigration status, housing & credit history	Yes	Yes
All tenants attend tenancy training & receive 3 months support at the start of the tenancy	Yes	Yes
Rent paid directly to you the landlord	Yes	Yes
Choice of tenants so that you can decide who is most suited for your property	Yes	Yes
Tenancy Support Service, offering FREE specialist support and expert advice for landlords and tenants*	Yes	Yes
Generous Cash Incentive Payments	Yes	No
Guaranteed Rent up to 6 Months in advance	No	Yes
Free London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) voucher worth £100	Yes	Yes
Fees payable	No	No





Still worried about Section 24?

As a Landlord facing the removal of financing costs as a legitimate business expense, apart from putting up rents and compounding the tax problem, you have four options: -

Option 1 - Sell Up

Take the CGT hit and mortgage penalties, and either spend the lot or invest the money elsewhere.

Option 2 - Do Nothing

Accept the changes and put up with less cash in your pocket.

Option 3 - Incorporate

Jump on the band wagon and incorporate, ending your section 24 concerns, but opening up further difficulties as laid out in our guide: **LT4L.UK/guide**

Option 4 - Run a Highly Tax-Efficient Professional Property Business

By doing so, you can enjoy:

- No loss of mortgage interest relief or wear & tear allowances
- Income Tax from your property income at 20% maximum
- No Capital Gains Tax, Stamp Duty, or Inheritance Tax
- No need to remortgage
- Better risk and business management
- Maximum flexibility
- Peace of mind and more money in your pocket!

Now is the time to chose, but whatever you do, don't simply bury your head in the sand!

Visit LT4L.UK/LLAS to request a free assessment.



visit lesstaxforlandlords.co.uk email info@lesstaxforlandlords.co.uk call 0203 735 2940

Specialist landlord & tenant lawyer -Tessa Shepperson answers landlords' FAQ: Ten Top Tips for Landlords on Evicting Tenants

There are many reasons why landlords may want to evict tenants and get their properties back. For example:

- You may want your tenants to leave so you can sell with vacant possession
- You may want to do renovation works which cannot be done with tenants in situ
- Your tenants may be failing to pay rent, or
- They may be unsatisfactory for some other reason

But how do you go about it and what things do you need to think about? Here are my top tips on eviction. Then at the end, there are a couple of free resources for you.

1. Is eviction really necessary?

For example, if your tenants are good tenants it seems a shame to make them move out just because you want to sell. Maybe, as an alternative to eviction, you could sell the property as an investment property, with them in situ? You may even be able to sell the property to them.

If your tenants are having problems making payment but are otherwise good tenants, you may be able to help them. Perhaps change their payment day to the day after their salary goes into their bank or allow them to take in a lodger (although be careful about this – you need to be careful that you will not be creating an HMO). Or maybe encourage them to use the Tasker Payments Service (http://www.taskerpaymentservices.co.uk/)? (This should be mandatory for any of your tenants on benefit).

Eviction is not only distressing for your tenants but can also be very stressful for landlords, leaving aside the expense. Best to avoid it if you can.

2. Do you rent on licenses rather than tenancies?

Are you REALLY SURE they are licenses? Many so-called licenses are actually tenancies. This can get you into trouble anyway as landlords can be prosecuted for issuing 'sham licenses. Frequently so-called licenses are only found out to be tenancies when the landlord takes the tenants to court and the Judge throws the case out because the procedure for evicting licensees is different from that used for evicting tenants. You don't want this to happen to you. For example, it may mean your tenants getting a court order that you pay their legal costs. So check this out.

Assuming you have tenants:

3 Do you know what your tenancy type is?

Most tenancies are assured shorthold tenancies. However, this is not inevitable. The significance of a tenancy type which is not an AST is that the eviction procedure will be different. So, you need to check this.

4. Have you dealt with the tenant's deposit correctly?

One of the top reasons why Judges throw out eviction claims based on the no-fault section 21 procedure is that the landlord has not protected the deposit or served prescribed information on the tenant within the 30-day deadline. Failure to comply with the deposit rules can also derail claims based on rent arrears as tenants can counterclaim for the penalty for non-compliance which can wipe out your arrears.

5. Did you serve the gas safety certificate on your tenants before they moved in?

This only applies to tenancies which started or were renewed on or after 1 October 2015, but this includes many, many tenancies.

As the law currently stands, landlords who have not served their gas safety certificate on tenants before they moved into the property will not be able to use section 21 AT ALL. This is explained in my blog post at https://www.landlordlawblog.co.uk/2018/02/13/bad-news-landlords-section-21-gas-safety-certificates/

6. Have you served an energy performance certificate on tenants?

This is another legal obligation which is now a prerequisite to serving a valid section 21 notice for tenancies which started or were renewed on or after 1 October 2015. This is not, at present, such a serious issue as failure to serve the gas certificate and is not fatal – however, some lawyers think that a similar issue could arise. So, make sure you have served it AND have proof of this.

7. Do any of the other section 21 pre-requisites apply?

These are, in essence:

- Service of the governments 'how to rent' booklet
- Having a license for your property if it is an HMO which requires licensing
- Not having had any improvement notices served on you by the Council in the last six months
- Your tenancy having first started not less than four months ago

8. Have you served the correct form of eviction notice?

Possession proceedings at court must be preceded by service of the correct form of notice on your tenants. You need to be careful about this as section 8 and section 21 notices have changed several times over the past few years. Both are now prescribed forms (save for section 21 notices for pre 1/10/2015 ASTs) so you need to be sure that you are using the correct version.

Be particularly wary about free downloads from the internet. They may be an old out of date (and therefor invalid) form.

9. Can you prove service of your eviction notices and other critical documents?

Say your tenants turn up at court and say that they have never received or even seen your gas safety certificate, section 21 notice or whatever. Will you be able to prove that they were served? If you can't, you may lose your case.

10. Are you familiar with the eviction procedure?

The process is not rocket science, but it is easy to make a mistake. If so, you may find that your case is side-tracked and takes considerably longer to resolve. And if your tenants are not paying rent, time is money.

- If you don't really know how it all works you should either:
- Use solicitors (we recommend Landlord Action), or
- Use our Landlord Law step by step guide when doing it yourself.

Some free resources to help you:

We have a free Which Possession Proceedings Guide at https://landlordlawservices.co.uk/openaccess trails/which-possession-proceedings/. If your tenant is not paying rent, you will also find some free resources at http://www.rent-arrears.co.uk

Tessa Shepperson. Tessa is a specialist landlord and tenant lawyer and runs the online information service at https://landlordlawservices.co.uk.

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How to maximize the commercial benefits of running a professional property business"

As a traditional Chinese curse has it: "May you live in interesting times"; and for anyone born since the end of the second world war that's certainly been the case.

What with Brexit uncertainty, EU stubbornness, and the betrayal of our hard-won democratic principles by some at Westminster, coupled with the very real threat raised by Comrade Corbyn's and McDonnell's radical socialist agenda; plus the property press pendulum of saying all is well one day and all is woe the next, and the media in general living up to its reputation of not letting the truth getting in the way of a good story, it's hardly surprising that there's so many differing views on what's going to happen.

Add to that the classic British habit of buying at the top and panic selling at the bottom, plus the brutalist approach that political parties of every hue have taken with the PRS (Private Rental Sector), then landlords wanting to get out have been handed an excuse for selling up. Hopefully though, we can shed some much-needed factual light on the subject.

So will 2019 be any different? The short answer is probably no; in that any BTL landlords or their advisers who are yet to wake up and smell the coffee are going to be in for a nasty shock, especially if they're banking on S24 being repealed or hoping that house price inflation will save them the trouble of having to run their property portfolio as a proper business. Likewise, the fools' gold rush to incorporate will see landlords painting themselves into a corner, as having spoken to almost 5,000 of them we've yet to come across one who's been told the full cost implications of their headlong rush down that one-way street.

With real 'accidental' landlords starting to leave the sector, and nature abhorring a vacuum, those business-minded ones who can access capital and who are ready, able, and willing to embrace licensing as well as taking a positive attitude to working with local authorities will undoubtedly succeed, particularly if they can keep borrowing below 65%, yields above 7% and, most importantly of all, stop letting the tax tail wag the planning dog.

Now that George Osborne's so-called Tenant Tax is really starting to bite (from 6th April this year the amount of interest relief that can be offset by higher-rate taxpayers is reduced by 75%), a frighteningly large number will face tax bills larger than their post-tax net income. If that wasn't bad enough, lenders are legally obliged to apply higher stress tests, and take into account the effects of borrowers making tax payments on account with all the havoc that plays with cash flow and the like.

By way of a typical example, a moderately successful private landlord will see their profitability plummet from a healthy pre-S24 23.5% to a shocking 11.6% in the 2020/21 tax year. Put another way, that same landlord will have seen their tax rate climb from an acceptable 26.5%, to a debilitating 63.8%, all for simply committing the 'sin' of wanting to be less of a burden upon their fellow taxpayers by being an accidental landlord.

And who said that the Tory's were the party of business! Mind you, better that than a return to the hard-Left's Marxist mantra of property is theft and the penal 98% tax rates we'd undoubtedly suffer if Comrade Corbyn and his kind ever gets the keys to No.10 to repeat the pre-Thatcher mistakes of the 1970s which brought this country to its knees. Just ask anyone who lived through those times what it was like.

Politics and marketing hyperbole to one side, PRS landlords are rapidly taking over from public sector ones as the biggest supplier of social housing, and helping the former to build, run, and grow professional property businesses that sustain and nurture the communities they serve, which include halfway houses with pastoral care, student accommodation, regularly decorated and maintained family housing for life in the same way that local authorities used to do, through to those who can afford to buy but prefer to rent, is very much the way forward.

Before we look at your options in more detail, let's first examine the main findings of the English Private Landlord Survey (EPLS) 2018 (published on 31st January 2019) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-private-landlord-survey-2018-main-report).

Since the last survey was undertaken in 2010, the PRS has undergone substantial growth and change. The number of households in the sector rose by 25% to 4.5m, making it the second largest tenure in England, and is home to a fifth of all households. It's also one of the most diverse, serving a wide range of different types of households across all incomes, including an increasing number of families, with some 35% having dependent children.

Looking at how the PRS operates as a business, the EPLS found that 94% of landlords are sole traders rather than companies and the like, and on average earn £15,000 a year before tax and other deductions. That low earnings figure is almost all down to the fact that some 45% of private landlords own just one property. At the other end of the scale, 17% of landlords own five or more rental properties, but only 13% reported a gross rental income of £50,000 or more.

Other findings show that landlords generate 42% of their gross income from rental properties, 53% plan to keep their number of rental properties at the same level, but 11% of landlords (and the ones who will undoubtedly benefit from our help) are actively planning to grow.

Interestingly, rent increase practices vary between those landlords who self-manage, and those who let via agents. For example, Agents are more likely to increase rent for both new tenancies (50%) and renewals (63%), as well as being more likely to require larger deposits. The converse is true though when it comes to housing families, those in receipt of Universal Credit/Housing Benefit, or those without a UK passport, where self-managing landlords are far more flexible than agents.

Back in 2015 we said that landlords, accidental or otherwise, had very few options if they wanted to survive George Osborne's ill-conceived and short-sighted populist attack. That in itself hasn't changed but was has happened is that portfolio landlords in particular have been forced to engage in some much overdue navel-gazing and work out that their best option is to enjoy life to the full today whilst at the same time building a sustainable business capable of being passed on to the next generation.

So what are your options as a portfolio landlord?

Option 1 - Sell up. Take the CGT hit and mortgage penalties (if any), and either spend the lot or invest the money elsewhere.

Option 2 - Decide to do nothing. Investigate the options as best you can and stay as you are, even though that may raise your tax bill and lower your disposable income. Meanwhile, put up your rents and pay down your mortgages.

Option 3 – Incorporate. Sell your personally held BTLs to a limited company which you own. It will get you over S24, but as limited companies are subject to every tax known to man, make sure that your advisers have good professional indemnity cover when you're left holding the baby. After all, how many people do you know who will never need the income and think that paying 40% inheritance tax is a good idea!

Option 4 – Take joined up advice from fully indemnified sector specialists with a 100% record with HMRC to maximise the commercial benefits of building, running, and growing a professional property business.

Clearly Option 4 makes the most sense for portfolio landlords. So what's stopping them from becoming real businesses and putting themselves back in control?

Our experience shows that not receiving joined-up advice or realising that most accountants, solicitors, mortgage brokers, and financial advisers have very different priorities and mostly only act under your instruction are probably the biggest factors preventing you doing the right thing.

That's closely followed by not using specialist accountants; the average high street accountant is not much more than a glorified bookkeeper and is pathologically afraid of giving advice, as in their mind advice equals risk. Worst still, they're so afraid of being seen to be wanting, and that they daren't admit that they don't know what they don't know for fear that they'll lose the client to a firm that's more expert than they are.

Like everyone else who needs to employ professionals, landlords crave absolute guarantees that no one can give; after all, the only absolutely certainty once we're born is death; and what works today might not work tomorrow. Change is the only constant, and that's doubly true when it comes to tax.

So what now? Despite the pervading sense of doom and gloom and being portrayed as heartless, uncaring, and exploitative capitalist scum who should be taxed out of existence by those who should know better, we've found that virtually all serious landlords are expanding their portfolios, housing more and diverse people than they ever did before, whilst at the same time providing accommodation that often exceeds even the most stringent licensing requirements. Moreover, we've yet to find a single private landlord who doesn't take their social responsibility seriously, or who doesn't decry a society wherein homelessness and rough sleepers still exist.

If you'd like to find out how you can stop being an accidental landlord and instead maximise the commercial benefits of building, running, and growing a professional property business, then please visit www.lesstaxforlandlords.co.uk

Less Tax for Landlords Limited - 33rd Floor, Euston Tower, 286 Euston Road, London NW1 3DP.

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Government unveils plans for 1% Stamp Duty surcharge on overseas property buyers

The Government has finally announced how an extra Stamp Duty surcharge on foreign investors would work.

The idea was first proposed by Prime Minister Theresa May at the Conservative Party conference last October and then mentioned in the Budget later that month, but a consultation has only just been released.

The charge would add an extra 1% to the existing rates for both standard and additional residential purchases in England and Northern Ireland.

It would apply to non-UK residents, which the consultation defines as anyone who has spent fewer than 183 days in any part of the UK – including Scotland and Wales – in the 12 months prior to the transaction completing.

Overseas buyers will be able to apply for a refund if they spend 183 days or more in the UK in the 12 months following day of transaction.

The charge will also apply to companies based overseas as well as UK limited companies under the direct or indirect control of one or more non-UK resident persons.

It will also apply to joint purchases where at least one party is a non-UK resident.

The Government said it is considering exemptions for those who work for the Crown, Armed Forces or Civil Service to support those based overseas.

Additionally, first-time buyers who are non-UK residents will still get to use some of the Stamp Duty relief up to £300,000, but will have to pay 1%.

The consultation said: "The Government believes that introducing an Stamp Duty surcharge of 1% on non-UK resident purchasers of residential property in England and Northern Ireland will help to control house price inflation, thereby assisting residents in getting on to the housing ladder in line with the Government's wider objectives on home ownership."

Mel Stride, financial secretary to the Treasury, said: "The UK is and will remain an open and dynamic economy, but some evidence shows that non-UK resident buyers of UK property could be inflating house prices.

"A 1% surcharge could help more people own their own homes in the future, and its proceeds will go towards tackling rough sleeping, boosting our plan to halve the numbers of rough sleepers by 2022."

The consultation closes on May 6.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777 877/NRSDLT_Consultation_web.pdf

Source: https://www.propertyindustryeye.com/government-unveils-plans-for-1-stamp-duty-surcharge-on-overseas-property-buyers/



Southwark Council Landlord Forum

Date: Thursday 25th April 2019

Time: 6.00pm - 8.00pm

Venue: 160 Tooley Street SE1 2QH.

This will be an event to build on our partnership work with private landlords, managing and lettings agents with a number of important updates on relevant legislation, new initiatives and topics of interest. It will be an informal networking event where we can also learn more about our private sector stakeholders' needs.

This is a free event with refreshments and lots of useful information available for landlords. It is not ticketed, but we would appreciate an RSVP from attendees to indicate numbers for planning by emailing tenancy.relations@southwark.gov.uk

Westminster City Council Landlord Forum

Date: Monday 29 April 2019

Time: 3.00pm to 6pm

Venue: 64 Victoria St, Westminster,

London, SW1E 6QP

To register your attendance and for more info, please email <a href="https://doi.org/10.2016/nc.2016/n

Conference & Award
Ceremony 29 March 2019
www.londonlandlords.org.uk

Fraudulent Islington letting agents sentenced to 28 months in prison and disqualified from acting as company directors for 8 years

Three men behind a dodgy letting agency have each been sentenced to 28 months in prison following a major investigation by Islington Council after a five-week trial.

The men, who ran companies in Islington and neighbouring boroughs using the trading name Crestons were convicted of carrying on business for a fraudulent purpose in a trial at Blackfriars Crown Court in December 2018. Their actions left at least 19 victims around £105,000 out of pocket.

The court heard testimony from more than 30 witnesses. Between 2014 and 2016, Crestons failed to refund deposits to private tenants at the end of their tenancies, failed to pass on rent to landlords, and failed to put tenants' deposits in an approved protection scheme.

Mohammed Rayn Mashuk and Mohammed Ibrahim Ali were convicted under section 993 of the Companies Act 2006 of one count each of carrying on business for a fraudulent purpose, as officers of Sirs Associates Ltd t/a Crestons. Ahmed Ali Syed was convicted under section 993 of the Companies Act 2006 of one count of carrying on business for a fraudulent purpose, as an officer of Sirs London Ltd t/a Crestons.

In a sentencing hearing at Blackfriars Crown Court on 17 January, Mohammed Rayn Mashuk, Mohammed Ibrahim Ali and Ahmed Ali Syed were each sentenced to 28 months immediate imprisonment. They must each serve half that sentence before being released on license. If they breach the license terms they will be brought back to prison. They were also each disgualified from acting as a director of a company for a period of 8 years.

In her sentencing, HHJ Sullivan said: "This is a case of deliberate reckless trading carried out over a lengthy period of time" and that "offences of this nature undermine confidence in the lettings sector".

The lengthy and complex council investigation, partly funded by the National Trading Standards (NTS), was triggered by complaints from tenants and landlords who had fallen victim to Crestons.

Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Islington Council's executive member for housing and development, said:

"We welcome this landmark sentence, which is a major victory for private tenants and landlords not just in Islington but across the country and sends the message loud and clear that rogue letting agencies cannot rip off their clients and get away with it.

"In London's crowded rental market, tenants are spending huge percentages of their income on rent and rental deposits, so it's vital that they are protected from bad behaviour by shady letting agents."

Isobel Thomson, CEO of the National Approved Letting Scheme (NALS), said:

"NALS welcomes the outcome of this case which demonstrates that agents who commit crimes will be prosecuted. NALS will continue to work with Islington Council to ensure that consumers are protected and we stop these criminal agents from tarnishing the reputation of the sector as a whole.

"Thanks to the work of Trading Standards the defendants in the case have been given a custodial jail sentence. It is only through the courts imposing severe sentences such as these that anyone tempted to behave in this way will be deterred".

For all the latest news and events, you can sign up for the free London Property Licensing newsletter here.

Source: https://www.londonpropertylicensing.co.uk/news

In Partnership with LLAS & ATLAS



Less Tax for Landlords is a specialist multi-disciplinary consultancy that helps portfolio landlords maximise the commercial benefits of building, running, and growing a recognised professional property business. We only work with those who are involved in owning or developing buy-to-lets, HMOs, or commercial property.

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Visit https://lesstaxforlandlords.co.uk/llas for more information

Less Tax for Landlords Limited 0203 7352940

<u>info@lesstaxforlandlords.co.uk</u> www.lesstaxforlandlords.co.uk



Azad Ayub Ltd has been offering their services in the residential property sector since 1980. We provide an exceptional and personal level of service to both landlords and tenants. This has been recognized in our winning a number of industry awards. We also have Investors in People accreditation for over 10 years. A very dedicated team of staff take great pride in offering professional services of a very high standard. This is reflected in the customers' satisfaction ratings we have received from existing and past tenants. Having been in business for over 35 years has given us the opportunity to provide continuity of service to landlords and tenants, and share the benefits of our experience with others.

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Bumblebee is an online estate agent providing quality bespoke property services to landlords and tenants throughout Barnet and the surrounding areas. Bumblebee was set up by The Barnet Group to offer customers a trustworthy, transparent and accountable service, ensuring we find the right solutions to customers' property needs. Any surplus revenue we make we will invest in delivering core services to the local community

For more info, visit: http://www.bumblebeeproperty.co.uk



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In Support of LLAS & ATLAS



Legacy Education Alliance Inc. (LEA) offers comprehensive instruction and mentorship in the areas of property investing, entrepreneurship, personal development and stock market trading Established in the UK since 2001,

LEA's UK property-specific training programmes include; Rich Dad® Education, based on the teachings of the internationally acclaimed author, Robert T. Kiyosaki; Making Money from Property by Martin Roberts; Property Academy by Robbie Fowler; Perform in Property by Steve Backley and Roger Black; Building Wealth and Women in Wealth. Our customers derive all corners of the globe, many of whom make up our roster of part-time trainers and mentors. LEA is actively committed to giving back and is a Gold Supporter of Make-A-Wish® UK. For more info, please visit Web: legacyeducationalliance.com



Our aim of being the brightest, the best and most trusted in the industry is continuing. We have become a recognised and respected industry voice and will use our influence to shape a responsible sector that works for all participants. We're an award-winning business, continually pushing standards higher.

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Founded in 2009, we have taken the lettings business to a new level by providing the Landlord with a comprehensive and bespoke service designed to meet their every need to maximise profit. We have a strong property background and covenant.

Currently managing over 1,000 properties all over London and specialising in rent guarantee, new build and conversion developments, investment and management. Please contact us or visit our website to find out how we can help you. www.caridonproperty.co.uk



London Property Licensing is a housing consultancy offering simple, impartial and expert advice on property licensing and the regulation of private rented homes. Established in 2015, the business was awarded 'Best Service Provider in the Private Rented Sector 2016' by the UK Landlord Accreditation Partnership and was a finalist in the FSB London Business Awards 2017.

Our website www.londonpropertylicensing.co.uk maps out the property licensing requirements across every London borough. We can handle license applications and provide expert advice on compliance. Landlords can also sign up to our free newsletter (www.londonpropertylicensing.co.uk/newsletter) for regular updates. For further information contact: info@londonpropertylicensing.co.uk



Central Housing Group's 'Guaranteed Rent Scheme' provides landlords with a guaranteed monthly rental income for up to 5 years. Quite simply, it's the most reliable way to let your property! We are a trusted and well established residential letting and management Agency that has been successfully acquiring and managing private rented accommodation since 2000 in North, West & East London. We are members of the Government's 'National Approved Lettings Scheme' (NALS), 'Ombudsman Services' for residential lettings, and the UK Association of Letting Agents (UKALA).

We are regarded as a professional letting services team that give our clients — landlords and local authority housing departments — a friendly, reliable, high-quality residential letting and management service. For further info please visit www.centralhousinggroup.com



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"Landlord Law's great documents, information and customer support have been a God send and helped put me on the right path when I started out as a novice landlord. Thank you Landlord Law! " John Meades, Landlord

London Borough of Southwark

Southwark Council are consulting on proposals to introduce a Gold Standard for the private rented sector. The aim is to improve standards across the sector beyond the current legal requirements for rented properties. To find out more and have your say go to www.southwark.gov.uk/goldstandard



University of London Our Annual Landlord Forum

Returns on the evening of **18th March 2019 at Senate House, University of London, WC1E 7HU**. There will be speakers and an opportunity to network, with refreshments provided.

The event is free to attend and a necessity for anyone who lets, or is thinking about letting, to students in London. Expert speakers will be delivering presentations, as well as exhibitors from businesses and organisations of interest to landlords and property professionals. Refreshments will be available. There will be filming and photography at this event.

Click this link & Book your free ticket today!

Date: Monday 18 March 2019. Time: 5:00pm to 8:00pm. Venue: Senate House, University of London, WC1E 7HU

The agenda:

5.00pm - Refreshments and Exhibitor Stalls

5.45pm - Introduction

5.50pm - Talk by Nova Financial

6.10pm - Richard Tacagni - London Property Licensing

6.30pm - Roland Shanks - University of London - Update on the Student Market 2019

6.50pm - Richard Blanco - National Landlords Association - Good Beginnings & Happy Endings - How to start

and end tenancies well

7.10pm - Comfort Break

7.20pm - Q&A

7.45pm - Networking and Exhibitor Stalls

8.00pm - End

Investing in Lincoln

Rob Hunter of Bond Housing Group explains their continuing commitment to Lincoln



From just one property in 2014, Bond Housing Group has become one of the fastest growing and most well respected property companies operating in Lincoln. So, 4 years on from their

first property in Richmond Road we revisit Rob Hunter their award winning group MD to see what's been happening since.

"The speed with which we have grown the Lincoln business has been phenomenal. Starting with just one property in 2014, we now own and operate over 100 units in Lincoln, and have invested over 5 million pounds into the local economy.

We are recognised as Lincoln's go to operator for bespoke co-living and studio accommodation and believe we are the only private landlord in Lincoln to have achieved ATLAS / UKLAP , MLAS, NLA and DASH accreditation, and to offer Client Money Protection. We are also one of a handful of landlords to achieve Trusted Landlord status from the City Council.

We are now a leading HMO manager in the City, and our portfolio includes some of the very largest HMOs in the area.

Operating from three locations in the city including our city centre offices on Clasketgate we are expanding all the time with developments underway at St Catherines and our new development being planned at The Avenue."

When asked about the year ahead Rob comments:

"We are very excited with the projects we have in the pipeline and we presently have 3 new properties on which we are ready to complete subject to planning. Because Lincoln is now an area with an Article 4 direction, we are now either acquiring poorly run existing HMOs, or vacant commercial buildings for conversion. For example St Catherines was an old doctor's surgery and The Avenue was an old dentist's clinic, so we are bringing these redundant buildings back into use to provide much needed safe secure accommodation for local professionals and students".

Although these are challenging times for Landlords, with mandatory HMO Licensing now being applied to all multi lets comprising 5 or more unrelated persons and tax changes affecting smaller landlords and those who have been operating for many years without a corporate structure, we are well positioned and well funded to continue to grow".





A visit?

"Sure, if any one would like to visit us and see what we are doing, they can contact me using the details below".

Contact Number 01522 246 724

Email lettings@bondhousinggroup.com

www.bondhousinggroup.com









London Borough of Croydon Lettings

What we do

Croydon Lettings Agency's goal is to help residents find and keep a home in the private rental sector. We aim to strengthen tenancies by working with landlords and residents to match their needs.

What is involved?

Croydon Lettings operates differently to high street letting agencies, providing the following services:

- Support residents to pay their rent in advance, and the deposit if needed
- Provide tenants with assistance in setting up a direct debit to pay rent directly to the landlord
- After care package for both landlord and resident
- Ensure that tenants are ready for tenancies through our tailored training package
- Holistic wrap-around service if required
- Strengthen and sustain tenancies
- Help prevent the need for a landlord to take legal action against tenants
- Continued support during lifespan of the tenancy

Croydon Lettings offers this service without any fees, so no cost to the landlord or tenant! If you are a landlord or a tenant, Contact us via our <u>online referral form</u>

Other Contacts: Layla, Property negotiator 07784224445 Sherine, Social lettings officer 07523504519



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Name of Tenant:
Address relating to the arrears:
Current address of tenant:
Amount of debt:
Type of debt:

Preferred contact number for payment:

That's it. That's all we ask. We'll forward the details to our litigation team and they'll draft and serve the letters. It's a great offer, so, sadly, we can't keep it going forever and it will expire at the end of the month. Don't hang about, click the link below to send us your email, and let's see what we can do to make your day brighter!



Do you have a property available to rent in Medway? Join our private Rented Scheme

Medway Council is actively looking for affordable rental accommodation of various sizes to meet the needs of a wide variety of tenants.

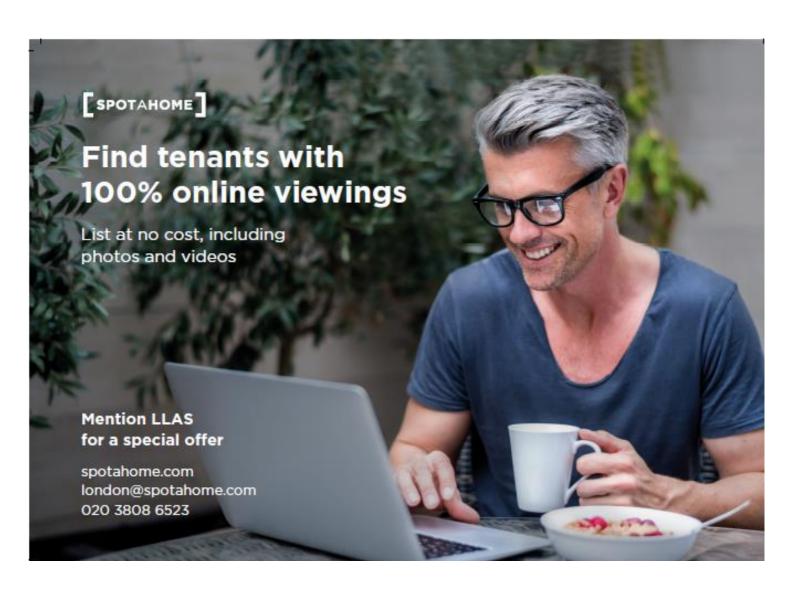
The council provides landlords with an introduction to prospective tenants. Where a letting is agreed, landlords will be able to access a number of incentives (dependent on property size, area, rent charged).

Some benefits of joining the Private Rented Scheme (PRS):

- There are no fees or commission payable for this service
- For new landlords there is help and assistance with accessing the lettings market
- There is assistance with completing housing benefit forms
- It saves landlords time and money, as there is no advertising and can reduce the amount of time a property is left vacant
- Ongoing tenancy support assistance

If you are a managing agent or if you own a property which you wish to offer a client from the council, please contact us. One of our officers will be in touch with you to discuss the scheme in further detail.

For more information about the PRS phone: 01634 333053 or email: lenka.trent@medway.gov.uk



Fees ban will apply to all Tenancies signed after June 1

Fees charged to tenants are to be outlawed on all new tenancies signed after June 1.

The long-awaited announcement of a date for introduction of the ban was made by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, the Government's housing spokesperson in the House of Lords, during the Tenant Fees Bill's Third Reading.

He said: "Implementation is subject to the parliamentary timetables and amendments need to be considered in the other place [the House of Commons].

"We need to enable agents and landlords following Royal Assent to become compliant but we intend for the provisions to come into force on June 1, 2019. "This would mean the ban on lettings fees would apply to all tenancies signed after this date."

Isobel Thomson, chief executive of the National Approved Lettings Scheme, said:

"At last agents have clarity on the date of implementation of the fee ban which the Government has laid great store by in terms of improving the lot of tenants. "Only time will tell whether that is the case or whether tenants will end up paying more through increased rent. "We believe that good, professional agents will be able to meet the challenges facing their businesses as a result of the ban but it is vital that enforcement is ramped up to ensure that all agents comply with the requirement and those who flout it are dealt with appropriately."

David Cox, chief executive of ARLA Propertymark, said: "This now gives agents the legal certainty they need to prepare for a post-tenant fees ban world.

"To learn about the intricacies of the legislation, we encourage agents to come to our regional meetings over the next few weeks and of course our annual conference, where ARLA Propertymark will be doing everything it can to help agents plan and prepare for the introduction of the Bill."

Agents can also look north of the border where tenant fees have been banned in Scotland since 2012.

David Alexander, managing director of agency software provider apropos, who also runs a lettings agent in Scotland, said:

"Some agents have been charging substantial fees to tenants with little explanation why these charges applied other than for 'administration' which has been an area of complaint for tenants. "This Bill will resolve many of these issues. The relatively quick implementation of the Bill could pose substantial problems for some agents, but it was clear that this legislation was coming, and the sector should have been preparing for its arrival. "Similar changes were implemented in Scotland in 2012 which ended agency fees and cleared up deposit holding by landlords and agents, and in general most coped well with this. "The bulk of the fee loss from the implementation of this Bill is likely to be absorbed by landlords, but the long-term benefits will be in creating a more trusting and attractive environment for tenants which, in turn, results in greater demand and, ultimately, increased rental returns."

Some agents have questioned the timing though, wondering why the ban cannot come sooner.

Simon Gerrard, managing director of north London agent Martyn Gerrard, said: "This delay is very little to do with letting agents being ready.

"The Government are clearly putting off having to implement the ban during the heat of Brexit, and are also likely keen to avoid the inevitable jump in rents that will occur. "At Martyn Gerrard, we have been ready since they announced the ban, as we already don't charge the admin fees they're getting rid of. "Those agents who have relied on tenant admin fees to survive and prosper, rather than charge landlords' transparent fees, have had plenty of time to prepare and should be ready by now. "This is simply prolonging the waiting period and giving them more excuses not to get their house in order."

There is also still some debate over whether the ban will result in charges being passed onto landlords.

Michael Bennett, head of lettings for Best Gapp, said:

"Our view is that providing a bespoke lettings service to landlords and tenants with timely execution in all aspects of the lettings business, coupled with a keen focus on keeping our landlord fees to a minimum without compromising the integrity of the service is paramount in the event of a change to legislation. "We are able to remain competitive and offset the loss in tenant related fees when the ban comes into force by offering our landlords special fee packages designed to add value to the tenant experience and to ensure that our landlords retain their competitive edge on pricing of their prime property portfolios. "We do not advocate increasing landlord fees or to consider employing other measures which would compromise the integrity of the service we offer to landlords and tenants."

Source: https://www.propertyindustryeye.com/the-clock-ticks-down-fees-ban-will-apply-to-all-tenancies-signed-after-june-1/



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