



Membership Cards

Very soon landlords who have signed up to the Accreditation Scheme Code of Standards will receive a Bolton Landlord Accreditation Scheme Membership Card 2005/06 which can be used as proof of scheme membership when approaching local contractors and businesses offering discounts and preferential rates for our scheme members.

If you have not received your membership card during March 2005 then contact us direct for an update on your scheme membership and entitlement we have included an up to date list of the benefits attached to scheme membership.

PRIVATE landlord Update

Spring 2005



Landlord Members Benefits

- **Grants** available towards [criteria applies]
 - External refurbishment of properties in Group Repair Schemes
 - Replace boundary walls in Environmental Schemes
 - Cost of bringing empty properties back into use
 - Raising energy efficiency standards
 - Working towards government decent homes standards
- **Discounts** and preferential rates negotiated with
 - Elliot Garden Property Insurance
 - Olympic Locks and Security
 - Chorley Electrical Traders
 - Travis Perkins Supplies
 - E.B.M. Builders Merchants
 - Centennial Motor Services
- **Contractor List** includes Registered Plumbers, Electricians and Builders wanting to work with private landlords.
- **Property assessment** and property improvement plan where applicable.
- **Advertising** of private rented properties available to let with accreditation status marketed and promoted.
- **Advice and information** from experienced officers in Housing Advice Services
 - On the law and rights / responsibilities of a landlord
 - Support and advice on dealing with problem tenants
 - Appointments may be available on request
- **Security** survey and installation of security products in target areas available until March 2005.
- **Free and Discounted** Landlord Guides and Manuals.
- **Landlord Forums and Events** providing regular updates on housing related matters that support a landlords business and investments.
- **The Bond Board** services includes private landlord advisor and tenant support workers.
- **Newsletter** providing members with regular updates and items of interest on housing related matters and services available.
- **Housing Benefits** service offering members improved access and information on new HB claims and processing of outstanding HB claims.



Saving Money, Saving Energy....

Tenants on low incomes are receiving new benefits through their landlord's involvement in Bolton Landlord Accreditation Scheme. During recent property assessments for accreditation we had access to a limited supply of energy efficient light bulbs which we gave to your tenants during our visit.

Your tenants also received advice on how they can access other energy efficient measures and benefits including loft and cavity wall insulation. These measures can be provided completely free of charge to low income households and means you the landlord could benefit from further improvements to the property at no cost to yourself.

Energy efficient measures can reduce running costs for your tenants making your property easier to heat and more affordable, which makes it more attractive to prospective tenants and could encourage existing tenants to stay longer.

Your local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre have kindly provided us with another limited supply of energy efficient bulbs which can be distributed to your tenants when we undertake new property assessments for accreditation.

If you would like your tenants to benefit contact Jim Leyland for further details at the Private Landlord Project Team Tel 01204 335486.



The Energy and Efficient Way to Save Money...

THIS EDITION

BARLO Update

'I Saved 18% on Property Insurance'

Tackling Problems Together

Increased Bonds

Housing Benefit Contacts

Grants Available

Membership Cards

Members Benefits Update

Save Money & Energy

Welcome

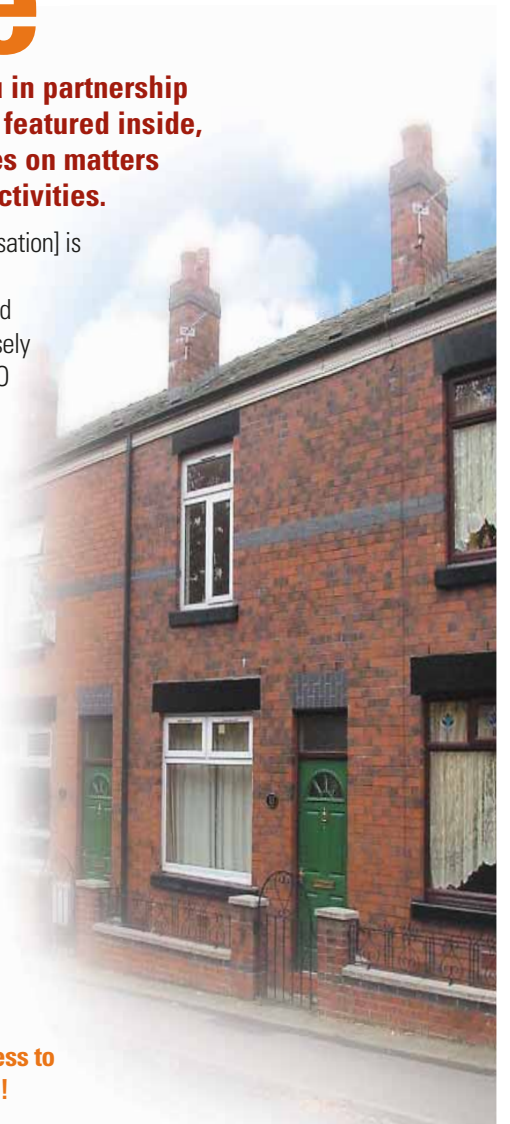
to our new look Newsletter brought to you in partnership with the services, agencies and landlords featured inside, providing you with information and updates on matters that supports private landlords and their activities.

BARLO [Bolton Accredited Residential Landlords Organisation] is a landlord forum which involves individual landlords, representatives of North West Landlords Association, and Managing Agents. These landlords continue to work closely with the Private Landlord Project Team developing BARLO and its relationship with the Council.



BARLO has brought about changes and introduced new services and products that has supported these landlords and provided mutual benefits. The Council is considering BARLO proposals for a new and formal partnership that will give our landlord members increased opportunities for involvement and influence in private sector housing matters in Bolton.

Join **BARLO** now for **FREE MEMBERSHIP** and access to **FREE BENEFITS** which are listed on the back page!



If you have any comments or would like to contribute to future editions of Private Landlord Update please contact:

Private Landlord Project Team
9 Rushey Fold Lane, Bolton BL1 3JW
Tel: 01204 335 486 Fax: 01204 335 487



'I saved 18% on property insurance!'

Since the launch of the joint initiative with Bolton at Home and Elliott Garden just 3 months ago the Accredited Landlord Insurance Scheme has gone from strength to strength.

Enquiries have already been received from over 20 landlords and many new policies have been arranged, with landlords benefiting from the fantastic premium discounts available.

One landlord, quoted £170.02 with their existing insurer, made a saving of over 18%, paying just £139.28 for their property insurance.

Policies are available for both 'verified' and 'self certified'

landlords as a member of the Bolton Landlord Accreditation Scheme you benefit from an additional discount against the already competitive premiums and extensive policy cover.

We work with a panel of insurers through a scheme administered by the HSBC Group to bring Landlords the most competitive quotation every time, ensuring we meet all of your requirements.

The key benefits include:

- All Risks of loss or damage including subsidence cover subject to an excess of just £100 (increasing to £1000 for subsidence)
- All types of tenants covered including DSS, Asylum Seekers, Students and Professionals
- Cover for Malicious Damage by Tenants
- Loss of Rent up to 12 Months
- Standard policy cover of up to 90 days for unoccupied properties with extended cover up to 12 months available upon request.

- Arson cover is provided whilst the property is unoccupied
- Legal expenses cover is included
- Property Owners Liability cover up to £2m indemnity for any one accident

If you would like further information please contact us now on 0191 512 3541 and take advantage of the benefits that being a member of Bolton Landlord Accreditation Scheme can offer.



Increased Bonds

The Bond Board Ltd, working in Bolton, Bury and Rochdale is the new name for what was formerly Bolton Bond Board. We have a new corporate identity and new logo which we have been using for a couple of weeks now. A move to new offices at 41 Mawdsley Street seems to have motivated us all to look at the services we provide and to think of changes we could implement to help landlords.



Consultation with landlords showed us that £200 paper bonds in 1993 were worth considerably more than in 2005.

We really wanted to increase the bond and have now devised a protocol with Environmental Services and if landlords allow an Environmental Services officer and someone from the Bond Board to inspect a vacant property before a new tenancy commences, the bond can be increased by a further £50, if the property is to a good standard. Accredited properties also attract the increased bond – just ensure Housing Advice

know it is accredited when you notify them that you have a vacancy.

The other point made by a number of landlords was that tenants who put nothing into the tenancy themselves, because they had a bond from us, had no stake in it. If anything went wrong in the tenancy, they lost nothing. Well, of course they did, because it would be difficult for us to help them again, but that is not always remembered when the tenant is causing damage. To address this, we are now saying to landlords

that IF they would feel more confident about a tenant who is able to pay in the region of £10-20 cash at the start of the tenancy in addition to the bond, then we are happy to allow this.

We hope these changes will show landlords that we understand the situations they face and will encourage them to use the changes to assist them. Contact Sharon Betton on Tel 01204 366328 for further information.

Tackling Problems Together

Case 1 – Rent Arrears

Landlord Mr P Dean approached the Private Landlord Project Team because one of his tenants was in rent arrears, the landlord had served a Notice of Possession Proceedings after failed attempts to recover the arrears. Mr P Dean explained he had been previously satisfied with the tenancy and was still keen to resolve the problem without resorting to legal proceedings.

The Private Landlord Project suggested and arranged an appointment for the tenant with Housing Advice Services where the tenant's responsibilities and implications of non payment of rent were outlined. As a result the tenant accepted budgeting advice and support in reaching an 'Agreement To Pay' that both the landlord and tenant agreed was fair and reasonable, regular payment of

arrears means Mr P Dean no longer needs to pursue the original Notice.

Legal proceedings can be lengthy and expensive, leading to further rent loss and letting costs for a vacated property, taking up much of your valuable time and resources. Reaching an 'Agreement To Pay' that is based on a tenants individual circumstances can help to sustain a tenancy that has been otherwise satisfactory.

Case 2 - Complaints

Landlords Mr M and Mrs D Patel were contacted during summer 2004 by the Private Landlord Project after residents made complaints to staff at the UCAN [Urban Care and Neighbourhood Centre] in Halliwell. The complaints centred on nuisance coming from two properties Mr M and Mrs D Patel owned and managed.

Because of the nature of the complaints and allegations of anti social behaviour we recognised that the landlord would not be able to address the problems and the needs of his tenants and local residents without our assistance.

Support for the landlord, tenants and residents' came from various sections and departments of Bolton at Home, Bolton Council and the Police. Practical assistance, advice, information and feedback was provided on a regular basis confirming action agreed, action taken, progress, outcomes achieved and satisfaction with the process. All the complaints have now been addressed and the situation resolved.

Mr M Patel said

"I am very happy with the level of support I received from all the Services and Agencies involved"

The Residents said

"The help we received was fantastic, the street is so much quieter, cleaner, and feels so much safer now"

If you would like more information or advice on support currently available when dealing with rent arrears or complaints call us at the Private Landlord Project Team on Tel 01204 335486, UCAN Centre on Tel 01204 335377 or Housing Advice Services on Tel 01204 335900.



Housing Benefits - Easier ways to get in touch

The telephone is not always the best way to get in touch with the Housing Benefit and Council Tax office, especially when you have a computer.

Many landlords are now finding out that using e-mail and the Bolton MBC website gives them the facility to ask and give information at any time of the day or night, and weekends as well.

By e-mailing you have the means to track the message and ensure its received – there is no way the message can get lost in the post, and you have proof that it has been sent and received. All e-mails are opened daily and diverted to the person who deals with the area concerned.

On the Bolton MBC website there are change of address forms to complete enabling landlords to give details of old tenants leaving and new tenants moving in. Change of circumstances, claiming discounts, paying by Direct Debit can also be reported in this way. Once completed the forms can be printed off and sent or handed in, or you can attach them to an e-mail. Whichever way is chosen by completing the forms and giving the information requested you are helping us to help you.

The email address for Housing Benefits is housing.benefits@bolton.gov.uk or council.tax@bolton.gov.uk for Council Tax

Or look at the Bolton MBC Website www.bolton.gov.uk for information / links to necessary forms.



Grants, are you missing out?

'Pick up a Property' and 'Top up' Accreditation Grants were launched in November 2004 at the 'Accreditation Grants and Affordable Warmth Event'. Following this event eight Landlords expressed an interest in applying for these grants within our target areas of Tonge, Queens Park and The Haugh.

A number of these Landlords are now actively seeking suitable properties within these target areas for the 'Pick up a Property' Grant, whilst one Landlord is actually in the process of purchasing a property for inclusion in the scheme. If you identify an empty or poorly maintained property in our target areas you could receive 50% grant assistance towards eligible costs.

Two Landlords are also taking advantage of the 'Top up' grants in the Queen's Park Renewal Area, following completion of Group Repair works. These grants consisting of a 50% contribution may be available towards cost of installing, improving or replacing central heating systems, kitchens and bathrooms and other energy efficiency measures.

There are grants still available so if you are thinking of extending or improving your portfolio in the near future and would like further details of the grants on offer please contact Paul Mellor on 01204 335858.

