

Membership Cards

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 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 Summer 2005



Landlord Members Benefits

- **NEW Housing Benefits** Landlord Liaison Officer dedicated service offering members improved access and information on new HB claims and processing of outstanding HB claims.
- **NEW Anti Social Behaviour Officers** dedicated private sector service providing landlords and residents with information, advice and practical assistance in resolving problems.
- **NEW Free Property Advertising** of private rented properties available to let with accreditation status marketed and promoted in the Bolton Evening News.
- **NEW Free Smoke Detectors** with 10 year battery fitted by Greater Manchester Fire Service on behalf of tenants.
- **NEW Free Energy Efficient Light Bulbs** packs distributed to private tenants.
- **Grants** (criteria applies) available towards
 - 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
 - E.B.M. Builders Merchants
 - Wigan Road Service Centre
- **Contractor List** includes Registered Plumbers, Electricians and Builders wanting to work with private landlords.
- **Property Assessment** and property improvement plan where applicable.
- **Advice and information** from experienced officers in Housing Advice Services
 - Clarification on the law and rights / responsibilities of a landlord
 - Support and advice on dealing with problem tenants
 - Appointments may be available on request
- **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 dedicated private landlord advisor and tenant support workers.
- **Newsletter** providing members with regular updates and items of interest on housing related matters and services available.



Warm Front II Grant

Properties with effective and efficient heating and insulation are easier to heat and keep warm, and more economical to run, making these properties more attractive and affordable for existing and future tenants.

High fuel costs in addition to the rent and other charges may be one of the deciding factors on whether an existing tenant remains in a particular property.

Ensuring your tenant has access to relevant and appropriate information about grants and assistance may increase the amount of income they have available for rent, utilities, and other financial commitments.

Tenants may be able to claim a grant of up to £2700 under the new Warm Front II scheme. This grant provides access to a package of insulation and heating improvements, energy efficient light bulbs, and energy efficiency advice which is tailored to each property up to the value of £2700.

New Warm Front II Grant applications must be submitted by the tenant, approval is based on the tenants' eligibility, and existing heating and insulation measures present in the property, and cannot include measures installed through Warm Front previously. When the Private Landlord Project Team undertakes a property assessment for the Accreditation Scheme we support your tenants in applying for Warm Front Grants where appropriate.

If you want to know more details about the scheme and help identify which of your tenants might be eligible contact the North Manchester Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0161 626 9383



THIS EDITION

BARLO Progress

Private Sector Anti Social Behaviour Officers

Licensing Private Landlords

Housing Benefits Landlord Liaison Officer

Free Property Advertising

Fire Safety Initiative

New Warm Front II

Members New Benefits

We're moving forward...

Bolton Accredited Residential Landlord Organisation [B.A.R.L.O.]

Three Elected Member representatives have now been nominated to the **B.A.R.L.O** Board who met with Landlord representatives in June 2005, everyone agreeing that the **B.A.R.L.O** approach is the way forward.

To help us ensure your views, needs and business interests are well represented and considered when making key decisions, we want more private landlord / managing agents to become actively involved.

Whether you have a very small, medium or large portfolio of properties, if being a landlord / managing agent is a part time activity or your main employment, we recognise the value of your experience and knowledge of the private rented sector.

If you are interested in working closer with other Private Landlords, Elected Members, and Officers in establishing **B.A.R.L.O.** as the main forum, for partnership working between Private Landlords, Bolton at Home and Bolton Council contact Julianne Lacy on Tel 01204 335460 for more details now.

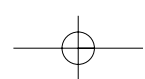
Join BARLO now FREE MEMBERSHIP providing improved / priority access to SUPPORT AND SERVICES as detailed in this newsletter.



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 julianne.lacy@boltonathome.org.uk

www.barlo.org.uk



Private Sector Anti Social Behaviour Officers.

Dedicated Anti Social Behaviour [ASB] Officers recently recruited and working within targeted areas of Halliwell and Tonge have forged new links and partnerships with private landlords, local businesses, residents and other agencies to tackle problems in the private sector. Numerous requests for assistance, advice and complaints have been received and the ASB Officers have supported landlords and residents with excellent results.

Are neighbouring properties letting you down?

A private landlord asked us to investigate and take action on disrepair and an accumulation of rubbish at a neighbouring property. The landlord felt the conditions were affecting his ability to attract prospective tenants.

Are your tenants happy with their neighbours?

A private tenant reported problems with a noisy neighbour

who frequently played loud music whilst working on a car outside their property.

Is your tenant behaving responsibly?

A resident complained that private tenants next door were responsible every weekend for a high number of visitors, loud music, shouting, littering of beer cans and bottles in street.

The above problems were resolved successfully by working

together with private landlords and residents helping to sustain existing tenancies and attract new tenants into an improved environment.

If problems are not dealt with tenants and residents may vacate properties and neighbourhoods, choosing instead to live in areas where higher property and tenancy management standards are available from alternative housing providers.

More information, advice and practical assistance is available by contacting Sharon Pendlebury/Barry Davies, Anti Social Behaviour Team on Tel 01204 335272.



NEW Property to Let Advertising!



9 Rushey Fold Lane – Halliwell

**Three Bedrooms
Two Reception
Suitable for family with upto 3 children
Recently modernised
Alarm/Carpets/Curtains
6 month Shorthold Tenancy
Rent £80 per week
Deposit Negotiable**

Bolton Landlord Accreditation Scheme

The scheme is based on a private landlords commitment to achieve and maintain agreed property standards and tenancy management practices in the private sector. The private landlord who owns and manages the advertised property at **9 Rushey Fold Lane** is a member of the above scheme. The successful applicant for this 6 months shorthold tenancy will be contacted directly by the landlord

Advertise your next vacancy free in the Bolton Evening News via Homesforyou the Lettings System operated by the Council and partner Housing Associations, and reach 1000's of prospective tenants seeking well managed and maintained housing in Bolton.

- What is on offer!
- Feature advert up to 15cm x 4.5cm
- Colour photograph included
- Accredited Status promoted
- Property details / Applicant criteria

Applicants are checked before being accepted on the Homesforyou register and the Private Landlord Team can assist you in acquiring further reference checks on former tenants of the Council.

To be eligible for this new pilot initiative your property should be able to meet the Accreditation property standards on application, or achieve the property standards prior to advertising.

For more details on how to get your property accredited and access to free advertising and assistance with reference checks, contact Paula Cheung in the Private Landlord Project Team on Tel 01204 335461.



Fire Safety – Save Lives

It is a fact that many people killed in house fires are sleeping at the time of the incident. A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stages of a fire, which then sounds a piercing alarm to warn the occupier. A smoke alarm wakes up your tenant giving them vital extra time to escape, it can also help to:

- Minimise extent of fire and smoke damage,
- Reduce amount of costly repair work required to your property,
- Limit impact on property insurance premiums

B.A.R.L.O. is working in partnership with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to offer your tenants FREE smoke alarms, FREE fitting, FREE fire safety advice.

Each smoke alarm comes complete with a ten year battery, providing even longer term protection and saving you and your tenant more money on replacement batteries.

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



Housing Benefits Landlord Liaison Officer

The Council's Benefits Service has successfully applied for extra government funding to enable it to work in partnership with B.A.R.L.O.

This is an exciting development for the Benefits Section which is keen to build on its existing links with private landlords and events such as its annual Landlords Listening Forum.

The additional funding has been made available via the government's Performance Standards Fund, which encourages innovation in service delivery and partnership working where this will lead to improved performance.

Details are still being finalised but it is intended that the project will:

- provide a focal point within the Benefits Service for landlords involved in the accreditation scheme

- work together with landlords in the task group to identify solutions to problems experienced by tenants and landlords in the claim process

- provide tailored training for landlords on Benefits matters
- contribute to B.A.R.L.O events to provide in-person advice on Benefits issues

- produce information and material directly relevant to landlords such as Information Packs and website content

The Landlord Liaison Project is one of a number of new initiatives currently being undertaken by the Benefits Service, including investment in training, quality checking and visiting staff.

These should help to improve the speed, accuracy and take-up of the service, and make the claiming

process as straightforward as possible for all involved.

We hope our involvement with B.A.R.L.O and the Private Landlords Project Accreditation scheme will reap rewards for all parties and are looking forward to being able to discuss and address the issues facing landlords, their tenants, and ourselves.

If you would like to help us identify the best way forward for this service contact Julie Wilson, Policy and Quality Officer on Tel 01204 331894.



LICENSING In the Private Rented Sector

The Housing Act 2004 introduces new powers to Local Authorities which include Licensing in three main categories

- **Mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation [HMO] with 3 or more storeys, 5 or more people, and 2 or more households**
- **Additional licensing of HMO which do not match the above criteria that are sufficiently problematic.**
- **Selective licensing in designated areas which are, or likely to become low demand, or experiencing significant problems related to anti social behaviour.**

These powers are being introduced to assist Councils in protecting the health, safety and welfare of the occupants, improve management, and reduce anti-social behaviour in an area.

Licensing of larger HMO as defined in the Housing Act 2004 is mandatory and is expected to be implemented later this year. Additional and Selective Licensing are discretionary and implementation will be subject to consultation and central government approvals.

A landlord or managing agent will qualify for a License when they demonstrate to the Council

- The proposed License holder is the most appropriate person
- The proposed License holder is a 'fit and proper' person e.g. no relevant criminal convictions.
- HMO must be reasonably suitable for the number of occupants permitted under the License

- Proposed management arrangements are satisfactory

Landlords and Managing Agents failing to obtain and operating without a License will be committing a criminal offence and if convicted will be liable for up to a £20,000 fine. Further recourse open to the Authority is to obtain a rent repayment order.

For more detailed information and advice contact The Housing and Public Health Unit, Weston House, Weston St, Bolton on Tel 01204 336538 or email: environmental.health@bolton.gov.uk.

