

The London Landlord

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Accrediting Agents

Around 20% of the LLAS members are letting or managing agents who own or manage up to 23,000 properties. As Agents represent a large number of members we have decided to accredit Agents in their own right. A separate certificate will be issued to accredited agents.

To become an Accredited Agent.

- The Agency must satisfy the 2/3rd rule that applies to all companies and partnerships. At least 2/3rd of the directors and 2/3rd of staff involved with the day to day lettings business must be accredited in order for the organisation to become accredited.
- Directors and staff must attend the standard one-day development course, must be "fit and proper persons" and comply with the LLAS code of conduct. The development course is the same as all members attend and if an agent and their staff have attended a course previously they do not have to repeat the course.
- If the Agency has several offices or branches, an individual office or branch can be accredited.
- Agency must be a member of a professional body that is governed by a code of conduct, enforced by the professional body, such as NALS (National Approved Letting Scheme), ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents), ARMA (Association of Residential Management Agents), NAEA (National Association of Estate Agents), RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors), **BUT** agents who are not a member of a recognised organisation, can provide other evidence of competency.
- The Agency must have written contracts with their landlords.
- The Agency must agree to recommend all their landlords also become members of the LLAS.

On behalf of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme I would like to wish you all a prosperous and Happy New Year.

With the implementation of the Housing Act the spotlight has been on landlords, however there continues to be cases of incompetent or unscrupulous agents bringing the rented market into disrepute. The LLAS steering group has agreed to accredit agents in their own right and we would encourage all good agents to become accredited in their own right. The need to attend training is the same as for landlords, and the normal development course will satisfy this criteria. Agents who have already attended the standard development course do not have to attend another.

We would support all agents becoming member of a recognised trade body, however we do not make this a requirement of accreditation. However such agents body must satisfy us that they are competent and follow good practice. We will not be prescribing the information an agent would need to provide but would be looking at such things as how long have they operated, number of clients, insurance, complements etc.

Hope you enjoy this newsletter

Dave Princep – Chair of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Will 2007 be an Easier Year for Landlords

2006 saw the implementation of a raft of new legislation that kept private landlords very busy learning new procedures in what the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) is calling 'class of 2006'

However, 2007 looks to set to be legislation-free, apart from the implementation of mandatory tenancy deposits protection, and landlords and tenants can look forward to continued growth in both the supply and demand for good quality rental property

"If a landlord has worked through the class of 2006 in HMOs, (Houses of Multiple Occupation) EDMOs (Empty Dwelling Management Orders), HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System), DDA, (The Disability Discrimination Act) he should look forward to enjoying 2007" forecasts Adrian Turner, chief executive of ARLA.

However some change in the market may be expected. The summer saw many HMO landlords leaving the sector, with many buyers benefiting. Should this trend continue, 2007 could prove difficult for tenants on low income

EDMOs were widely misunderstood by the public and the press but they are designed to retrieve empty or derelict property to help lessen housing shortage.

HHSRS, Housing Health and Safety Rating System, arrived without disruption, although many councils continue to prepare and amend their policies and procedures on its use. It was introduced to ensure that all housing leaves the nineteenth century and enters the 21st century as safe and healthy accommodation.

2006 was rounded off with the arrival of DDA, the Disability Discrimination Act. So far this has arrived without causing disruption, undue cost or upheaval. The rumours were untrue and landlords will not necessarily have to alter physical features in their properties, like widening front doors or installing chairlifts when it would be uneconomic to do it.

Professional bodies serving the private sector will continue to plead with the government to licence all letting agents as the surest way of abolish the cowboys and rogues.

In 2007 Landlords do still have some leaning to do as all surveys show that they have yet to absorb the requirements of mandatory deposit protection. However they have until April to decide whether to comply through insured schemes or to use the custodial scheme, where deposits have to be banked with government appointed agency.

Despite the Housing Act 2004, both landlords and tenants should look forward to continued and steady growth in rental housing. ARLA research predicts an average growth in tenancies of 20-30,000 a year for the next ten years.

For tenants in 2007, buy to let should continue to increase the range and improve the standard of housing available, while young households will not be forced into owner occupation at a financially precarious time of life.

For further info www.themovechannel.com

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The Non Resident Landlord Scheme

By The letting Centre

The Non-resident Landlords Scheme is a scheme for taxing the UK rental income of non-resident landlords. The scheme requires UK letting agents to deduct Basic Rate tax from any rent they collect for non-resident landlords unless the agent has authority to pay the particular landlord his rental income gross (without deduction).

Non-resident landlords are persons (this term includes individuals, companies and trustees) who have UK rental income, and a "usual place of abode" outside the UK. Although the scheme refers to 'non-resident' landlords, it is **usual place of abode** and not **non-residence** that determines whether a landlord is within the scheme or not.

In the case of individuals, the Revenue regards an absence from the UK of 6 months or more as meaning that a person has a usual place of abode outside the UK. It is therefore possible for a person to be resident in the UK yet, for the purposes of the scheme, to have a usual place of abode outside the UK.

When working out the amount to tax, the letting agent can take off deductible expenses and the Inland Revenue will tell an agent not to deduct tax if non-resident landlords have successfully applied for approval to receive rents with no tax deducted. But even though the rent may be paid with no tax deducted, it remains liable to UK tax, so it must be included in any tax return the Inland Revenue sends them.

Non-residents who are eligible can apply at any time for approval to receive their UK rental income with no tax deducted. This includes applying before they have left the UK or before the letting has started. Applications should be made on form NRL1 which is available at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cnr/nrl1.pdf> or by phoning 0151 472 6208/9

However, the Inland Revenue may refuse approval if they are not satisfied that the information in the application is correct, or the non-resident landlord will comply with their UK tax obligations.

Letting Agents

Letting agents that have to operate the Non-resident Landlords Scheme must register with the CNR (on form NRL4), account quarterly for the tax due under the scheme and, by 5 July following the year ended 31 March, complete an annual information return, and

where they have deducted tax, give the non-resident landlord a tax deduction certificate NRL6.

The Audit and Pension Schemes Services office carry out audit inspections from time to time to check that letting agents have complied with their obligations under the Non-resident Landlords Scheme. Audit inspections will be conducted within a Code of Practice.

The inspection involves checking the records held by the agent. Tax under the Non-resident Landlords Scheme is deducted by letting agents. Letting agents must calculate the amount of tax for each quarter. They then need to apply the basic rate to arrive at the amount of tax due and then pay the tax to the Accounts Office using the quarterly payslip form N

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Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme UPDATE

The Government has awarded contracts to three companies to run tenancy deposit protection schemes from April 2007.

Computershare Investor Services plc will run the single custodial deposit scheme, with the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators providing the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Service.

The dispute Service Limited will run insurance – based scheme directed primarily at letting agents. It will also run the scheme's ADR service.

Tenancy Deposit Solutions Limited will run an insurance-based scheme sponsored by the National Landlords Association and administered by Hamilton Fraser Insurance, which will be directed primarily at landlords. The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators will be the principle provider of ADR to the scheme.

Tenancy Deposit Protection is a key consumer-protection measure, which will also introduce a simpler way of resolving deposit disputes and help raise standards in the private rented sector. Under the new scheme, alternative dispute resolution services will be free to use for both landlord and tenant for the first time.

For more info, www.communities.gov.uk

Property Tax: The Benefits of Holding Property in Joint Names

By David Kibel

This is the second of the series of articles on various aspects of the taxation of the ownership of residential property, written by David Kibel FCA.

In general terms there are potentially significant tax advantages from holding property in joint names, either with your spouse (or civil partner if appropriate), or perhaps with your children. The benefits relate not only to Income Tax, but also to Capital Gains Tax and even Inheritance Tax. This article deals with the Income Tax benefits; the other taxes will be covered in a subsequent report.

On a simplistic level, all joint owners are entitled to personal allowances and lower and basic rate tax bands. By way of example, if Mr P who is a 40% higher rate taxpayer, transfers some or all of his property portfolio into the name of his wife who has no other income, income tax of over £8,000 could be saved each year.

A word of caution. Although an interest in properties can be transferred between spouses or civil partners with no Capital Gains consequences, the transfer of a property to children is deemed to be a transfer at market value which could lead to Capital Gains Tax being paid by the transferring parent. Unless you have properties on which there is no potential CGT, you should therefore only include your children as property owners when initially buying the property.

Married couples or civil partners do not have to own their property jointly in equal shares in order to have the income shared equally between them. The tax rules state that income from jointly owned assets (not just properties) as between spouses is to be assessed equally irrespective of their actual shares owned. Thus a husband can own 99% and the wife 1%, but they will each be taxed on half the income (though they can elect otherwise if they want). For Capital Gains Tax, they will however be taxed on their actual proportionate ownership.

There is another interesting way to potentially reduce tax liabilities for jointly owned property. This comes from HM Revenue & Customs' own Property Income Manual which states that joint property owners (not husband and wives) are able to agree a different division of profits or losses to their actual ownership proportions, and the share to be assessed for tax purposes, must be the same as the share actually agreed. Thus if there is a written agreement as to how

joint property owners want the net profits from the property to be shared, the Revenue cannot overturn this. An extreme use of this might be for a parent to purchase a property putting up, say, 95% of the cost and for his children to put up the other 5%. They would have a written agreement that the property rents would go wholly to the children (and in such an event the rents should be paid into the children's bank account). This would mean that they would be taxed and not the parent, thus potentially saving large amounts of income tax. It would be a very good way of transferring income from the parent to children to help, for example, children whilst they are at university in a very tax efficient way. The parent would still own 95% of the property so that he would receive his full share of the property on sale

Summary

As can be seen, the owning of property in joint names can be very beneficial indeed from a tax point of view. It is normally best for such properties to be held as tenants in common rather than as joint tenants.

Obviously all cases are different, and readers should not act on the comments in this article without taking normal professional advice.

David Kibel is the Managing Director of Lawrence Grant Kibel Limited, Chartered Accountants, based in Stanmore, Greater London. He has many years experience of the taxation of property in the UK, and advises on this and on many other tax related issues.

He can be contacted at david@lawrencegrantkibel.co.uk or by telephone on 0208 416 3322.



Hillingdon Private Sector Landlords Forum

Date: Tuesday 13th February 2007

Time: 7.00pm-9.00pm

Venue: Committee Room 6, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1UW

Please note: No parking at the Civic Centre
Refreshments will be provided on the day.

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**Professional Landlords offered wholesale
loans**

Alliance & Leicester Commercial Bank has launched a wholesale buy-to let product aimed at professional landlords with large portfolios of predominantly residential investment properties.

The launch follows the bank's move into the retail buy to let market earlier in 2006 and is part of it's strategy to develop a specialist commercial property lending business encompassing both commercial and residential investment markets

Charles White, director of strategy and commercial property lending at Alliance 7 Leicester Commercial Bank explained "Our wholesale buy to let product is designed to offer flexibility and committed funding for professional landlords to facilitate active portfolio management. We are confident that the new product will meet a demand that is not currently widely catered for.

"Alliance & Leicester Commercial bank has developed significant expertise in the commercial property lending sector with the recruitment of experience lending team in both London and

a range of bespoke lending products across.

Alliance & Leicester Commercial Bank's wholesale buy to let product is designed for professional landlords with residential investment portfolios of more than five properties or a minimum market value of £1 million.

Landlords will be given a committed revolving credit facility secured on a portfolio of properties, providing the flexibility to: -

- Bid for new stock in time critical or competitive situation (such as auctions) with the certainty of committed funding and
- Acquire and refurbish un-tenanted properties pending re-letting

The wholesale buy to let product will allow a maximum portfolio loan -to value of 75%. However 100% finance on new purchases will be allowed where the existing loan to value against the existing portfolio permits. Landlords will also be able to redraw funds within facility limit where borrowing is reduced from capital reduction or property sales.

Dealing with Noise and Nuisance

Noise is one type of nuisance and is a common problem. Local authorities receive some 180,000 complaints a year relating to noise. Fortunately, there are remedies available to both landlords, occupiers and also local authorities to combat serious cases which constitute a nuisance to other residential occupiers.

What is Nuisance?

It is anything that interferes with other people's rights to the use and enjoyment of their home and community. Nuisance is often referred to as a private, public or statutory nuisance. Statutory nuisance is defined as a matter, which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance and specifically includes:

- Noise emitted from premises such as noisy parties
- Noise from vehicles, machinery or equipment in the street
- The state of premise such as
- The state of premise such as verminous conditions
- Accumulations or deposits such as rubbish dumping
- Smoke, gas, fumes or noise emitted from premises
- Nuisance arising from the place or manner in which an animal is kept (e.g. overcrowding)

Noise

Noise is probably the most common form of nuisance for landlords and their residential occupiers. Where the noise is caused by the tenant or a visitor of the tenant, the landlord will generally have authority to deal with the problem under the terms of the tenancy, bringing possession proceedings as the ultimate sanction. Where the noise is coming from a third party, either a neighbour's home, a local business or stationary vehicles and equipment in the street, the starting point is to talk directly to the person or company responsible for the noise and point out the problem. They may be carrying on normal domestic activities and unaware that their actions are causing a significant disturbance

Landlords Duties

A landlord has a duty to keep the structure, exterior and other parts in a state of repair, and to give his tenant's the benefit of quiet enjoyment of the property. Allowing premises to fall

into a poor condition prejudicial to health can constitute a statutory nuisance

Tenants Duties

A tenant is obliged to take care of the property. The tenant must also ensure that neither his activities nor those of his visitors should cause damage to the property or disturbance to those living nearby. If the tenant breaks this covenant, a landlord may rightfully apply to the court for possession. The Housing Act 1996 (Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in Scotland) increased the sanctions available against problem tenants, introducing a new discretionary ground; Ground 14 (Ground 15 in Scotland). The conduct need only be *likely* to cause annoyance to the landlord, other occupiers or even people engaged in lawful activity in the locality. The new provisions also apply to the conduct of the tenant's visitors

Starting formal Action

When informal action is not possible or fails, it may be necessary to consider formal action. The occupier affected can complain to the local authority about the noise problem. Complaints are normally addressed to the environmental health department. Local authorities have a duty to investigate complaints of noise emitting from premises and vehicles, and machinery or equipment in the street. Under sections 80 and 81 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, local authorities have a duty to deal with any noise which they consider to be a statutory nuisance. The Noise Act 1996 gives the local authority increased powers to combat anti-social behaviour including a standard for assessing noise and powers to seize the noise-making equipment

The Local authority will usually send an environmental health officer (EHO) to visit the property where the noise or other nuisance is taking place. If during the visit, the EHO witnesses the noise or is otherwise satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, they must serve an abatement notice on the person responsible for the nuisance. This may require the noise to be stopped altogether or limited to certain times of the day. Failure to comply with an abatement notice without reasonable cause is an offence which can carry a maximum of £5,000.00 with a further fine of up to £500.00 for each day on which the offence continues after conviction. Nuisance caused by commercial activity can attract higher fines. Local authorities have a

number of powers to help them abate a noise nuisance. They can gain entry to premises to enable them to abate the nuisance or they can gain access or entry to vehicles, machinery or equipment when the person responsible cannot be found (e.g. misfiring vehicle alarms).

Self Help

An occupier of premises suffering noise or other nuisance may seek abatement of that nuisance through the magistrates Court under s.82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This route is often useful if the local authority has failed to take action, and can act as a deterrent or threat of action. For the council to take action, an officer must first witness the actual nuisance, which due to the time or duration may be difficult

In order to bring action in this way, a person must first give three days notice of intention to bring proceedings. The Court is empowered, after a hearing to make an order requiring abatement of the nuisance and prohibiting its recurrence. For further advice on this procedure you are advised to contact the local authority's Environmental Health Department.

An occupier can also take civil action for noise nuisance at common law by seeking either an injunction to restrain the defendant from continuing the nuisance and/or by issuing a claim for damages or loss.

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For further info visit www.letlink.co.uk

Dealing with Pests

Who do you think is responsible for dealing with pests in rented properties?

What is a pest?

When talking about pests it is commonly assumed we only mean rats, mice and cockroaches but it can also include feral pigeons, feral cats, foxes and squirrels.

What can also be unclear to landlords or tenants is what legislation, if any, applies and whose responsibility it is to deal with these problems.

As a residential landlord, do you know what the law says about pest control? Are you responsible

for taking action, or is that left to your tenants? Do you understand how pests can affect public health and how they can be dealt with

The legislation most commonly used to deal with rats and mice is the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949; for cockroaches and other insect vermin there are powers under the Public Health Act 1936. Both laws, however, place duties on the owner or the occupier, whichever the local authority considers is most appropriate.

What factors do you think we should take into account in making our decision?

Hackney Council is currently carrying out research into this issue. Findings to date show that few residential landlords have a pest control policy on how to deal with infestations or other pest-related problems. Basic information is sometimes included in tenancy handbooks or lease agreements, but usually it's the tenant who has to deal with the problem regardless of the root cause

Our research is aimed at defining the law, establishing responsibility and explaining the options available for dealing with pests. We will also be proposing generic guidance for landlords and tenants, to help them assess who should be responsible for dealing with situations when they happen. It will also explain how to treat a problem, how to take effective preventative measures or control the risk of further incidents and how to avoid legal action.

If you would like to contribute to our research and help shape future pest control guidance and policy, we would like to hear your views. Any input from private landlords or residential social landlords would be invaluable in compiling guidance to help landlords and tenants resolve any pest problems at an early stage.

To share your views please contact Jonathan Ruder at:

Private Sector Housing Officer, Hackney Council,
Stoke Newington Municipal Offices, Church Street,
N16 0JR or email: jonathan.ruder@hackney.gov.uk
or phone 020 8356 4762 or fax 020 8356 4758.

Hackneys Private Sector Landlords Forum

Date: 15th Feb 2007

Time: 2pm - 5pm

Venue: The Old Baths Eastway, 80 Eastway,
Hackney E9 5JH

Tessa Shepperson's Landlord FAQ: How can I increase the Rent

Contact Tessa with any Landlord queries that you have, headed 'LLAS FAQ'

For a rent increase to be valid, you need to be sure that you have followed the correct procedure. Otherwise your tenant will be entitled to continue to pay the old rent and any arrears claims based on the new rent, will fail. In particular, unless your tenant agrees, you cannot increase the rent unilaterally by just sending the tenant a letter telling him your proposed new rent.

The main methods of increasing rent are as follows:

For assured and assured shorthold tenancies:

1. **By agreement**, This is usually done by the tenant signing a new tenancy agreement (or tenancy renewal form) giving the new increased rent. However it can also be done by the tenant signing another document such as a letter, confirming that he agrees to the new rent. From the landlord's point of view, this is probably the best way of increasing the rent, as it cannot be challenged.

2. By way of a **rent review clause** in the tenancy agreement. The clause must comply with the provisions of the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999, in particular increase must be referable to something independent such as the retail price index. A clause effectively allowing the landlord or his agent to increase the rent, as they please will be void. Also clauses allowing very large increases in rent will also be void. If rent is increase exactly, the increase may not be valid.

3. By the landlord serving the prescribed **notice of rent increase** on the tenant. This has to be in the proper form and be properly filled in. This form can only be used after any fixed term has ended, and only once every twelve months. Be careful to use an up to date form as it has been amended several times during the past few years. Note that the tenant has the right to refer the rent to the Rent Assessment Committee for review during the first six months after service of the notice on him.

For Rent Act Tenancies

'If a fair rent' has been registered, then the landlord can apply every two years to the Rent Officer for a new fair rent to be registered. The only exception to this is if the property has been substantially

improved, in which case he can apply within the two-year period for a new 'fair rent' If no fair rent is has been registered, then rent can be increased by agreement, however, if an application is ever made for a 'fair rent' to be registered, the rent will be subject to the 'fair rent' regime after that. Note that rent increases are capped under a complicated formula set out in The Rent Acts (Maximum Fair Rent) Order 1999.

For any other type of tenancy (e.g. common law tenancies) rent can only be increased by agreement or by a rent review clause in the tenancy

For more information on these proposals visit www.law-reform.co.uk

Accredited Landlords can claim **20% discount** off their first year's membership of Landlord-Law (not to be combined with any other offer). For further info write "LLAS Discount" in the subject box.



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Tessa Shepperson is a solicitor and author, and runs the popular Landlord-Law site at www.landlordlaw.co.uk

The Launch of Lewisham New Housing Assistance Policy

On 22 November the Housing Grants team, Lewisham Council, officially launched its new Housing Assistance Policy. Cllr Susan Wise, was joined by residents who have benefited from assistance and those who participated in last year's Private Sector Housing consultation exercise (which fed into the creation of the new policy), voluntary groups and Council Officers.

The new policy brings together a package of assistance for homeowners, private tenants (who have a repairing obligation) and private landlords who are struggling to repair their homes and maintain them to a 'Decent' standard. The Government's Decent Homes standard, which is most commonly associated with social housing, also applies to private housing occupied by vulnerable households. A 'decent' home is basically one which is in a good state of repair, dry, warm, safe and secure.

The policy is not intended as a resource for people wanting to decorate or make improvements to their homes; it is not about increasing the value of homes but making homes 'Decent'.

The assistance available ranges from grants and interest free loans provided by the Council to: bring an empty property back into use; bring a property up to the Decent Homes standard or the standard required for a HMO license and install a solar water heating system.

Assisting responsible private landlords to ensure that privately rented housing is of a good standard and available to benefit claimants, is a useful way of ensuring that houses are not left empty or in a poor state of repair.



To find out more or to see if you may be eligible to help, visit www.lewisham.gov.uk/housingassistance , or contact the Housing Grants team on 020 8314 6622 or email housingassistance@lewisham.gov.uk

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CPD Course on how to lawfully Re-possess your property without a Solicitor

Date: Wednesday 7 March 2007

Time: 9.30 am - 4.30 pm

Venue: The Old Baths Eastway, 80 Eastway, Hackney E9 5JH

Course fees £127.00 per person, for accredited landlords discounted rate of £87.00

Book online at

www.londonlandlords.org.uk

For further info contact Wendy on **01258 858 585**

One of the most common UK poison is in your home today

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, toxic gas that has the molecular formula CO. The molecule consists of a carbon atom that is triple bonded to an oxygen atom. Carbon Monoxide is produced by the incomplete combustion of the fossil fuels, gas, oil, coal and wood used in boilers, engines, oil burners, gas fires, water heaters, solid fuel appliances and open fires.

Carbon Monoxide is a commercially important chemical. It is also formed in many chemical reactions. And in the thermal or incomplete decomposition of many organic materials.

Dangerous amounts of CO can accumulate when as a result of poor insulation, poor maintenance or failure or damage to an appliance in service, the fuel is not burned properly, or when rooms are poorly ventilated and Carbon Monoxide is unable to escape.

Having no smell, taste or colour in today's world of improved insulation and double glazing it has become increasingly important to have good ventilation, maintain all appliances regular and to have absolutely reliable detector alarms installed giving both a visual and audible warning immediately there is a build up of CO to dangerous levels.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Symptoms

Mild carbon monoxide poisoning causes headache, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, and poor coordination. Most people who develop mild carbon monoxide poisoning recover quickly when moved into fresh air. Moderate or severe carbon monoxide poisoning causes confusion, unconsciousness, chest pain, shortness of breath, and coma. Thus, most victims are not able to move themselves and must be rescued. Severe poisoning is often fatal. Rarely, weeks after apparent recovery from severe carbon monoxide poisoning, symptoms such as memory loss, poor coordination, and uncontrollable loss of urine (which are referred to as delayed neuropsychiatric symptoms) develop.

Carbon monoxide is dangerous because a person may not recognize drowsiness as a symptom of poisoning.

Consequently, someone with mild poisoning can go to sleep and continue to breathe the carbon monoxide until severe poisoning or death occurs. Some people with long-standing, mild carbon monoxide poisoning caused by furnaces or heaters may mistake their symptoms for other conditions, such as the flu or other viral infections.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is diagnosed by measuring the level of carbon monoxide in the blood.

Know the symptoms of CO poisoning.

At moderate levels, you or your family can get severe headaches, become dizzy, mentally confused, nauseated, or faint. You can even die if these levels persist for a long time. Low levels can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on your health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause.

Carbon Monoxide poisons by entering the lungs via the normal breathing mechanism and displacing oxygen from the bloodstream. Interruption of the normal supply of oxygen puts at risk the functions of the heart, brain and other vital functions of the body.

Ten Steps to Carbon Monoxide Safety

1. Check the flame colour of your appliances, if its orange you do have a problem. However, Blue does not necessarily mean its safe. Get your appliances checked annually and get a detector if unsure. You would not drive your car without an MOT. Doing the same for your home is common sense as you spend most of your time there.

2. Check the flue, is it blocked? Do you have creeping plants growing up your walls? Do you have birds nesting in your flue? Completely remove these obstructions from the flue area and fit a guard to stop any birds nesting. Get your flue checked, Is it drawing properly? Was it fitted correctly? in the first place?

3. Do you have a horizontal gas grill? They can be particularly hazardous. Is yours working correctly? Older appliances can be problematic, use the electric toaster instead. Get your cooker checked.

4. Is there adequate ventilation? Check your airbricks or trickle vents. Have you had double-glazing fitted? If the appliances in your home do not have enough air they will produce carbon monoxide

5. When were your appliances checked? Do it every year, don't leave it to chance. Remember the engineer can only check the conditions on the day that he attends, get protection year round, fit a CO detector with a low level alarm,

6. Do you suffer from unexplained illnesses, fatigue, muscle pains, upset stomach, lethargy, Dizziness, headaches. Go to your doctor and get a CohB test, go directly from your , don't go elsewhere as the CO in your blood will deplete and may not be picked up

7. Are you a Landlord? The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 place a duty on landlords to make sure that appliances and flues are kept in good order and checked for safety at least once every 12 months. Landlords must also keep a record of previous safety checks and issue the current record to the tenant.

8. Are you a tenant Tenants? Tenants moving into new accommodation should:

- Demand to see a copy of the current record of safetychecks carried out.
- Ensure that safety checks were carried by a CORGI registered engineer.
- Not use any gas appliances, which they think may be unsafe.
- Not attempt do-it-yourself work on appliances

9. We all feel better on holiday, If you feel especially invigorated it may be that you have been removed from the source of the poison. If your health goes into decline on your return it may be that it's not just post holiday blues, you may be suffering the ill effects from being poisoned from carbon monoxide in your home.

10. The most important thing that you can do to protect yourself and your family from the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning is to get a carbon monoxide detector alarm with low level indicator. If you fit a a detector you can at least be sure, having carried out all the above safety checks that you are protected.

How to spot a property Hotspot

Since the Spanish property boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s, many people in the UK have been on the look-out for a holiday home in the sun. In realising a considerable amount of equity in their property, they appeared to become property investment specialists over-night. The only problem is that effective **property investment** requires much more than striking it lucky in one market. It's about calculating risks, estimating growth and return.

Let me put it this way: when you view a house or apartment that you are considering buying, do you see the nice south-facing balcony and the walls painted in your favourite colour? Or do you visualise a balance sheet weighing up expenses against income?

Clearly, you must take factors such as decor into account because, although you are buying for investment, you will need to be able to sell on at a profit to someone who has another use for the property. But you need to look at every aspect of the investment, weighing up the pros and cons, the profit and loss, the income and expenditure. No investment is without its weaknesses, but you must be able to evaluate these so that you can make a measured judgement.

The most successful investors will only view the property for a few minutes before deciding to proceed. The reason is that they had already satisfied 95 per cent of their requirements through extensive research before visiting

So, where to buy? This is the question that everyone wants answering. ore visiting.

The fact is, there is no one single location or country but a range which offers different pros and cons

Tips on how to decide on which country and location to invest in..

1. Budget. Many people will tell you that location is the most important aspect. Well, if you can't afford a property, then there's certainly no use looking at it. If a location offers lower-priced property, it opens up the market to other buyers who may want to buy with the small amount of equity they have in their current residence.

2. Tourism. This is the key 'driver' for many markets. Why would people want to visit this country in the first place? Obviously, every country has a capital city, but not all have impressive golf courses, exciting ski slopes, spectacular coast-lines and so on. Choose a location which has wide appeal. Also, bear in mind that some countries have longer letting or tourism seasons than others.

3. Growth. What is likely to happen in the next five to ten years that could have an adverse or beneficial effect on property?

War and political conflict lead to widespread uncertainty and will cause property prices to fall. On the other hand, EU accession, Olympic bids, hosting major events or new tourist attractions will lead to increased investment and higher property prices. It is important to look at the country as a whole, and not just the property market. What state is the local economy in? Is there room for further growth? Find the answers to these questions.

4. Rationale. Why are you buying? In an emerging market, it's difficult to accurately predict the money that will come in from rental income. People should only invest in emerging markets in order to appreciate their capital, not for short-term gain.

5. Location. Every country has good areas to invest in, and bad areas to invest in. Buying a house 20 kilometres from the coast just because it's cheaper is not necessarily a good investment,

You need to be able to sell it on, and it must have appeal to a wide audience.

Property investment is one of the safest and most profitable ways of making money. Others investment mechanisms range from those which offer little return to ones which are pure gambles. Property investment offers a happy medium and an investment that can bring huge gains, if you do your homework.

Michael Johns is Managing Director of The Right Move Abroad, who specialise in investment in emerging markets; visit their website: <http://www.therightmoveabroad.com>

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Islington Landlord & Tenant Forum

Date: Wednesday 21 March 2007

Time: 6pm to 8pm

Venue: Islington Town Hall, N1

Food and refreshments provided

Advertising Opportunities with LLAS

LLAS is giving its readers the opportunity to advertise in future edition of the newsletters with special rates for accredited landlords and agents. For more info

Email: LLAS@camden.gov.uk or

Tel: 020 7974 1970

UK set to be Super Millionaire Land

While most of us simply dream about living a million dollar lifestyle, a new report predicts that by 2016 the dream will be a reality for a quarter of households in the UK.

Barclays Wealth Insights, a new quarterly report written by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) on behalf of the wealth management arm of Barclays, says that households in the UK with more than \$1 million (£526,900) in property, land, savings and investments will grow to 26% in the next 10 years.

This significant growth of aggregate wealth will outstrip any other G7 economy, making the UK home to the highest concentration of \$1 million households around the world. BY comparison, it is predicted that global powerhouse like the US and Japan will have 16% & 22% in the numbers of million-dollar household.

Factors that are driving UK wealth creation include a strong property market, and an increasing entrepreneurial culture that encourages individuals from all walks of life to take risks as they strive for business success.

This means that the typical wealthy individual in the UK will increasingly shift from the stereotype of inherited wealth.

Mark Kibblewhite, managing director of Barclays Wealth's private banking division explained: " The UK wealth explosion is good news for individuals, businesses and the economy alike. The UK is full of vibrant, dynamic and innovative individuals and the predicted growth of wealth is testament to their astute business sense and our increasingly stimulating entrepreneurial culture.

Tips to get your finances in shape

Your finances can get a financial workout in 2007 and needn't be time consuming or complicated - a few simple steps can ensure that your money goes further over the next twelve months

- Switch your current account to market leading rate account where regular savings transferred can earn 12%

- Switch to online banking. Research by A&L has already highlighted how nearly half of Brits (44%) who bank online feel they are fully in control of their finances

- Set up a regular direct debit to a market-leading savings account and watch your money grow Research shows that the majority of people consider £50 to £99 is a realistic amount to save each month.

- So for example, a person saving £50 a month could get a return of £672 after 12 months. A further 15% believe they could save £250 or even more a month. Saving £250 a month would produce a total nest egg of £3,195 gross

For further info www.themovechannel.com

Stand out...

from the page when you buy Loot's special ad styles for accredited landlords. It's the same price as a standard ad in Loot with up to 280 characters (that's letters and spaces) and also includes a photo of your property.

LLAS branding promotes your status as an accredited landlord and informs readers that you have been recognised under the scheme.



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LLAS Power Ad

1 week in print & 2 weeks online **£35**
 2 weeks in print & 2 weeks online **£60**
 4 weeks in print & 4 weeks online **£95**

To claim your LLAS style ad,

**Call Loot on
08700 43 43 43**

**Mention you are an LLAS accredited landlord,
then quote your LLAS reference number.
There is no extra charge for this service.**

Loot



loot.com

This offer is only available for members of the London Landlord Accreditation scheme

HOMEFINDERS

WWW.HOMEFINDERS-UK.COM



Happy New Year From Homefinders!

To celebrate, we would like to offer all our customers the following gifts for a prosperous new year. If you are looking to let or sell your property, we can offer:-

- **Reduced commission - 0.75% + VAT** - for all properties sold on a sole agency agreement through Homefinders before the end of February 2007
- **Free rental insurance and legal costs** for the first six months for all properties let through Homefinders in 2007 to private tenants
- **Free Plumbing, Drainage and Electricity** let through Homefinders in 2007 cover for breakdowns on your property for six months for all properties let through Homefinders in 2007
- **3 Year Council Leases available** with **GUARANTEED RENT** or other viable council schemes to make the most from your investment

To take advantage of these generous offers, call now:-

Homefinders Sales – 020 8533 6461

Homefinders Leasing / Letting – 020 7033 0311 / 020 85336461



Reits are no substitute for Property Investing

Real Estate Investment Trusts will not provide a substitute for investing in property, according to F&C investments.

Writing in their news brief, fund manager Ian McBryde said "Reits are an important development in the property market and will widen the investors base for property" However, it does not itself create value, although it does have significant tax advantage".

McBryde argues that Reits are typically more volatile than direct property investment and are affected by changes in the equity market as well as the property market.

This means that Reits are a good way to gain exposure to property, pricing will not always fully reflect trends in the value of the underlying assets

only direct investment in property can do this. However, there is no doubt that many UK investors will respond to some of the positive features of Reits," he said.

Camden Council Private Sector Landlord Forum

The Camden Council Landlords Forum has been established to discuss and provide information on issues that affect you as a Landlord. The forum takes place three times a year. 2007 dates are as follows:

Wednesday 28th March 2007

Thursday 5th July 2007

Thursday 15th November 2007

Time and venue to be arranged

To express your interest please

Email: env.health@camden.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7974 2090

Letter to The Environmental Health Team, LB of Camden, Town Hall, Argyll St. WC1H 8EQ

FIRE, THE LAW AND LANDLORDS

From 1st October 2006, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2005, came into force. This replaced all previous legislation for landlords with a single order. Fire certificates are no longer issued.

The Order places responsibility for compliance solely on the person responsible for the premises, known as the *Responsible Person*. This is the person who owns the premises or business (e.g. the landlord) or the person with control over the premises (e.g. the managing agent), business or activity. Where two or more responsible persons share responsibility, (e.g. tenant / landlord, multiple tenancy building or adjacent premises) the responsible persons must share information and work together to comply with the order.

The Order makes specific requirements for fire precautionary matters to protect the *Relevant Person*. This can be anyone who is legally on the premises (e.g. the tenant, cleaners etc) or anyone who is not on the premises but who may be affected by a fire in the premises. The term "premises" refers to any shared areas or common parts of the building e.g. staircases, corridors and shared facilities such as the fire alarm.

ACTION REQUIRED BY THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON

Where the Order applies to your premises, as the Responsible Person, you must carry out a Fire Risk Assessment and make an Emergency Plan. The Fire Risk Assessment is the key component of the Order. It must be reviewed regularly and amended when necessary.

A Fire Risk Assessment should be a structured and systematic examination of the premises to identify the hazards from fire. Once identified, you must then decide if a hazard is significant, who is at risk and whether the existing fire precautions are adequate so that the risk associated with the hazard is acceptably low. If the existing fire precautions are not adequate

you must take additional action to minimise the risk either by removing or reducing the hazard or by providing adequate control measures.

The Fire Risk Assessment must be formally recorded if the responsible person employs five or more people, the premises are licensed or the inspector requires it.

The Fire Risk Assessment must be tailored to the particular premises under consideration and must be carried out by a Competent Person. This can be anyone appointed by the Responsible Person and could be anyone from a company fire warden to a fire alarm service engineer. They may be directly employed or a subcontractor but the important word is competent.

You must also make an *Emergency Plan* to outline the action that your tenants, employees and other people in the premises should take in the event of a fire. The Emergency Plan may need to be recorded (see below); if so, it should be kept in the premises, be available to your tenants and employees and the employees' representatives (where appointed) and form the basis of the training and instruction you provide. In drawing up the *Emergency Plan*, you need to take the results of your risk assessment into account.

All equipment provided for the purpose of fire safety or for the use or protection of firefighters must be maintained and kept in good order.

The guides are available from:

Fire Safety Guides

PO Box 236

Wetherby

LS23 7NB

Tel: 0870 830 7099

They can be ordered online from

<http://shop.communities.gov.uk/DCLGShop/>

Useful links and contacts

Department for Communities & Local Government

The Department for Communities & Local Government is responsible for policy on housing, planning, regional and local government and the fire service.

<http://www.communities.co.uk>

Direct.gov.uk

Advice for tenants and landlords on various issues including tax and other general housing advice

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/HomeAndCommunity/fs/en>

Residential Landlord

Free information and advice for landlords and property investors

<http://www.residentiallandlord.co.uk/>

National Landlords Association

Information and advice for residential landlords operating in the private rented sector throughout the country

<http://www.landlords.org.uk/>

Landlord Zone

Information for landlords, tenants & agents in the rental property

<http://www.landlordzone.co.uk/>

National Federation of Residential Landlords (NFRL)

The largest professional landlords organisation recognised by the government in the UK. The NFRL represents and protects the interests of private residential landlords across the whole of the UK

<http://www.nfrl.org.uk/homepage.htm>

Accreditation Network UK (ANUK)

ANUK is a network of professionals and organisations that promotes accreditation in private rented residential accommodation.

<http://www.anuk.org.uk/>

The Southern Private Landlords Association (SPLA)

The SPLA seeks to protect and promote the interests of private residential landlords and encourages the supply of good quality accommodation and professional standards of management.

<http://www.spla.co.uk>

Landlords UK

Links, guides, forums and information

<http://www.landlords-uk.net/>

Landlord Law

Straightforward, fast and affordable legal advice for Landlords and Tenants www.landlordlaw.co.uk

London Landlord Accreditation Scheme development

Course dates

Monday 22 January 2007	Southampton
Wednesday 24 January 2007	Brent
Tuesday 30 January 2007	Wandsworth
Wednesday 31 January 2007	Redbridge
Thursday 1 February 2007	RBKC
Thursday 8 February 2007	Islington
Wednesday 14 February 2007	Haringey
Wednesday 21 February 2007	Redbridge
Thursday 22 February 2007	Hillingdon
Friday 23 February 2007	Tower Hamlets
Monday 26 February 2007	Camden
Wednesday 28 February 2007	Wandsworth
Thursday 8 March 2007	Islington
Tuesday 13 March 2007	Haringey
Wednesday 14 March 2007	Hackney
Thursday 15 March 2007	Hillingdon
Tuesday 20 March 2007	Westminster
Wednesday 21 March 2007	Redbridge
Thursday 22 March 2007	Brent
Wednesday 28 March 2007	Wandsworth
Thursday 29 March 2007	Camden
Thursday 5 April 2007	Islington
Thursday 12 April 2007	RBKC
Tuesday 17 April 2007	Hillingdon
Wednesday 25 April 2007	Redbridge
Thursday 26 April 2007	Camden
Monday 30 April 2007	Wandsworth

The LLAS aims to assist good landlords to operate successful businesses. An important element of the scheme is the development course, which will give you with information on how to avoid the pitfall and problems of operating a rental business and should problems occur how best to sort them out. The scheme is recognised across London and supported by the SPLA. If you would like to attend a development session and become accredited please visit www.londonlandlords.org.uk and book online or call 020 7974 1970 for paper application

The current course is £94.00 but if you book and pay online you pay a discounted rate of £74.90