

accreditation news

September 2004



the **newsletter** for private landlords
in the Bury area, produced by the
Bury Landlord Accreditation Scheme



First Property Investor Show in the north is a huge success

As a result of the success of the Property Investor Show in London, Homebuyers UK launched their first show in the North on 18 to 20 June at GMEX Manchester. Over the three days, the show attracted 5,750 visitors, many of whom were either already local landlords or were looking to invest in the buy-to-let market.

Bury shared an "accreditation village" (right) with seven other local authorities from around the region, all of which were promoting the benefits of accreditation scheme membership.

A total of 224 visitors left their contact details with the team, including over 30 landlords operating in the Bury area. Hundreds of people stopped for a chat and took away information packs. The event provided us with a great opportunity to talk to investors on a one to one basis and as a result, we were able to get valuable information on current issues that affect today's landlord.

As well as making direct contact with local landlords, we were able to set up links with other organisations, so that we can offer better advice and support to our members. We look forward to building on the success of this years show and make next years an even bigger, better event.



The accreditation village proved very popular

Accreditation scheme keeps growing!

Bury Landlord Accreditation Scheme now has 50 accredited properties within the East Bury area, with many more in the pipeline. Interest for the scheme continues to grow as landlords become aware of the many benefits.

Landlord Accreditation offers:

- Referencing for prospective tenants
- Improved links with Housing Benefits

- A comprehensive information pack
- Access to funding for property improvements
- A marketing service for your properties
- Advice and information on tenancy management issues
- Discounts on goods and services

If you have not already received your information pack, or want more information, contact Babette Howard on 01204 365711 or email her at b.howard@mmhg.org.uk

Top tips for landlords

Before you start letting a property, make sure that you have at least a basic knowledge of the legal requirements of being a residential landlord

● Wherever possible, ensure that you obtain references for all prospective tenants. If you are a member of the accreditation scheme, you can get a reference for current or previous tenants of Bury Metro or local housing associations via your Accreditation Co-ordinator, provided that you get written permission from the prospective tenants.



ACORN HOUSE
150 Willow Street, Bury, BL9 7PS



'Acorn House is an Advice Centre in the Heart of East Bury'

Located in the Heart of East Bury, Acorn House is a Centre for information regarding regeneration within the East Bury area. More generally Acorn House staff are here to help with any enquiries you may have, particularly those around regeneration and council services. The Advice Assistants based here will do their best to help. If we are unable to provide you with an immediate answer, we will identify (if possible) where your questions can be answered

Specific Advice on:

- Regeneration
- Pensioners Service
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Job Centre
- Dog Wardens
- GM Police
- Domestic Violence
- Housing
- Childcare
- Employment Training

And more....

The Advice Assistants are your first point of contact

We also hold advice and guidance sessions with specialist organisations helping you to get the right advice and assistance

Please call into Acorn House during the opening hours or alternatively telephone us for an Information leaflet with dates and times of the events being held

We will strive to help you with any enquiry you may have

**For further information
Contact the Advice Assistants on
0161 253 6348**



OPENING TIMES	
MONDAY	9.30am - 4.30pm
TUESDAY	2.00pm - 5.00pm
WEDNESDAY	9.30am - 4.30pm
THURSDAY	9.30am - 4.30pm
FRIDAY	9.30am - 4.00pm

- Make sure that your property is well maintained and that any furniture you supply complies with the relevant legislation.
- A CORGI registered plumber must inspect any gas appliances in the property annually and a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate should be given to your tenant each year.
- Be realistic about the rent you charge. It is better to have a tenant in the property paying a reasonable rent than to have the property standing empty.
- Make sure that you have a proper form of tenancy agreement that complies with current legislation.
- At the start of the tenancy, use a proper written inventory to go through both the conditions and contents of the property with your tenant. This can prevent arguments about deductions from deposits when the tenant leaves.
- If your tenant falls into arrears and you are unable either to make contact with them or reach a satisfactory repayment plan, you can issue a notice seeking possession on ground 8.
- If you suspect that your tenant has abandoned the property, be very careful about re-entering without a court order. Unlawful eviction is a criminal offence and can also make you liable in the civil courts for damages.
- As a good landlord with well managed and maintained properties, you will not only attract good tenants, but you will also be in a much better position to enforce your rights should you have to.

Reducing the problem of nuisance neighbours

Anti-social behaviour can seriously affect the quality of life in a community and can cost you a great deal in terms of possible damage to your property and loss of goodwill from local residents.

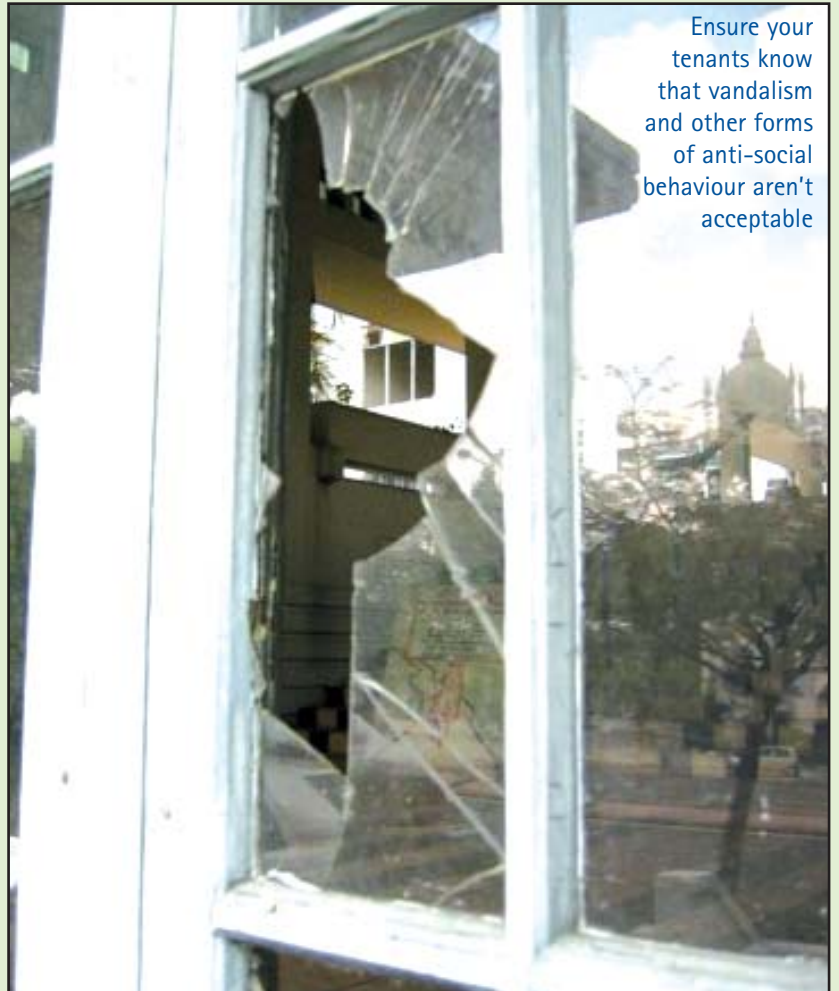
Behaviour such as drug dealing, racial harassment and physical violence are criminal offences, but anti-social behaviour can also include loud music, barking dogs, verbal abuse or vandalism, which still has a detrimental effect on neighbours.

If your tenant is causing a serious nuisance, they could find themselves in jail!

As a preventative measure, you can make sure that your Tenancy Agreement is strong and clearly worded; making it crystal clear that anti-social behaviour is not acceptable. You can download a suitable agreement from the Residential Landlords Association: www.rla.org.uk

You should leave tenants in no doubt that nuisance behaviour whether by them or their children may lead to the loss of their home.

You or your tenants can contact the Accreditation Co-ordinator for a special form to report incidences of anti-social behaviour, or you can telephone Bury's Community Safety Team on 0161 253 5287 for further help and advice.



Ensure your tenants know that vandalism and other forms of anti-social behaviour aren't acceptable

Great discounts for scheme members!

BLAS and Travis Perkins are pleased to introduce the 'Accredited Landlords Privilege Scheme'. The scheme includes a comprehensive pricing structure specially created for the needs of the private landlord from one of the largest suppliers of timber and building materials in the country.

Travis Perkins can offer you savings on more than 100,000 product lines from over 500 branches nationwide including: **building materials; plumbing and heating; timber and joinery; decorating; bathrooms; tool hire and equipment; kitchens; landscaping products; ironmongery and sheet materials.**

In addition to discounted prices, you can take advantage of free local delivery (within 25 miles of the branch) and their Call Collect service.

How to join

Membership will only be granted to accreditation scheme members. To apply, simply complete the application form provided by your Accreditation Co-ordinator. Once your application has been processed, you will receive a confirmation letter with an accreditation membership number. You can then begin to enjoy all the above benefits straight away.

Important changes to building regulations

New electrical safety requirements will help combat the 750 injuries per year attributed to unsafe installations

According to Government statistics, around 10 people die and about 750 are seriously injured every year because of unsafe electrical installations in their homes.

To combat this problem, the Government is to include electrical safety requirements in the Building Regulations, the aim being to improve the design, installation, inspection and testing of electrical installations in properties when the installations are being newly built, extended or altered.

The changes include:

A new requirement, 'Requirement P' is to be added to Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations. Minor works on fixed electrical installations will need to be notified.

A new Approved Document P has been published and includes:

- Guidance on design, installation, inspection and testing of electrical installations.
 - Guidance on types of electrical work that would not normally need to be notified to building control.
 - Appendices that contain illustrations of the sort of electrical services commonly required in homes, examples of model electrical installation certificates and illustrations of what equipment may be encountered when work is carried out to older electrical installations.
- The new Part P redefines building work to include electrical work on certain types of



fixed electrical installations in dwellings:

"Fixed electrical installations in dwellings shall be suitably designed, installed, inspected and tested so as to provide reasonable protection against their being the source of a fire or a cause of injury to persons."

Failure to comply will be a criminal offence and local authorities will have the power to require the removal or alteration of the work that does not comply.

Building control bodies will be authorised to accept certificates of compliance (i.e. Electrical Installation Certificates) issued by 'Competent Firms' or alternatively carry out inspections themselves. Appropriately

approved electrical contractors will be able to self-certify that their work meets the requirements of the Building Regulations and will need to supply an Electrical Installation Certificate signed by a competent person. It is likely that the Government will define "Competent Firms" as those registered with the NICEIC Approved Contractor Scheme and the Electrotechnical Assessment Scheme.

Approved Document P will take effect on 1 January 2005.

For more information on these new proposals, visit the ODPM website www.odpm.gov.uk and click on Building Regulations.

Get in touch...

If you need any advice or information, we're only a stamp, click or call away!

Babette Howard

Accreditation Co-ordinator
Manchester Methodist Housing Association
Bayley House
St George's Square
Bolton BL1 2HB

Tel: 01204 365711
Email: b.howard@mmhg.org.uk
Website: www.mmhg.org.uk/burylas

Lisa Barnes

Environmental Health Officer
Housing Standards Team, Environmental Services
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Textile Hall
Manchester Road, Bury BL9 0DG

Tel: 0161 253 5000
Email: l.barnes@bury.gov.uk
Website: www.bury.gov.uk