

# Landlord Registration – Service Update

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Sector)



## Changes to service due to COVID-19

- The service made some changes to how landlords would be able to contact the team due to all staff working from home at the start of the pandemic.
- The best way to contact the service is by emailing [landlordregistration@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:landlordregistration@westlothian.gov.uk) and a call will be arranged.
- Face to Face appointments will be considered on a case by case basis, when the service does return to full service. Face advice and support will be appointment only, there will be no drop in options available.
- Should a landlord wish to meet with a member of the Landlord Registration Team a virtual call can be scheduled to provide advice and support.
- Any changes to the service will be issued to landlords regularly.

# Evictions

- The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 introducing powers and measures to help protect the public, maintain essential public services and support the economy during COVID-19
- All grounds are currently discretionary and none mandatory, It is illegal to remove a tenant without an Eviction Order from the First Tier Tribunal (Housing and Property) Chamber unless that tenant willingly moves after being given notice.
- The Housing Options Team will require that an Eviction Order is granted by the Tribunal.
- The Council are unable to provide tenants with advice on notice's or evictions nor can we advise landlords. Independent legal advice should be sought.

# Website Update

- We have updated our website with useful information, which covers all topics relating to private renting.
- The layout has been changed to ensure that it is easier to navigate and easy to find the information you require.
- The website will be update regularly to reflect any changes to legislation, regulations and updates from the Scottish Government.
- All training and forum presentations will be on the website, along with the Private Landlord Newsletter.

# Inspections and Repairs

- Tenants are still able to report issues regarding repairs within their property. The service will give advice on the applicable standards and will be using photo/video evidence where possible to diagnose the property condition/repair against these standards.
- The Technical Officer will look at each case and will determine if an inspection is required to assess if the property meets the Repairing Standard.
- Since the beginning of January 2021 there has been 55 cases of properties failing the Repairing Standard. In 2020 there was 50.

## An indication of the types of cases received within the first half of 2021.

Leak	44.00%
Dampness	20.00%
Heating Problems	12.00%
Wear and Tear	8.00%
Tenant Damage	4.00%
External Grounds	8.00%
Third party damage	4.00%

# Scottish Government Consultation

The Scottish Government has launched a new consultation on the impact of Covid-19 legislation they introduced in 2020. This consultation will run until 9 November 2021.

The consultation seeks views on issues that have occurred as a result of the emergency COVID-19 legislation introduced during the pandemic - for landlords, this meant changes to the grounds on which they could evict tenants with rent arrears.

For the private rented sector, the consultation is seeking views specifically on the discretionary grounds for pre-action requirements and for eviction proceedings where tenants have been unable to pay rent. It is important that landlords provide their input to inform future decisions on this legislation, and what difficulties/benefits this has brought to the sector and to landlords themselves.

More information on the consultation and to have your say, go to the [Scottish Government website](#).

# Landlord Registration Survey

- In December 2020 we conducted a survey with all registered landlords in West Lothian to ascertain their satisfaction with the Landlord Registration Service.
- At the time the survey closed there was 5137 registered landlord and in total 5060 responses were received. A 10.9% return.
- The responses showed that an overall majority of landlords were satisfied with the service.
- The responses appeared to show there was an overall lack of knowledge to the services the team provide.
- Various actions were set and implemented as a response to the survey.
- A list of these were issued, however will be included within our newsletter which will be issued at the start of September 2021.

# Scottish wide research on the private rented sector

Research is being undertaken across Scotland to understand the impacts of changes that have been made to the private rented tenancy regime in Scotland.

Whether you have 1 property or 500, the researchers at Indigo House are interested in what you think. The research is looking at the impact of the PRT, and the Coronavirus emergency legislation on landlords and tenants.

If you are interested, please go to <https://rentbetter.indigohousegroup.com/call-for-landlords-and-letting-agents/>

Questions?