

# **Solihull Private Landlords Forum Newsletter**

**- Winter 2012 -**

## **Do you have tenants aged 25 to 34?**

**The Shared Accommodation Rate has previously applied to single people aged under 25 on Housing Benefit in the private rented sector. These claimants are restricted to the rate for a single room in a shared house, rather than the higher rate for a self contained one bedroom property. From January 2012, the Government has extended the Shared Accommodation Rate to claimants under the age of 35.**

This means that single claimants under 35 making a new Housing Benefit claim on or after 1 January 2012 will only be entitled to the Shared Accommodation Rate. Existing claimants on 1 January 2012 may receive transitional protection granted by the government as part of the changes for a limited time, otherwise they will move to the Shared Accommodation Rate on the anniversary of their claim.

For further information on this and other changes to Local Housing Allowance contact **Solihull Council's Income and Awards team** on **0121 704 8200** or visit <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/benefits/lhachanges.htm>

## **Solihull Landlords' Forum**

**Do you want a chance to meet other landlords and find out about the issues that affect you? What do you want to discuss?**

Then come along to the next Landlords' Forum on Wednesday **9 May 2012**, in the Civic Suite in Solihull Town centre. **Time: 6pm - 8pm**. There is free parking available from 5pm in the Council House car park, accessed via Manor Walk.

The forum is an excellent opportunity to promote good practice and developments within the private sector. Are there any issues you would like to discuss? If so please contact the Housing Strategy Team at Solihull Council email: [housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk)

## Solihull Council website

**We are keen to provide good information that is relevant to landlords.**

A page on the Council's website <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/housing/22064.htm> has been set up for this. Please take a few minutes to look at it and let us know what you think! Is the information helpful? What else would you like to see? Email the Housing Strategy Team at [housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk)

Information about the next Forum will also be published at this web address nearer the event.

## Free insulation for your property?

**We have had a mild winter so far but it is always good to be prepared. You may be able to improve your property and help your tenants with their bills!**

Landlords and tenants can get general advice about the grants they maybe entitled to concerning insulating their property by calling the **Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre** on **0800 512 012**. Depending on your tenants circumstances this maybe free. They can also provide advice on energy bills and loans available for installing insulation or replacing central heating.

Some key ways to improve a property's energy efficiency include:

- The loft insulation should be insulated to a minimum depth of 270mm to stop heat loss through the ceiling.
- Install cavity wall and floor insulation to stop heat escaping where possible.

We want to work together to help keep your tenants warm during the winter months and your rent coming in. A special **Solihull Winter Warmth helpline** has been set up on **0121 704 8080** for people who require urgent help this winter. Lines are open Mon-Fri between 9am - 5pm. The Winter Warmth Helpline provides information and advice for vulnerable residents who need urgent help such as:

- Advice on their energy bill
- Emergency food supplies
- Debt advice and advice on paying bills.

## For wider interest:

**The Department for the Communities and Local Government have announced a review to look at the barriers to investment in private rented homes.**

The Government's Housing Strategy published last month highlighted the range of steps being taken to increase the supply of new homes. Sir Adrian Montague's review will examine how best to encourage greater investment in rental properties - helping support the rapid growth of the private rented sector by increasing the supply of affordable homes. Further details, including the terms of reference for the review, can be found at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/2057868>

## What do you think?

We will produce a newsletter twice a year. To provide feedback on this newsletter or to make a suggestion for an inclusion of an item in a further issue please contact the Housing Strategy Team at Solihull Council at [housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategy@solihull.gov.uk)

## Useful Contacts:

### **The National Approved Letting Scheme (NALS)**

Telephone: 01242 581712

Email: [info@nalscheme.co.uk](mailto:info@nalscheme.co.uk)

Website: [www.nalscheme.co.uk](http://www.nalscheme.co.uk)

### **The Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA)**

Telephone: 0845 345 5752

Email: [info@arla.co.uk](mailto:info@arla.co.uk)

Website: [www.arla.co.uk](http://www.arla.co.uk)

### **National Landlords Association Membership line**

Telephone: 020 7840 8937

Email:

[membership@landlords.org.uk](mailto:membership@landlords.org.uk)

Website: [www.landlords.org.uk](http://www.landlords.org.uk)

### **Residential Landlords Association**

Telephone: 0845 666 5000

Email: [info@rla.org.uk](mailto:info@rla.org.uk)

Website: [www.rla.org.uk](http://www.rla.org.uk)

### **Solihull Council - Shipshape - the register of Solihull Home Improvement Professionals**

Website:

[www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards/shipshape.htm](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards/shipshape.htm)

### **Gas Safe Register**

Telephone: 0800 408 5500

Website:

[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

### **National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Consulting (N.I.C.E.I.C)**

Telephone: 0870 013 0382

Email: [enquiries@niceic.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@niceic.org.uk)

Website: [www.niceic.org.uk](http://www.niceic.org.uk)

### **The Valuation Office Agency**

Telephone: 0845 602 1507

Website: [www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk)

### **Citizens Advice Bureau**

Telephone: 0844 826 9716

Website: [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)