

Wigan Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Code of Practice

The aims of the Wigan Landlord Accreditation Scheme are to encourage, acknowledge, raise awareness and actively promote good standards and management practice by landlords. We also aim to assist landlords and tenants to undertake their responsibilities to each other.

This Code of Practice is to be accepted by **all** accredited landlords and agents as a minimum standard that their properties and services will meet.

Property Standards

- ✓ Gas Safety - All gas appliances must be inspected in accordance with current Gas Safety Regulations and a gas safety certificate should be obtained on an annual basis. All installation, maintenance and safety checks must be carried out by a Gas Safe Registered gas engineer.
- ✓ Electrical - All electrical work must be carried out by a competent person registered with the Department of Communities and Local Government full competence scheme for electrical safety in dwellings (BRE, BSI, ELECSA, NAPIT or NICEIC).
- ✓ Heating - The property must be provided with an efficient heating system. Efficient heating is defined as any gas or oil programmable central heating system; or electric storage heaters on an off-peak tariff (eg. Economy 7); or warm air systems; or programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating.
- ✓ Appliances - You should provide manufacturers or appropriate details on the safe operation of appliances to tenants on request, for example, cookers, fridges, freezers, boilers, heaters and heating time clocks.
- ✓ Furniture - Any furniture you provide should comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).
- ✓ Fire Safety - It is strongly recommended that the battery powered smoke detectors are of a tamper-resistant construction with built in 10 year+ lithium battery cell. You should check they are functioning at least at every property inspection and at every change of tenancy.
- ✓ Repairs - The property must be kept in a good state of repair and any necessary repairs must be undertaken within the following timescales:
 - ✓ Emergency Repairs - Any repairs required to avoid any danger to health or risk to the safety of residents, or serious damage to buildings or resident's belongings e.g. burst pipes, leaking roofs, heating failure. Make safe or complete within 24 hours of defect being reported.
 - ✓ Urgent Repairs - Repairs to defects which materially affect the comfort or convenience of residents must be completed within 10 working days of report of the defect.
 - ✓ Non-Urgent Repairs - Reactive repairs not falling within the above categories. Completed within 28 days of reporting the defect.
- ✓ Safety & Security - The property must be safe and secure against unauthorised access and also include the provision of an acceptable method for receiving mail.
- ✓ Access - Where access is required to carry out routine inspections or viewings the tenant shall be given 24 hours notice unless in exceptional circumstances where providing notice is not practical. The tenant shall be informed of the date, time and purpose of any such visit
- ✓ Freedom from Hazards - as far as reasonably practical, the property and its surroundings are kept free from health & safety risks to tenants and their visitors.
- ✓ Appearance of the Property - Prior to letting the landlord should take all reasonable steps to ensure the appearance of the property, both internally and externally conform to a decent lettable standard and that its outbuildings and surroundings do not detract from the overall appearance of the local area.
- ✓ Statutory Licensing - All premises must comply with any statutory licensing scheme in operation in their area - for example Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Management Standards

- ✓ Fair Treatment - We expect you to treat all tenants and prospective tenants equally and fairly and that in the letting of your property, no person, or group of persons applying will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- ✓ Tenancy Agreement - All tenancies must have a written tenancy agreement that includes the rent level, provision for review and agreed frequency of rent payments.
- ✓ Utility charges - The tenant must be informed as to who is responsible for the payment of the utility charges (gas, electricity, water and telephone) and also the Council Tax and that the responsibility is accurately stated in the terms of the tenancy agreement
- ✓ Deposits - For all new tenancies granted from 6th April 2007 a government approved national tenancy deposit protection scheme should be used.
- ✓ Landlord Details - A notice should be displayed in each property that details the name, address and telephone number of the landlord or agent.
- ✓ Insurance - You must have adequate insurance cover for your property. Tenants should be advised to take out their own contents insurance, where appropriate.
- ✓ Inventory - You should compile an accurate and agreed inventory of all equipment and furniture and take details of the decorative condition of the property.
- ✓ Neighbours - We expect your tenants to behave in a responsible way towards their neighbours - any complaints should be discussed with your tenants. You should also inform your tenants about arrangements for refuse collection, avoiding noise nuisance and any other potential causes for conflict.
- ✓ References - Where possible we recommend that prior to letting the property landlords obtain references from relevant sources in relation to prospective tenants
- ✓ Rent Accounting - Where rent transactions are made by bank transfer a regularly statement (at least annually) should be provided to the tenant. Where transactions using cash or cheque are made a receipt should always be given. We recommend that landlords record every payment made by each of their tenants.
- ✓ Fees - Where fees are charged for example arranging a letting, the fee shall be a reasonable amount and the tenant should be informed in writing in advance so that they are fully aware of what is expected of them.
- ✓ Rent Arrears - We expect landlords to pursue rent arrears in a systematic manner and not to demand monies on an unreasonable basis
- ✓ Tenancy Termination - Landlords should adopt the correct procedures for tenancy terminations and refrain from any act of harassment or illegal eviction

Fit & Proper Person

- ✓ You and any other person with any interest in your properties must not have been convicted of harassment, illegal eviction or fraud or have failed to comply with informal or statutory notices served by the Council for any of your properties.
- ✓ You should not be in default of any mortgage or other loan secured on your property which may put the home of your tenants at risk due to repossession.

Scheme Membership

- ✓ Membership of the scheme will continue upon compliance with this code of practice.
- ✓ Throughout the life of the membership of the scheme each of the properties within the landlord's portfolio will be inspected to ensure quality standards are being maintained/adhered to.
- ✓ We will, following your initial provision of documentation on safety standards and mortgage/loan commitments, also expect to have sight of current documents at the time of each property inspection
- ✓ I understand that if my application is refused for any reason, or if I am removed from the scheme for any reason, I will be unable to re-apply for a period of 12 months from the date of refusal or removal.

Energy Efficiency

- ✓ All properties that have become vacant since October 2008 require an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). Landlords should provide their EPC with their accreditation application.
- ✓ All properties should be provided with a reasonable level of energy efficiency measure and include as a minimum hot water tank lagging, exposed pipe lagging and adequate loft insulation where appropriate.