



Summer Newsletter

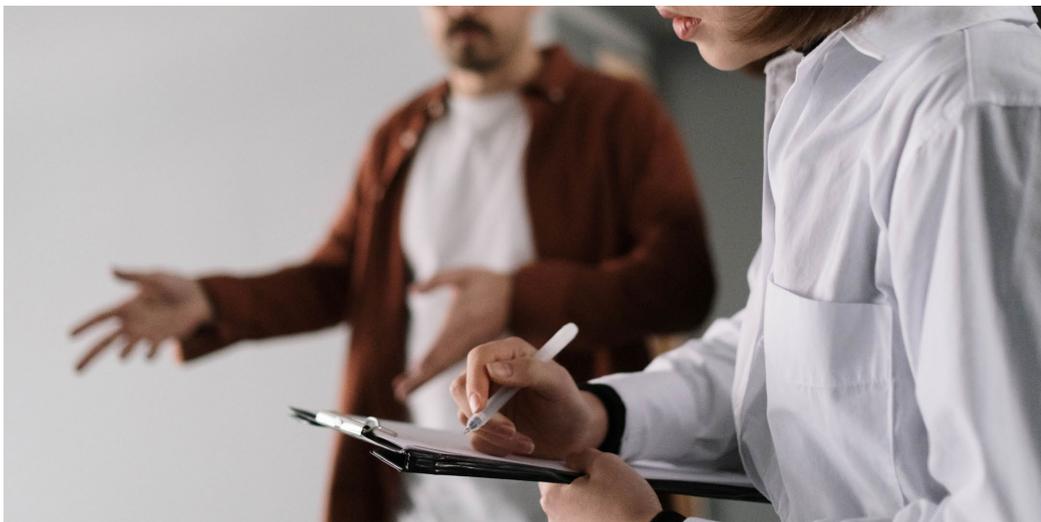
July 2024

Dear Landlord / Agent,

Read on for relevant private rented sector (PRS) news, including:

- Common complaints made to our compliance team,
- Benefit information for you to share with tenants, and
- How to minimise the risk of discrimination when letting.

| Rent Smart Wales



What problems do tenants report to RSW?

Our Compliance and Regulation team handles all complaints relating to licensees to ensure compliance with licence conditions, Code of Practice, and other legislation. The team engages with landlords and agents to investigate and secure resolutions to any issues raised.

We aim to assist you with compliance where possible. Unfortunately, licence revocation and other sanctions are sometimes needed. Read about the most common complaint types below.

1. Property condition

To avoid complaints about the condition of your property make sure you inspect it before contracts are issued and undertake any necessary maintenance.

An inventory must now be given to the contract holder as part of the Welsh Government model written statement. If the model contract terms are unaltered, you must issue the inventory to the contract holder within 14 days of the occupation date.

Inventories are a great tool to help resolve disputes. The more detailed your inventory, the easier you will find dealing with any disputes later.

Check out the [inspection checklist](#) on our resources page.

2. Security deposits

Despite deposit laws being in place for over 15 years, some landlords struggle to fully comply with the requirements. On receiving a security deposit you must do two things:

1. Protect the deposit in a Government Approved Scheme and follow the scheme's requirements.
2. Serve the required information on the contract-holder AND on any

other person who, in agreement with the contract-holder, paid the deposit on their behalf.

If there is a dispute about whether the security deposit should be used to cover property damage or other losses, the deposit protection scheme provides a formal resolution route to assist both parties. Claims from deposits must be reasonable, and only made for damage caused by the tenant that is not wear and tear.

There are 3 Government approved Scheme providers: [mydeposits](#), [DPS](#) and [IDS](#).

3. Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour could include poor waste management, neighbour disputes, persistent noise etc. These complaints can be tricky to resolve but licence holders should make sure contract-holders comply with the terms of their contract.

What does this mean for you? Early intervention is likely to prevent escalation, so do not ignore early signs. Consider taking the following steps:

1. Make sure that your own obligations have been fulfilled e.g. by providing appropriate waste receptacles or noise insulation is appropriate for the property.
2. Provide the contract-holder with relevant information at the outset e.g. contact details for you, local waste collection information, a copy of the [Tenant Guide](#) published by Welsh Government.
3. Tell the contract-holder if the standards you expect are not being met.
4. If there is no change in behaviour, put it in writing.
5. Work with authorities and support agencies to help resolve issues.

Ultimately, re-possession may have to be considered to minimise the impact on

the neighbouring community and protect your property.

| Benefits



Universal Credit: Ensure successful migration for your tenants

Since being introduced in 2013, thousands of benefit claimants have migrated onto to Universal Credit.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is now contacting legacy benefit recipients to notify them that those benefits are ending and inviting them to claim Universal Credit instead.

If your tenant receives benefits, they may have made the move already. If they still claim legacy benefits, the information below will be of interest to you and your tenant.

Legacy benefits include:

- Tax credits: Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Other benefits, such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP), will stay the same.

The DWP will write to households who need to make a new claim for Universal Credit. There is no need to do anything until this letter has been received.

It is important your tenant makes a claim by the deadline given on the letter, as failure to do so could lead to delays in receiving Universal Credit.

For further information visit the pages below.

[Completing the move to Universal Credit](#)

[What to do if you receive a Migration Notice letter](#)

[Universal Credit and rented housing: guide for landlords](#)

| Letting



DSS discrimination: What you need to know

You will already know that the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate (directly or indirectly) against people with 'protected characteristics'.

This means you cannot treat a tenant or prospective tenant less favourably than others just because of their age, sex, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or gender reassignment.

An example of direct discrimination

A letting agent says that someone cannot apply to rent a property they have advertised because of their race.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a practice is not discriminatory in itself but puts people with a protected characteristic group at a particular disadvantage when compared to others.

An example of indirect discrimination:

A person in receipt of housing benefit is told by a landlord or agent they cannot apply to rent a property. Although being a benefit recipient is not a protected characteristic, this may put disabled people or single parents at a disadvantage.

Breaching the Equality Act is illegal and can be costly. To minimise risks to you and your business, consider every tenant on a case-by-case basis and avoid any blanket policies which prevent certain demographic groups applying to rent your property.

For more information, read Shelter's guide for letting agents and landlords who advertise or let properties.

Learn more and collect CPD points at the same time! Rent Smart Wales has free Equality and Diversity training.

[Read guide](#)

[Complete training](#)



Property Ombudsman: Record number of enquiries made last year

The Property Ombudsman (TPO) scheme has been providing consumers and property agents with an alternative dispute resolution service since 1990.

Last year the complaints they received reached a record number. Their annual review revealed 57,635 people sought support with their property and housing related issues. This is a 240% rise since 2013.

The TPO offers a free advice service, conducts investigations, and gives feedback to policymakers and stakeholders to improve the sector. The growing demand for service shown in this report highlights the importance of trying to resolve issues between landlord, agent and tenant before they become disputes.

A large number of enquiries from the PRS related to repairs and maintenance. To avoid disputes arising you should tackle disrepair early, make sure your property is [fit for human habitation](#), and keep a detailed inventory.

[Read the review](#)



Support available for those affected by hoarding disorder

If someone collects an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner it often results in unmanageable amounts of clutter accumulating in the home. This is known as Hoarding disorder.

The disorder is a mental health condition which affects between 2% and 5% of the population. It can be a significant problem if the clutter interferes with everyday living or poses a health risk to the person and anyone who lives in or visits their house.

Councils are reporting an increasing number of referrals, with some individuals living in the private rented sector. Help is available. Most councils work with vulnerable people affected by hoarding to explore support options available to them. They can assist to help sort and dispose of unwanted items and often work with organisation like [Mind Cymru](#).

If you know somebody who requires assistance, contact your local housing advice or environmental health team.



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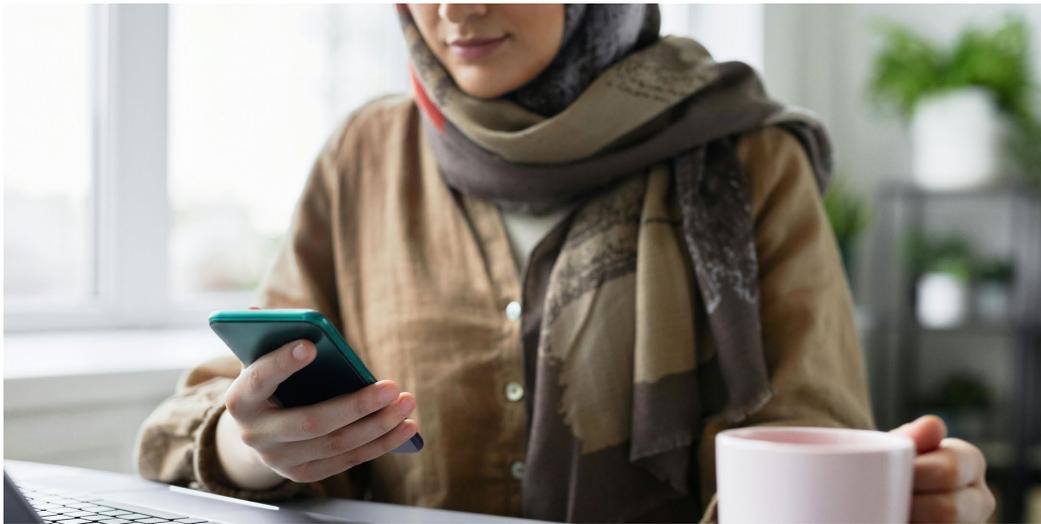
Cardiff Council's Tenancy Sustainment team works with vulnerable people affected by hoarding to explore support options available to them. The team works with council tenants, homeowners and private renters in their homes to help sort and dispose of unwanted items.

It is a person-centred, free service. The Council works with Cardiff Mind to support any clients who would like to access counselling services to address the underlying causes of their hoarding.

If you would like to find out more about the service and how it could help someone you know, please email tenancy.sustainment@cardiff.gov.uk or call 02920 537271.

Get support

| Torfaen County Borough Council



Torfaen landlord survey: Have your say

Torfaen landlords are invited to take part in a short anonymous survey to review the local private rented sector.

This stakeholder engagement aims to strengthen relationships between landlords and Torfaen County Borough Council, as well as shape support provision for landlords and tenants in the area.

You have until 31/08/2024 to submit your survey response.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact rentsmart@torfaen.gov.uk

Respond now

| Caerphilly Council



Caerphilly landlord energy conference

Caerphilly Council aims to transform properties in their area into energy-efficient, cost-saving havens. A free event being held in October will focus on help for private landlords.

During the event, attendees will have opportunities to gain insights from leading experts, connect with fellow landlords, discover tools, resources and incentives to implement energy saving solutions and stay informed about the latest regulations.

The Caerphilly Landlord Energy Conference 2024 is being hosted by Caerphilly County Borough Council and will take place over two sessions.

2pm – 4pm or 6pm – 8pm on Wednesday 9th October
at Llancaiach Fawr Manor, Treharris, CF46 6ER.

[Book your free place now](#)



Looking for events in your local area?

You can find landlord forums, workshops and more on our website.

[View events](#)

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