



Autumn Newsletter

October 2024

Dear Landlord / Agent,

We have lots to share from the private rented sector in this issue, including:

- The Publication of the White Paper on Adequate Housing and Fair Rents
- Making sure you are up to date on smoke alarm requirements, and
- A change to the way Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water bill empty properties

| Welsh Government



Publication of the White Paper on Adequate Housing and Fair Rents

On 24 October, the Welsh Government published a [White Paper on Adequate Housing, Fair Rents and Affordability](#).

The White Paper asks for views on proposals for the long-term approach towards achieving housing adequacy across all housing tenures in Wales. The White Paper also sets out a range of proposals aimed at improving affordability, habitability, and accessibility in the Private Rented Sector, all of which are key aspects of housing adequacy.

The Welsh Government will be holding engagement events for the White Paper in the New Year. Details on these events are to follow.

The consultation will run until 31 January 2025.

[Read and respond to the White Paper](#)

| Renting Homes

Working together

for a safe home for all

Smoke alarms: Some landlords are behind the curve!

As surprising as it may sound, there is still uncertainty about the [fitness for human habitation standard](#) in general and for smoke alarms in particular.

Failure to meet the standard has significant consequences e.g. the tenant may not be liable for rent for each day the dwelling is unfit. It may also invalidate a possession notice served.

To recap: Since 1st December 2023, a smoke alarm, in proper working order should be present on every storey within your property. These smoke alarms must be connected to the electrical supply and inter-linked with all other smoke alarms connected to the electrical supply. Be aware that more complex house types and those in multiple occupancy are likely to need additional fire safety measures installed. For further advice review the fire safety risk assessment guide or seek assistance from your local Council's environmental health team.

Our [registration data](#) tells us that over 20% of registered properties either have no alarm system, or the detectors are not interlinked. It is also possible that those who have installed alarms to comply with the new law, have not updated their RSW registration to indicate that they have done the work. To update your registration, [log in to your account](#) and edit the registration.

For those who are compliant, think about whether you could [prove that your properties have met the standard](#). You may have to do this if challenged.

Read FFHH Standard guidance

Read Welsh Government guidance

| Guidance

Condensation, Damp & Mould



New guidance available for agents, landlords and tenants

According to a [report](#) from The Property Ombudsman, between 6% and 13% of PRS properties are affected by damp and mould. In 2023, the organisation received more than 1,000 damp and mould related enquiries.

Condensation, damp and mould are interlinked and caused by a variety of factors: environmental, structural and behavioural. It can have long lasting effects on the health of occupants and to the structure of the property itself. A joint effort from tenants, landlords and agents is needed to prevent it occurring.

To help, Rent Smart Wales has developed a leaflet and poster with the latest guidance for tackling condensation, damp and mould.

The [poster](#), aimed at tenants, provides advice on reducing condensation in the home. It promotes the need for ventilating when cooking, bathing and drying clothes and gives other top tips too.

The [booklet](#) has more detailed guidance about associated health risks.

- For property owners, it provides advice on property structure and maintenance which can reduce the likelihood of damp and mould.
- For occupiers it provides advice on how to safely clean mould and when to report any problems to their landlord.

Why not share these resources with your tenants?

[View Property Ombudsman guidance](#)

[Read Rent Smart Wales resources](#)



A change to the way water charges are billed on empty property

Most properties, even when they are empty, do need some access to water. In the past, no bill was issued to the landlord on empty property, but this is changing.

From now on, owners will be liable for charges on empty properties. These charges will cover maintaining a water supply to the property, taking away surface water and where relevant, taking meter readings and maintaining the water meter. This change reflects the way other utility companies deal with empty properties.

If the property is not occupied, the property owner will be responsible for payment of the standing charges at the property until the property becomes occupied or is sold.

If the property is occupied, the landlord needs to register the details of the occupier with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, who will set up an account for them. The quickest and easiest way to do this is to use landlordtap.com.

Visit Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's website

Did you know?

Rent Smart Wales works with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy to make sure landlords are aware that they can be liable to charges incurred at their rental properties in Wales.

You can opt in to have Rent Smart Wales share your details with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy (depending on the location of your rental properties), reducing your risk of liability for water charges.

[Contact Rent Smart Wales](#) for more information.

| Deposit protection



Protect your security deposit today

If landlords take security deposits, they must protect them in a government approved scheme. We still receive regular reports of deposits not being protected and/or the requirements of the deposit scheme not being met. Failure to protect the deposit and provide the required information, could have financial consequences, and restrict your ability to regain possession.

What do you need to know?

- In England and Wales deposits must be registered with one of the authorised schemes, namely: [MyDeposits](#), [Tenancy Deposit Scheme](#) or [Deposit Protection Service](#)
- This must be done within 30 days of taking the deposit
- The landlord must comply with the scheme requirements and
- The contract holder must be given the required information specified in Section 3 of [The Renting Homes \(Deposit Schemes\) \(Required Information\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2022](#).

The three schemes have very helpful resources on their websites including case studies. They provide advice on what you need to resolve disputes and the practices you could adopt to help secure successful results.

Case studies

Read some examples highlighted by MyDeposits below:

- [Waste left at end of tenancy](#)
- [Keys not returned](#)
- [Poor cleaning standards](#)
- [Kitchen worktop damage](#)
- [Pets and fair wear and tear](#)

Mae Cynllun Lesio Cymru yn agor drysau.

Gallwch lesio eich eiddo a
chael incwm rhent gwarantedig
didrafferth am 5 i 20 mlynedd.

Ymunwch â Chynllun
Lesio Cymru.
Cofrestrwch heddiw.



Unlock the benefits of Leasing Scheme Wales

Lease your property and get
hassle-free guaranteed rental
income for 5 to 20 years.

Join Leasing
Scheme Wales.
Sign up today.

Unlock the benefits of Leasing Scheme Wales

What is Leasing Scheme Wales?

Leasing Scheme Wales is a scheme funded by the Welsh Government and managed by local authorities. The scheme provides property owners the opportunity to lease their flat or house to their local authority for hassle free guaranteed monthly rental income.

It is designed to make renting privately in Wales more accessible and affordable offering property owners an opportunity to access grants and guaranteed income while providing tenants with secure, long-term, and affordable housing.

Benefits for property owners:

- Hassle free guaranteed rental income for the length of the lease (at the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate) – meaning no rent arrears and no voids
- Up to £25,000 grant to bring the property up to rental standard (subject to T&Cs)
- Up to £5,000 grant to increase your property's energy rating (subject to T&Cs)
- Leases of between 5-20 years
- Property inspections, repairs and maintenance covered (subject to

reasonable wear and tear)

- Full management of the property and tenant for the lifetime of the lease

Interested in finding out more?

Your [local housing support team](#) are ready to take your call and can help guide you through the process.

| Tenant support



Are your tenants struggling with debt? Help is at hand

The Private Rented Sector Debt Advice Helpline is a free, independent and confidential debt advice service funded by Welsh Government.

The helpline provides specialist advice to tenants on how to manage their debts and maximise their income, to help them to pay their rent and sustain their tenancies. The service is available in English, Welsh and other community languages.

Call 0808 278 7920 to get in touch or visit the [Advicelink Cymru website](#) for more information.



Looking for events in your local area?

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

[View events](#)

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rhentudoeth.llyw.cymru
rentsmart.gov.uk

Rhentu Doeth Cymru | Rent Smart Wales
Blwch PO / PO Box 1106
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF11 1UA



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